









Planchon del.

C. S. SONNINI.

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# TRAVELS

IN

## UPPER AND LOWER EGYPT:

UNDERTAKEN BY ORDER OF  
THE OLD GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE;

BY  
*C. S. SONNINI,*  
ENGINEER IN THE FRENCH NAVY, AND MEMBER OF SEVERAL  
SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY SOCIETIES.

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ILLUSTRATED WITH FORTY ENGRAVINGS;  
CONSISTING OF  
Portraits, Views, Plans, a Geographical Chart, Antiquities,  
Plants, Animals, &c.  
Drawn on the Spot, under the Author's Inspection.

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. . . . . Tolerantia rerum  
Spernebat cunctas insuperata minas.  
Vertice nudato, ventos pluviasque ferebam.  
Non mihi solstitium, non grave frigus erat.  
.....  
Quamvis exiguo poteram requiescere somno,  
Et quamvis modico membra fovere cibo.

Corn. Gallus, Epig. 1. Senect. Descr.

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Translated from the French,  
BY HENRY HUNTER, D. D.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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S699.E  
1807  
TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT,

CHANCELLOR OF HIS MAJESTY'S EXCHEQUER;

UNDER PROVIDENCE,

THE BULWARK BETWEEN FRENCH AMBITION

AND

THE LIBERTIES OF MANKIND,

*THIS TRANSLATION*

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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ONE of the first books of History put into our hands, contains many curious and interesting particulars respecting ancient Egypt. The recollection of these carries us with a warmer impulse to contemplate the present state of things in that country. The French nation, each individual an Alexander, aims at nothing less than the conquest of the globe. After having over-run a great part of Europe, they turned their eyes eastward to Asia, and, without the *veni*, it was *vidi, vici*, and the islands of the Egean Sea furnished another *department* to the Republic. It was but a step thence to Africa, to greet the Mameluc of Egypt with the fraternal embrace, and add *twenty more* to the departments of the Great Nation. The

an ambition of the *Kings* of France has more than once threatened the liberties of Europe; but the little finger of a modern *Citizen* of that country is thicker than the loins of kings. They must have *a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven*: France must be aggrandized, and Paris embellished, at whatever rate.

The publication of M. Sonnini's Travels throws considerable light on Buonaparte's expedition. Louis XVI. employed the former of these gentlemen to travel through Egypt, merely in the view of physical and commercial arrangements; the Directory send thither the hero of Italy, with a vast army, to make a conquest of the country. How it has sped the world by this time knows. Cæsar's laconic boast is now curtailed of its third limb. The Republican General can go no farther than the *veni, vidi*: but the *vici* lies buried without the walls of Saint-Jean d'Acre. Our author is a very good observer of what is, but he knows nothing of what will be: he is an excellent naturalist, but a most wretched prophet: he has mistaken the fond dreams of a patriotic imagination

gination for a revelation from heaven; and like the baseless fabric of a vision leaves not a wreck behind.

Both the writer and the warrior have conveyed a most useful lesson to mankind : it is, to regard with a jealous eye, a people, who, under every form of government, still aim at domineering. Whether they go forth in travelling parties or in armed hosts; whether they cultivate science or till the ground; whether they plant the tree of liberty or unfurl the bloody flag, the Frenchman never loses sight of his motto, *Extollenda est Gallia*. He has got liberty and fraternity in his mouth, but mark, he has got a rod in his hand, and Flanders, Holland, Switzerland, a great part of Germany, and almost all Italy, have felt it to be a rod of iron.

These Travels, and the political and commercial views which they unfold, are peculiarly interesting to Great Britain at this crisis. I thought it a duty which I owed to *my* country to lay them before the Public without delay, and, to

keep pace as much as possible with the general impatience to see the work in English, called in assistance toward forwarding the Translation. I hold myself, however, responsible for the whole, flattering myself it will be found a fair and faithful transcript of the original.

H. H.

*Hoxton,*  
*9th August, 1799.*



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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A DAWN of hope appears that Egypt, now so vilely degraded, abandoned to plunderers and barbarians, may at length recover the lustre which once distinguished her among the nations of the globe. Transferred into the possession of a people as renowned as that which was once the boast of antiquity, this celebrated country, which ages of unrelenting destruction have completely disguised, will re-assume her departed glory. The men as well as the soil; the territory as well as its inhabitants, are hastening to wear a new aspect: and the period is at hand when Egypt shall no longer be what she lately was.

It could not, then, be uninteresting to exhibit a view of Egypt such as the French shall have found it; to depict the manners of the different tribes who inhabited it, and among whom civilization

lization is going to succeed to gross and ferocious ignorance ; to describe the wreck of august monuments scattered over a soil rendered proud by their boldness and their enormous masses ; to delineate some traces of the rich attire which generous Nature has incessantly displayed before the eyes of ungrateful men, who never ceased, in their turn, to requite her kindness with outrage ; in a word, to present a sketch of this portion of Africa before it shall have changed its appearance. This representation will enable the reader to follow with avidity the progress of an unexpected regeneration, and the labours which our compatriots are gone to deposit in the bosom of immortality.

But for these considerations, the work now submitted to the public had probably never seen the light. The Author would have suffered the materials of it to sleep in his port-folio ; but he deemed himself under an obligation to render an account to his country of the knowledge which he had acquired, in the persuasion that, after having served her with zeal, his duty was not completely discharged, till he had consecrated to her, besides,  
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the result of an enterprise engaged in, solely with a view to make it subservient to the public good.

The work has been moulded into the form of a relation, as best adapted to a book of travels. There is a pleasure in laying hold of a traveller's hand, in making one in his parties, in partaking of his fatigues and dangers, as well as in enjoying with him the success with which his researches are crowned. But this relation has not the dryness of a journal or of an itinerary. Observations, elucidations, general reflections, relieve it from such a tiresome monotony.

It was the Author's intention to have given a new map of Egypt, more accurate than any one hitherto exhibited; but he had not time sufficient for executing his idea; he has therefore adopted D'Anville's chart, as the least defective which he has had an opportunity of inspecting, though assuredly it leaves ample room for improvement. Drawings exact, and taken on the spot, represent objects of various kinds, most of them not generally known; the singular figures discovered in

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the Temple of Isis, at *Dendera*, will attract particular attention. The Author takes credit to himself for having followed the advice of a learned antiquarian, the Count de Caylus, who *exhorts those who collect monuments of antiquity, to communicate them to the public, because their collection, though it consist but of a few articles, may present singularities not to be found in the most extensive cabinets.* The collection of drawings for this work, contains, in fact, some very curious singularities. Finally, nothing has been neglected that could prevent these travels from sinking too far below their subject, and the interest generally excited by new destinies of a country fruitful in wonders.



## LIST OF PLATES.

---

### VOL. I.

Portrait of the Author, C. S. Sonnini. To face Title.

Plate		Page
1.	1. Cleopatra's Needle. 2. Pompey's Column	117
2.	Fossil Tooth, natural size — —	119
3.	<i>Carousse</i> , a Fish of the coasts of Egypt —	197
4.	<i>Henna</i> , a Plant — — —	268
5.	View of part of the Ruins of Canopus —	351
6.	Colossal statue, fluted, of the Ruins of Canopus	352
7.	1. Part of the Ruins of Canopus. 2. Colossal Statue, fluted, of the Ruins of Canopus —	353
8.	View of Abou-Mandour — —	363
38.	D'Anville's General Map of Egypt.	

### VOL. II.

23*	Portrait of Mourat-Bey (page 283) to face the Title.		
9.	<i>Atlé</i> , a Tree—fig. 1. Fruit of the <i>kishta</i> —	2	
10.	View of a Tent of the Bedouins —	99	
11.	View of the Monastery of Zaïdi el Baramous	162	
12.	View of the Dovecots of Alguan —	200	
13.	Egyptian Idols — — —	213	
14.	Bust of Isis — — —	ib.	
15.	Tragic Masks — — —	ib.	
16.	Egyptian Figures — — —	ib.	
17.	Egyptian Idols and Figures — —	240	
18.	1. Osiris. 2. Figure of a Woman unknown	241	
19.	1. Head of Vespasian. 2. Head of Arsinoé, Wife of Ptolemeus Philadelphus —	ib.	
	20. View		

Plate	Page
20. View of the Village of Terrana —	242
21. 1. <i>Fulful Beladi</i> , a Plant. 2. The <i>Schal</i> , a Fish. 3. The <i>Kachoué</i> , a Fish — —	169
22. Fishes of the Nile. 1. The <i>Hersé</i> . 2. The <i>Karmouth</i> . 3. The <i>Kescheré</i> — —	249
23. Other Fishes. 1. The <i>Schilby</i> . 2. The <i>Bouri</i> . 3. The <i>Sardine</i> , or <i>Sprat</i> — — —	256
24. Statue found in Thebaïs — —	335
25. Section of the Pyramid of Gisah —	338
26. General Plan of the Mummies-Well at Sakkara	340
27. Other Fishes. 1. The <i>Bolti</i> . 2. The <i>Bayatte</i> . 3. The <i>Benni</i> — — —	341

## VOL. III.

28. View of the Column of Antinoé (page 43) to face the Title.	
29. Figure found at Echmimn — —	126
30. Capitals of the Column of the Temple of Dendera	157
31. Figures of the same Temple — —	ib.
32. Other Figures of the same — —	159
33. Another Figure of the same — —	160
34. Other Figures of the same — —	161
35. Other Figures of the same. Sceptre surmounted with a <i>fleur de lis</i> — — —	ib.
36. Extraordinary Figure of the Temple of Dendera	164
37. Colonnade of Thebes — —	237

# CONTENTS.

## VOL. I.

---

---

### CHAP. I.

SERVING AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK.

*Motives which induce travellers to publish their discoveries—The delay of this publication accounted for—Embarrassment which the traveller has to encounter who is in haste to write—Travellers—Hasselquitz—Savary—Prodigious changes which the French are effecting in Egypt* - I

### CHAP. II.

*Buffon—Departure from Montbard—Coral—Troglodyte—Languedoc—Phalangiste—Preservation of fishes—Pleasant anecdote—Gulf of Lyons* 14

### CHAP. III.

*Departure from Toulon—Come to an anchor—Coast of Corsica—Genoa—The Opera—Elba and the adjacent islands—Gale of wind—Arrival at Palermo* - - - - - 23

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

*Maritime honours—English travellers—Palermo and its environs* - - - - - 36

## CHAP. V.

*Passage from Palermo to Malta—Soundings between Sicily and the island of Malta, and between this last and Africa—Coasts of Sicily—Pantalasia—Isle of Malta; its nature, its cities, its productions* - - - - - 51

## CHAP. VI.

*Meteorological observations—Galleys of Malta—Political and philosophical glance at the Order of Malta—Antiquities and idiom of the island of Malta—Maltese dogs—Passage from Malta to the island of Candia—Sailing birds—Arrival in Egypt* - - - - - 75

## CHAP. VII.

*Desert of Libya—Coasts of Egypt—Towers of the Arabs—Landing at Alexandria—Its ports—Its commerce—Glimpse of the city of Alexandria* 91

## CHAP. VIII.

*Modern Alexandria—Its inhabitants—Jews—Spirit of revenge—Assassination of the Consul of Alexandria, and of a Dutchman—Language—Ruins* 101

CHAP.

## CHAP. IX.

<i>Enclosure of Alexandria by the Arabs—Cleopatra's needles—Cleopatra—Palace of the kings of Egypt—Pompey's column</i>	114
--	-----

## CHAP. X.

<i>Ruins—Canal of Alexandria—Cisterns—Culture of the country adjacent to the canal—Salt-wort—Birds—Sparrows—Catacombs—Cameleons—Jackals</i>	130
---	-----

## CHAP. XI.

<i>Natural history of the Jerbo of Egypt, with remarks on natural history in general, and a note respecting a plan of travelling into the interior of Africa</i>	142
--	-----

## CHAP. XII.

<i>French factory—Statue—Adanson and his misfortunes—Augustus, another French interpreter—Antique tomb—The name of Alexander still respected in Egypt—Venetians and English—Commerce—Germes—Fishes</i>	182
--	-----

## CHAP. XIII.

<i>Journey from Alexandria to Rossetta—Maadié—Heraclea—Rossetta and its environs—Glance over the Delta</i>	193
--	-----

## CHAP. XIV.

<i>Disturbances at Cairo—Oriental dress—Boats of the Nile—Winter—Rossetta—Commerce—Rice, its culture, and its antiquity in Egypt—Trefoil—Oxen and cows</i>	214
--	-----

## CHAP. XV.

<i>Inhabitants of Rossetta—Pipes—Coffee-houses—Arabian tales—Manner of making the coffee—Shameful vices of the Egyptians—Wives of the rich—Conversation by signs with one of them—Particulars respecting those women—Jealousy of the men—Homage paid to women</i>	240
---	-----

## CHAP. XVI.

<i>Wives of the commonalty—Black of the eyes—Alquifoux—Red of the hands and of the feet—Henna—Depilatories—Plumpness of the women, their cleanliness, their cosmetics</i>	261
---	-----

## CHAP. XVII.

<i>Egyptian dogs—Cats—Beautiful animal of this genus reared by the Author—Domestic animals—Mangouste, or ichneumon—Species of tortoise of the Nile hostile to the crocodile</i>	281
---	-----

## CHAP. XVIII.

<i>Castle of Rossetta—Houhou—Lapwing—Turtle-doves—Chevéche—Lotus—Racket—Cassia—Sycamore</i>	
---	--



<i>Samore—Schishmè—Dourra—Indian pink—Wild ducks—Thrushes—Woodcock</i>	- - 304
--	---------

## CHAP. XIX.

<i>Natron—Bleaching of cloth and thread—Other uses of natron—Senna—Birds—Description of a species of falcon—Wagtail—Dragon-flies—Wasp—Cricket—Rain—Delta—Herons—Coot—Quails—Snipes—Armed plovers—Fenu-greek</i>	320
---	-----

## CHAP. XX.

<i>Journey to Aboukir—Ruins—Bedouins—Port and road for ships—Jew drogman—Red partridges—Ruins of Canopus—Colossal and fluted statue—Canopus—Governor, castle and village of Aboukir—Little Pyramid—Return to Rossetta</i>	- 344
---	-------

## CHAP. XXI.

<i>Bedouins—Birds—Boghass—Tower of Canopus—Abou-Mandour—Grapes—Desert—Jackals—Lizards—Insects—Serpent—Difficulties respecting the pyramid of Aboukir—Opinion of the Egyptians with regard to travellers</i>	- 359
---	-------



# TRAVELS

IN

## UPPER AND LOWER EGYPT.

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### CHAP. I.

SERVING AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK.

*Motives which induce travellers to publish their discoveries—The delay of this publication accounted for—Embarrassment which the traveller has to encounter who is in haste to write—Travellers—Hasselquitz—Savary—Prodigious changes which the French are effecting in Egypt.*

IT is rather late to enter on a career which ought long ago to have been accomplished. It must appear very extraordinary to defer to the seventh year of the French Republic the publication of travels which terminated in the year 1780. No traveller surely ever advanced so slowly to meet the public eye. Others, on the contrary, almost to a man, discover an ardour of impatience, on their return, to communicate the knowledge of their labours and of their discoveries. This zeal,

highly commendable, no doubt, is likewise extremely natural. In truth, when a man has had the courage to cast himself away, if I may use the expression, in countries remote, uninhabited, or, what is still worse, inhabited by nations whose rude or half-formed civilization is infinitely more dangerous than the state even of savage humanity ; when he has been endowed with a vigour capable of surmounting obstacles, with the perseverance necessary to overcome the difficulties which obstruct his path at every step, and with the fortitude which supports amidst the ills physical and moral to which enterprises of this kind are necessarily exposed ; when, in a word, talents, experience, or good fortune have extricated him out of dangers and distresses innumerable ; there is, it must be acknowledged, a satisfaction, a real enjoyment in retracing the various events which excited powerful emotions during his progress, the obstructions, the fatigues, the hazards which by turns attacked or threatened the very existence of the traveller ; for if it be pleasant to call to remembrance calamities which are past, it is still more so to relate them.

If to these motives purely personal, but which, nevertheless, rarely fail to awaken a general interest, the man who has devoted himself to the dangers of tedious peregrinations, unites views more exalted, considerations more powerful ; if, transported with  
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the love of glory, or, which is the same thing, with the love of public good, he has been sufficiently happy to extend the sphere of knowledge, and to add new realms to the empire of science, it becomes a sacred duty to give an account of his progress, and delay or neglect becomes equally reprehensible. My own pen has apparently recorded the sentence of self-condemnation; for amidst the incredible number of men and things reviewed during the course of twelve years of travelling and observation, my collection must of necessity contain many interesting objects, and some of these entirely new. I cannot complain of want of encouragement. Friends, whom letters and the sciences have rendered illustrious, pressed me to publish my travels; and Buffon, who deemed mine worthy of being associated with his own immortal labours; Buffon, that Colossus of eloquence and philosophy, wrote to me in these terms, in 1781: "I can have no doubt that you must be possessed of many excellent observations, the publication of which would redound greatly to your honour."

But I enjoyed not the liberty of devoting myself to an employment which requires composure, and serenity of mind. How far, alas! have I been from tasting the delicious fruits of tranquillity! Nature had, if I may venture to say so, distinctly marked my destination. With an ardent imagination, a

thirst after science, a passion for discovery, the coolness of intrepidity ; with a physical constitution fit to encounter every hardship ; I seemed to be formed for enterprises the most hazardous, for the execution of projects the most uncommon ; and when, after a long course of trial in this way, though still in the prime of life, I returned to my native country, that same Nature who has allotted to each of us his particular disposition, seemed to punish me for choosing a state of retirement, and at the same time to accuse a government which scarcely ever understood how to place men in the post adapted to them, or to do itself honour by making a selection unsullied by venality or intrigue. That robust temperament which had withstood the burning heat of an African climate, the boiling humidity of the equator, in South America ; which no excess of fatigue and privation was able to subdue, sunk under the languor of repose. One violent malady succeeded another ; a gloomy melancholy occupied the place of mental activity, and a painful agitation of soul followed close upon the salutary agitation of the body. An absence of some years had stimulated a covetous disposition in certain of my relations. In order to recover what they had robbed me of, I was obliged to find my way into what was then denominated the sanctuary of Justice, but which proved to be, in reality, the labyrinth of chicane, the walls of which, bristled on all sides with sharp hooks, loaded



loaded themselves with the spoils of those who had the temerity to venture in. On the other hand, men, who have often made me regret the insincerity of most of the eastern nations, the depredations of the Arabs; men among whom a female has been seen to figure, the reproach of her sex and the disgrace of human nature; men, beings maleficent and dangerous, of whom society furnishes but too many examples, and whom, for the sake of public prosperity, it would be of importance to unmask; the M.....s, the U.....s, the Lef.....s, and other subaltern knaves, taking advantage of my inexperience in business, of my carelessness about pecuniary interests, of the frankness, the confidence, the simplicity of a character generous, but credulous to a fault, involved me in a thousand embarrassments, overwhelmed me with tricks, and quirks, and wranglings; and shameless plunderers contrived to divide among themselves the tattered remnants of my fortune, after tearing it in pieces, and tormenting, persecuting me day after day, till I was ready to sink under vexation and disappointment\*.

\* “ We find but too frequently that when an honest man happens to be involved in a dispute with a rascal, the rascal meets with powerful protectors, because the honest man satisfies himself with being honest, whereas the rascal is supple, flattering, insinuating; the meanest concessions cost him nothing; he does whatever is required of him: the honest man does that only which he ought to do.” (*Historical Essays on Paris, by Sainte-Foix, vol. vi.*)

Amidst so many causes of disgust, amidst convulsions too violent to be endured by a sensibility which promised to be the charm of my life, but which has proved its bane ; amidst distractions so serious and so mortifying, how was it possible to engage in an undertaking that required undivided attention ? Where was the possibility of surmounting difficulties of another kind, which arose out of the very nature of the work ? Twelve years employed in traversing distant regions may, it is acknowledged, furnish a large stock of information, and extend the field of experience ; but this intenseness of application does not constitute the talent of writing, and the prosecution of this species of expedition is far from being favourable to the formation of the scholar. Familiarized to the image of personal destruction which the perils of every day are incessantly presenting to him, a prey to unremitting fatigue, pressed by wants which recur almost without a moment's interval, the man who devotes himself to the business of travelling, ought to set out with a soul encompassed by a threefold rampart, to shelter him from fear and depression. Frequently intermixed with barbarous and ferocious men, he is sometimes obliged to employ the services of savage natures which he is unable to restrain ; to these he must communicate a portion of his own intrepidity, and as it is not always easy to make an impression on gross and

irony characters, in order to rouse them, he feels himself at times constrained to borrow their language. These circumstances taken together leave an impress of harshness, which, to delicate eyes, presents an appearance bordering on vulgarity, and which exerts an irresistible influence on the style. Besides, the efforts made to acquire the capacity of speaking foreign languages, imperceptibly make a man forget his own; and with all this, no resource in the consolations of literature, not so much as leisure to direct the thoughts toward a subject of that description. Such are the embarrassments in which I must probably have felt myself entangled, and out of which I must have extricated myself, had I written the history of my travels immediately on their termination. If the traveller is the historian of the men he meets on his way, he is at the same time the historian of Nature; and, in order to do her the justice she deserves, he ought to be able to paint her in full dress, as in her noble simplicity.

Perhaps I may be mistaken, but I am disposed to think that, in the last-mentioned respect, my work will have gained a great deal by the delay of publication, and that I shall have reason to applaud myself on having complied with Montaigne's precept, addressed to authors: "Let them think seriously of the matter before they publish; who is hurrying them?" (*Essays*, book iii. ch. 9.)

Egypt, that ancient cradle of the sciences, where the wonders of art and those of nature contended for the prize of admiration, has been the object of philosophic excursion in ancient as in modern times. From Herodotus\* down to Volney, writers of equal celebrity, the multiplied details respecting a country, of which the surface of the whole globe presents no parallel, demonstrate the curiosity which it generally excited. But this frequency of travellers cannot exclude my pretension to a place among the rest, and I am not to be deterred from speaking of Egypt by the number or renown of those who have trodden the ground before me. Barbarism and ruins have succeeded to the institutions and the monuments of antiquity; and the difficulty attending the prosecution of research, and of making observations, has not permitted modern travellers to examine every thing. There remained after them, as there will still remain after me, many objects, if not to be seen, at least to be seen well. Besides, objects do not present themselves to all observers under the same point of view.

\* M. Sonnini might have produced an authority at least as respectable as that of Herodotus, and of still higher antiquity. To Moses, the lawgiver of the Hebrews, mankind is indebted for the earliest, most authentic and most interesting memoirs of ancient Egypt, and he knew the country much better than any traveller who has written since his time. But a reference to Scripture would have degraded and sullied the pure and philosophic page of a French republican.—H. H.

And

And just as every painter has his particular touch and mode of colouring, which animate subjects, already treated, with the graces of novelty, the traveller who carries with him his own manner of observing, has likewise in his narratives his peculiar mode of expression; and it is from this combination of paintings that we are to expect the perfect knowledge of a country so interesting, and the more so that, it being impossible to know every thing, each particular traveller applies himself in preference to the particular object of his research. Directed by his taste, and sometimes by an enthusiastic impulse, he relates every minute particular connected with his darling pursuit, and overlooks what is foreign to it. The botanist, accordingly, in many cases, sees plants only; the zoologist, nothing but animals; the antiquarian, nothing but ruins; the naturalist, only the phenomena of nature; the merchant, only the means of extending commerce and increasing his fortune; while the politician confines his attention to the relative situation of country to country. One scorns to descend into detail, and presents the results of his observation in a mass; whereas another dwells with minute exactness on particulars: one sometimes sacrifices accuracy to elegance of description, or to copiousness of expression; and another, a scrupulous observer, but dull and destitute of genius, communicates



communicates the dryness of his subject to his manner of treating it.

A striking example, among thousands that might be produced, of this predilection, against which a man cannot be too much on his guard, is to be found in the travels of Frederic Hasselquitz. This pupil of Linnæus, a most zealous inquirer, but exclusively attached to the study of natural history, being at Grand Cairo, wished to visit the pyramids of Memphis; but being arrived at the foot of those monuments, equally renowned for their enormous size and their antiquity, he soon withdrew his attention from them, and fixed it entirely on the *formicæ-leones* which swarm in the sands of that district. Insects engrossed all his powers of thought, and one of the most astonishing works of all antiquity excited no emotion in his breast. “The pyramids,” says he, “magnificent as they are, make a slighter impression on the mind of a connoisseur in natural history than the industry of those pany animals\*.”

The generality of mankind will not give into the opinion of the Swedish naturalist, of whom, to

\* Travels in the Levant, by Fred. Hasselquitz, published by Linnæus, and translated from the German at Paris, 1769, part I. p. 107.



say nothing of the extravagance of the comparison, it may be observed, that it was hardly worth the while to march so far as to the plains of Memphis to hang with rapture over a nest of ants, so common in other countries, Europe not excepted; and that a traveller exposes himself to ridicule, when, attached solely to a favourite object, he follows too closely the letter of the proverb, *ne sutor ultra crepidam*.

It is farther to be remarked, that few French travellers have penetrated into Upper Egypt. No one of them who in modern times have acquired celebrity, prosecuted his researches beyond the plain of Saccara, that is, beyond the vicinity of Cairo. Savary himself, who has published two volumes on the subject of Upper Egypt, never travelled a single foot in it; and the tone of assurance with which he speaks of the country, and the detail of his journey through it, as if he had really performed it, are a stain on the reputation of that elegant writer. I knew Savary well. I have seen him at Alexandria, in the island of Candia, and afterwards in France. The merited success of the first volume of his Letters on Egypt, and he intended to go no farther, as it contained the only parts of that country which he had visited, actually intoxicated him. He took it into his head to add to it the history of a journey never undertaken, and found himself reduced to the necessity of extracting

tracting from, and copying Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and others. More fortunate than Savary and many others, I had it in my power to traverse the *Saïd*, for this is the name given by the Arabs to Upper Egypt, from ancient Cairo up to Assouan; and this consideration will perhaps render my work somewhat interesting.

But what interest more powerful in favour of travels through Egypt can be imagined, than to reflect that it is no longer in the hands of the Mamelucs who oppressed it; that the French, in breaking asunder the brazen yoke under which lived in a state of brutal subjection the descendants of the most illustrious nation of antiquity, present to them, together with the gift of liberty, the means of recovering illumination and the sciences, the first domain of their ancestors! Egypt such as I paint it, will soon cease to be what I saw it. An immense space of time is going to elapse in a few days, and not long hence, nay during my own lifetime, I shall be only an ancient traveller, as those of antiquity at present are with respect to us. So many prodigies were reserved for the greatest nation in the universe. Cities shall rise again out of their rubbish; the monuments, to which all approach was interdicted by ferocious usurpers, are going at length to become objects of inspection; those which ignorance and barbarism took pains to an-

nihilate shall be restored to their ancient lustre, while others shall re-appear which now lie buried in the sand. The image of splendour shall every where resume the place of the hideous picture of destruction. Science is about to advance with the pace of a giant. Canals, that copious source of prosperity, are going to be cut or repaired. The commerce of the world will naturally fall back into its ancient channel; and what the Pharaohs, in the plenitude of their power, were afraid to undertake, the junction of the two seas, Frenchmen, conducted by a new Alexander, whom victory and the sciences are emulous to crown, shall present to the astonishment and admiration of future ages. The mind is lost and confounded in contemplating that immensity of glory with which the French nation is encircling itself. Proud of belonging to it, I feel an additional satisfaction in being able to consecrate to my country the fruit of my labours\*.

\* As our Author had suppressed the history of his travels for twice nine years, he would perhaps have acted prudently in suppressing his prediction concerning the approaching state of Egypt, till events had given him a firmer foundation whereon to rest them. The Gallic expedition to that country is assuredly of very uncertain issue. The vain-glory of a Frenchman is truly ridiculous, and the idea of the French nation giving liberty, happiness and the means of illumination to the countries which they overrun as a pestilence, is an insult to the common sense of mankind. It merits the silent smile of indignation and contempt.—H. H.

## CHAP. II.

*Buffon—Departure from Montbard—Coral—Troglodyte—Languedoc—Phalangiste—Preservation of fishes—Pleasant anecdote—Gulf of Lions.*

ON returning from my second voyage to America, I repaired to Montbard, where Buffon had expressed a wish to see me. In this retreat I passed the greatest part of six months; and that period, which fled away with too much rapidity, is assuredly the portion of my life which has furnished memory with the most precious recollections. To my abode at that temple of taste and the sciences I am indebted for the little I am worth. They were the winter months, and the severity of the weather secured us from intruders. My days flowed there in a delicious succession, in the service and society of the great man; charming society, which no inequality of temper ever ruffled, and which I have no where since found! Buffon was not of the number of those men of letters whom Erasmus humorously compares to the huge figures in Flemish tapestry, which, to produce their effect, must be viewed at a distance. His conversation was as agreeable as interesting, and he blended in it an easy gaiety, a tone of good nature which put all around him

him

him at their ease. To these social qualities he united all the graces of a fine person ; he was, like Plato, of the most commanding and robust stature : broad shoulders announced his strength ; his forehead was elevated and majestic, and he commanded observation by the elegance of his deportment, and the dignity of his movements\*. But he had besides, what most of the ancients wanted, that attention to his person, and that elegant neatness of dress, which indicate attention and deference to others.

Government had appointed M. Tott inspector of the sea-ports of the Levant and of the Barbary coast, and had issued orders to equip a frigate in the harbour of Toulon, to carry him to the place of his destination. I was commanded to embark on board the same ship, and to keep by her through the expedition. But my orders were afterwards countermanded ; I left the ship at Alexandria, to pursue my travels through Egypt. I parted with

\* *Erat et speciosissimo & robustissimo corporis habitu. Unde et a latis humeris, amplâ fronte & egregio totius corporis habitu, orationis vi & ubertate, Plato nuncupatus est.* He possessed the most elegant and robust figure. Hence, with the advantage of broad shoulders, a large forehead and complete symmetry of person, accompanied by an uncommon force and copiousness of speech, he obtained the name of Plato. (*Life of Plato by Marsilius Ficinus.*)



Buffon at Montbard, after receiving from him kind wishes and embraces, which I valued as the benediction of genius. The post conveyed me with its usual rapidity to Marseilles, where I stopped only a few moments.

A certain person had formed the project of digging through a hill in the neighbourhood of Ciotat, down to the sea, the waters of which, in various places of the coast, force themselves through immense cavities a considerable way up the land. He pretended that these subterranean cavities contained an immense quantity of coral, the easy attainment of which would considerably increase that branch of commerce, and enrich the projector. Memorials on the subject had been addressed to Versailles, in the view of obtaining permission and assistance. The minister consulted Buffon, who transmitted the memorials to me, that I might make the necessary inquiries on the spot. On my arrival at Ciotat I found the enterprise already relinquished; the work had been given up almost as soon as it began, and it was thought of no more.

I was informed at Ciotat of a singular ceremony practised there every year, the first days of *Nivôse*. A numerous assemblage of men, armed with sabres and pistols, sally forth in pursuit of a very small  
bird



bird called by the ancients troglodyte, a name which Guenau de Montbeillard continues to give it in the natural history of birds\*. When they have found it, which is no difficult matter, for care is taken to have one always ready, they suspend it on the middle of a long pole which two men carry on their shoulders, as if it were a heavy load. This whimsical procession parades thus through the streets of the city; they weigh the bird on a strong balance, and afterwards sit down at table to divert themselves. The name given there to the troglodyte is not less whimsical than the species of festival which it occasions. They call it *pulois* (pole-cat) or *woodcock's father*, on account of the resemblance of its plumage to that of the woodcock, which they there allege to be generated by the pole-cat, a great destroyer of the feathered race, but not the producer of any one.

On returning to Marseilles, I stopped at Cassis, where there are two manufactures in which coral is polished and worked up; the greatest part of this commodity is exported to the coast of Africa, and exchanged for human beings. The vineyards which surround this little city produce a white-wine, which is held in considerable estimation.

\* *Motacilla troglodytes*. Lin. Syst. Nat.

It was known at Marseilles, that it would require some time to complete the armament of the frigate fitting out at Toulon. I proposed to make an excursion into Languedoc, and, accompanied by M. Tott's secretary, travelled by land to Cette, of which Vernet has painted a superb view. In the course of my walks round the city I picked up some volcanic substances, and along the shore a variety of shells and other marine productions. I was astonished to find on the very brink of the sea, and in the humid sea-weed, a singular species of scarab, very rare in the north of France, and which has been decorated with the name of *phalangiste*\*, because it is pretended that the long points of his corslet have some resemblance to the pikes with which the soldiers of the Macedonian phalanx were armed. This is what the partisans of method in natural history call vulgar names. And what a strange vulgar name is that which, in order to be understood, requires the most exact knowledge of antiquity! Linnæus has denominated the same insect the giant *Typhæus*†, which assuredly has nothing vulgar in it, and which seems but indifferently descriptive of a scarab a few lines in length, and

\* Geoffroi, Hist. abrégée des Insectes des Environs de Paris, tom. I. p. 72, plate V. fig. 3.

† *Scarabæus Typhæus*, Lin. Syst. Nat.—Fabricius, Spec. Insect. p. 10.

whose

whose nature it is to nestle under the excrement of animals.

Those whose taste leads them to make collections of natural history, well know how difficult it is to preserve the colours of fishes. Drawn out of the fluid in which they live, deprived of the moisture without which they cannot exist, they soon lose, together with life, the lustre and reflexes of their scales; their discoloured skin assumes a livid and tawny hue, and, in our cabinets, they no longer preserve that appearance of life, which seems still to animate other classes of animals. Every thing that appeared to me of possible attainment in this way, I found in the possession of M. Boriés, doctor of medicine at Cette. He had devoted his attention to natural history, and particularly to the preparation of fishes, and the specimens which he had collected still retained, if not the brilliancy, at least a part of the colours of animated nature. This naturalist made a secret to me of his method of preservation; promising at the same time to communicate it to Buffon, on condition of certain arrangements. I know not what has resulted from the correspondence which I was at pains to establish between them.

We visited, on one side, the baths of Balaruc, and, on the other, the vineyards of Frontignan,

which produce that spirituous and high-flavoured liquor, excess in which has, oftener than once, conducted the drinker to the hot bath.

We wished likewise to look at Montpellier, and made that excursion along the finest road I ever saw in France.

At last time pressed our return to the coast of Provence, and we resolved to go by sea. We agreed for our passage with the master of one of the tartans then in the port of Cette. As we waited, at our inn, for the hour fixed for sailing, the master arrived, out of breath, to inform us, that M. the commandant of the city desired our attendance at his house, where several other persons, who were to embark on board the same tartan, had already assembled. He signified to me that M. the commandant was highly displeased with me in particular, because that being an officer, I was leaving Cette without his permission.

Though it was in my power to have refused submission to a pretension so singular, we went to the commandant's. He was an officer of invalids, his name *Quérelle* (Quarrel). Immediately addressing himself to me, he said: "I am astonished, Sir, that you have not paid me a visit; I would have invited you to eat soup with me."—"Sir," replied I, "you

I, "you will readily forgive a stranger, a traveller, "an officer who has no connexion with the military land-service, for being ignorant of your existence, however important it may be; and "soups are not among the objects of my pursuit." "That is enough, Sir," resumed M. Quérelle, somewhat disconcerted; "you may go whenever you please: as to all these people," added he with a tone of dignity, turning round to my fellow-passengers, "let them go, I don't concern myself with them." We took our leave, laughing heartily at this little adventure, the analogy of which with the name of the commandant was so striking.

The wind had sprung up, the sea was in a state of agitation, the sky overclouded; every thing announced the approach of foul weather. Our master discovered little inclination to leave the harbour; he yielded nevertheless to my importunity, and we set sail, while the other tartans kept snug in port, though it had been agreed that we should sail in company. The night was tempestuous, and a very heavy sea made our little bark to labour exceedingly. It is well known how dangerous navigation is in that part of the Mediterranean into which the Rhone precipitates itself. Hence it has obtained the appellation of *Golfe de Lion* (*mare Leonis*, Lion's gulf), being, thus to express myself, terrible and cruel from the miseries which

the mariner has there to encounter, and the frequent shipwrecks suffered, and not, as is commonly imagined, from the name of the city Lyons, which is at a considerable distance from those seas. We suffered nothing, however, except some moments of anxiety, and reached the harbour of Marseilles without meeting any accident. I set out immediately for Toulon.



## CHAP. III.

*Departure from Toulon—Come to an anchor—Coast of Corsica—Genoa—The Opera—Elba and the adjacent islands—Gale of wind—Arrival at Palermo.*

AT ten o'clock of the evening of April 26th, 1777, the frigate *Atalanta*, one of the finest in the French navy, set sail from the road of Toulon. She was under the command of M. Durfort; her crew consisted of near three hundred seamen, and she mounted thirty-two cannon. Some persons from Versailles, Monsieur and Madame Tessé, M. d'Ayen, M. Meung, had obtained permission to embark with us, and were to be carried to Palermo, to Malta and Syracuse. These persons were formerly denominated the *Great*; but they had divested themselves of the pride of courts, and were become very agreeable people. Madame Tessé, one of the wittiest women of her day, gave the tone to this little colony of courtiers; and the politeness, the frank and graceful probity of the commander, the select character of the other officers, rendered the company on board the *Atalanta*, the most amiable society that can be imagined, and such as could hardly be expected at sea. M. Tott, for his part,

had with him an officer of cavalry, and a counsellor of the Chatelet, a whimsical association, and worthy of its author. Citizen Venture, the learned interpreter of the oriental languages, and who is now with the army of Egypt, was likewise embarked on this expedition. It was no easy matter to find accommodation for so much company; it was found necessary to dismount the four sternmost guns, to make cabins on deck, and the powder-room was so encumbered with temporary beds, that it was impossible to turn about in it.

We sailed with a fair wind, but this was of no long continuance. It presently became contrary, and blew furiously from the east. The heavens, covered with thick clouds, poured down an incessant torrent of rain. On the morning of next day, several kinds of birds were seen flying round the vessel. I distinguished among them turtle doves, small ring-collared plovers, and one blongios. Some of those birds perched on the rigging, and were so fatigued and stunned with the tempest, that several plovers\* were caught by the hand, and the species of crab-eater † known by the name of blongios.

\* *Pluvier à collier*, Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & *petit pluvier à collier* des plan. enlum. No. 921. *Charadrius hiaticula*, Lin.

† *Blongios*, Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & *blongios de Suisse*, pl. enlum. No. 328. *Ardea minuta*, Lin.

After

After having to no purpose endeavoured to ply to windward by tacking, we were under the necessity of looking out for shelter, and came to an anchor, at two o'clock in the afternoon of the very next day after our departure, in the road of Vignettes, in the bay of Toulon. The coast near which the frigate was moored is bold; its cultivation extremely varied, the bastides \* meeting the eye from distance to distance, the smiling aspect which it presents, form an agreeable contrast with the arid and greyish mountains which rise behind, and form the back ground of the picture. On the declivity of some of those mountains, nevertheless, feed the excellent sheep of the vicinity of Toulon, on nutrimental and odoriferous plants. The strawberries which we found there, in great abundance, were the finest flavoured I ever tasted.

The chase, which we could not pursue too far from the vessel, procured us only a few quails already on their return from emigration. We likewise saw the lapwing there, and I shot a yellow wagtail † and a small bird of a species never described before Buffon, and which he calls *garvoüé*

\* This is the name given, in the southern departments, to the small country-seats built by wealthy individuals, in the neighbourhood of cities. f

† Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 28, fig. 1. *Motacilla baarula*. Lin.

from

from the name *chic-gavotte*, which it bears in the part of the country formerly denominated Provence, where it is likewise known by the name of *chic-moustache*, from the black fillets which surround the bill \*. These last birds fly about in pairs amidst the shrubbery, in the cultivated fields which surround the bastides; they are far from being wild, and their flight is short, not very lofty, and a good deal resembling that of the sparrow.

The impetuosity of the east wind continued to increase till it blew quite a storm, and we dropped a second anchor. We remained in this state till the 2d of May, when the wind coming round to the north-west permitted us to weigh.

At day-break, the 3d of May, we perceived the island of Corsica at the distance of six or seven leagues, and as we approached, had an opportunity of examining the coasts of it. Those which lie between cape Calvi and cape Corse, the northernmost of the island, are lofty mountains, of a barren and rocky appearance, with deep incisions. The mountains of cape Calvi, under the shelter of which is a large and safe harbour, are the highest on this part of the coast; their summits

\* Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. art. *Gavoüé*, & pl. enlum. No. 626, fig. 1. *Gavoüé de Provence*.—*Mustacoe Bunting*, Latham, Syn. ii. p. 175.—*Emberisa provincialis*. Lin.

were still covered with snow. We likewise descried, in the gulf formed between the capes Corse and Calvi, Red-island, *isola Rossa*, a small low-lying island which guards a deep and important haven against westerly winds.

We saw a great many porpoises \* or blowers, playing on the surface of the sea, an almost certain presage of foul weather. In fact, it was now impossible for us to make Corsica, or to continue our course, the wind having again become contrary, and blowing a tempest ; we came to the resolution of stopping at Genoa, where we arrived May 4th at ten o'clock in the morning.

It will not be expected, surely, that I should give a description of the city of Genoa : it is sufficiently known, especially of late years, to dispense with my speaking on the subject. I shall only relate a trifling incident, in which we were the principal performers. Though apparently of no importance, it furnishes a trait of national characters, and for that very reason merits a place in the narration of a traveller.

Two female dancers held the first rank in the ballets of the opera at Genoa ; both had the advantages of youth and beauty ; both were possessed of

\* *Delphinus phocæna*. Lin.



equal agility. But the Graces directed the movements and the attitudes of the one, whereas the steps and skips of the other, more surprising from their nimbleness, were, after all, mere exertions of bodily strength. The public applause was, however, exclusively reserved for this last, while the former was received with indifference. It belonged to Frenchmen to give lessons of taste, it belonged to them to avenge the insulted Graces. We concerted measures together, and the officers and passengers divided themselves into several parties on the next representation. As soon as the actress whom we had determined to patronize appeared on the stage, we received her with a burst of applause decidedly expressed. Some Genoese joined in it; but the clamour, the clapping of hands, the striking of canes of by far the great majority of the spectators ensured victory to the other performer, in spite of all our murmuring. We were not however disconcerted. Next day we called in more auxiliaries, and exerted ourselves to make as much noise as possible. Our opponents were not a whit behind us; but as we were dispersed over every part of the house, we daily brought over fresh proselytes. This struggle excited some apprehension in the senate, and an order was issued prohibiting all disturbance at the opera. We raised none; but at the opening of the ballet, an uproar arose which stunned the ear. Guards were stationed up and



down the theatre: we were not greatly disquieted at this. At length, after five or six representations, during which the opposition gradually diminished, we had the satisfaction to see our principles generally adopted. The actress who, before our arrival, had constantly been received with unbounded applause, ceased to enjoy the public approbation, which was all transferred to her whom we protected. Satisfied with this triumph, which was that of good taste, we gave an entertainment on board the frigate to both the ladies. She whose success we had interrupted accepted with a very good grace, and we did every thing in our power to compensate the slight reverse of reputation which we procured her.

At this same spectacle it was that I saw, for the first time, those degraded beings who have nothing of man but the exterior. Sacrificed to the improvement of the loveliest of arts, they acquire, at the expense of their very existence, a voice sonorous, melodious, but which is totally out of nature, as it is neither the voice of a man nor of a woman. France has not sullied itself with such a crime. Unknown likewise to most of the nations of Europe, it was reserved for priests beyond the Alps, the men, in whose hands excommunication was a piece of armour so harmless, that they discharged it in season, out of season; these men shuddered not at the thought of composing choirs destined to sing  
the

the praises of Deity, and to make the arches of his temple resound with the harmonious accents of wretched victims whom, by a refinement in barbarism, they had expunged from the list of men. But, what is hardly credible, this idea of mutilation originated in the head of a woman. A celebrated queen of antiquity, Semiramis, who by her riches, her power, her victories, and the lustre of her reign, was exalted to the highest rank of human beings, Semiramis is the first who set the example of a cruelty which is a blot on the page of history.

Pacherotti, whom Brydone had seen not long before on the stage of Palermo, and whose talents he celebrates \*, was then at Genoa. Notwithstanding the vehement elogium pronounced on that songster by the English traveller, I thought him far beneath the high reputation he had gained. His voice was indeed full of sweetness, but his mode of playing was spiritless, and his delivery totally destitute of warmth: he was a thing to be heard and not seen. His countenance, his gestures, though he was young and handsome, wore the appearance of constraint, of imbecility, which disgraced his singing. He otherwise fulfilled all that was to be expected of him. In truth, the energy of action, the fire of expression, which can flow

[ \* Travels in Sicily and Malta, Demeunier's translation, tom. ii. p. 146, 147, and 200.

only from that of feeling, were incompatible with his state of degradation.

After having been detained, by contrary winds, ten whole days in the port of Genoa, we took our departure from it May 13th at six in the morning, with a good breeze of wind from the north-east, and rapidly increased our distance from the elevated and smiling shores of this part of Italy. Behind us, the maritime Alps presented a vast amphitheatre whitened with eternal snows. The lofty mountains which skirt the gulf of *la Spezia*, and which the French seamen pronounce *l'Espezie*, appeared in view; their summit was covered with snow, and they appeared to me arid, and formed of rocks cut perpendicularly. They are the quarries that principally furnish the fine marbles of every species which we import from Italy. We passed, on our left, the island of *Gorgona*, which is subject to the Duke of Tuscany. It is of small extent; its form is rounded, and its mountains, which render it visible a great way off, seem to be of the same nature with the adjacent coast. We afterwards steered between cape Corse and *Capraria*, a small island vulgarly called *Cabraire*, belonging to the republic of Genoa. It is nothing but a rock almost entirely barren, but containing, nevertheless, habitations which furnish very excellent sailors.

On

On the 14th the wind having become unfavourable, we plied to windward between Corsica and the isle of Elba, one of the possessions of the king of Naples. It contains two good harbours and quarries of marble; but it is particularly famous for its iron mines, and its forges, in which the manufacture of that mineral is conducted through a process which has been described by Tronçon-du-Coudrai, a captain of artillery. This process is more economical, more expeditious, and at the same time more beneficial than that of the furnaces generally employed for smelting in the rest of Europe; and it produces iron equivalent to the best Swedish, as to toughness and ductility; and more in quantity than from the ordinary forges, without any increase of expense. The mines of iron, and those of loadstone, with which the isle of Elba is impregnated, render the approach to it perceptible by navigators, from the variation the compass there undergoes.

That part of the coast of Corsica comprehended between cape Corse and Bastia, is of a similar nature with that which is opposite to it, and of which I have made mention: in other words, it is formed of steep mountains, some of which, those of greatest elevation, were still covered with snow. The city of Bastia presented to us an agreeable appearance; it is situated on the declivity of a hill: its port  
cannot

cannot admit ships of war, but is very commodious for vessels of small draught of water.

Towards noon, having got a fair wind, we passed close by *Monte-Christo*, a barren and desert rock, situated to the south, at no great distance from the isle of Elba, from which it appears to have been detached by some one of the mighty convulsions that have not been unfrequent in those seas. The line which united these two islands may still be traced by the *Planosa* (*Planouse*, or *île Plate*, Flat Island), a ridge of rock scarcely appearing above the water's edge, and reaching from the one to the other. I was informed that this last-mentioned ridge is the resort of a great quantity of sea-calves and seals.

We saw astern of the ship a flock of *petrels*, known to navigators by the name of birds of storm\*. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when they first came near us; the weather was fine, the wind at south-east, and almost calm. But about seven o'clock the wind came round to the south-west, and blew furiously. The sky was overclouded and lowering, the night set in extremely dark, and repeated flashes of lightning increased the horror of it; there was a dreadful swell in the sea, and

\* Oiseau de tempête. Buffon, *Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum.* No. 993.—*Procellaria pelagica*. Lin.



we were at last obliged to lie to all night under our courses \*. This gale lasted till noon of the 15th. We were then off the mouths of Boniface, that is, the strait which separates the islands of Corsica and Sardinia, and along a coast of from twelve to fifteen leagues. It is hardly possible to navigate in those seas, without encountering stormy weather. The sea, repelled in contrary directions by a vast extent of coast, and by numerous ridges of rocks and quicksands, agitated by the winds, the direction of which is liable to frequent change from a multitude of straits, is there usually swelling and tumultuous. During the foul weather of the morning, the turtle-doves and quails, in expectation of finding an asylum from the tempest on board the vessel, ventured to alight on her. But this inhospitable retreat saved not these unfortunate travellers from death; they all suffered themselves to be caught by the hand, so fatigued were they, or confounded by the tremendous uproar of the elements in which they were involved. I observed that the turtle-doves arrived in pairs. Shoals innumerable of porpoises furrowed the waters at a little distance from the ship, while, on another side, the tortoise pressed heavily on the surface.

\* What precedes, from the beginning of the last paragraph, is related, in the *History of the Bird of Storms*, by Buffon (*Hist. Nat. des Ois.*) as an extract from the *Journal of a Navigator*. It was from my Journal that note was extracted.



We had another brisk gale from the west-south-west on the 16th, but not so violent as the first; and on the 17th we descried *Ustica*, one of the little islands dependant on Sicily. It is only four leagues round, and has the appearance of cultivation. It was the place of resort for the pirates and corsairs who infested those seas; about four years ago, however, the king of Naples determined to build a fort to keep them off. We had likewise before us the lofty shore of Cape Saint-Vitto, in Sicily, and, at ten o'clock in the evening, came to an anchor off the mouth of the harbour of Palermo.

## CHAP. IV.

*Maritime honours—English travellers—Palermo and its environs.*

IT was an affair of no slight importance to settle the manner in which ships of war were to give and receive salutes in the ports of foreign nations. Every commander had particular instructions on the subject; and if it was recommended to them to support the glory of their flag in battle, it was no less expressly prescribed not to let it down in the form of the honours which they paid, or had a right to demand. This idle ceremonial frequently became the source of serious disputes, and disturbed the tranquillity of nations. Punctilious officers gravely employed themselves in a minute detail of this weighty business. Some of this description have been known at Smyrna, the most frequented port of the Levant for European vessels, to claim and appropriate to themselves, exclusively, the discharge of cannon, by which merchant-ships are accustomed to express their respect for men of war, of whatever kind, on entering a harbour, and to hasten the return of the salute, even before it was finished, for fear that the ships of other powers should anticipate it as their due. As if the glory of arms could consist in such frivolous emulation,

the furniture only of narrow minds, but totally unworthy of the military character, to whose talents and intrepidity were confided the floating batteries destined to waft along the ocean terror to the enemies of the state, and protection to commerce ; as if a simple omission in a point of civility, which ought to be carefully distinguished from an insult, did not rather degrade the person guilty of it, than him who had a right to expect it. Many will recollect the phlegm of a Dutch officer's reply, in the East Indies, to Bougainville, who put the question to him, What form of salute he was to receive, in case his ship should render the proper honours to the Dutch fort ? " When I pull off  
" my hat to any one," answered the Dutchman, " it is on my part a mark of politeness which I  
" think due to him ; but I do not wait to inform  
" myself beforehand whether he is, in return, to  
" uncover his head."

Be this as it may, we were obliged to comply with the custom ; and as soon as the *Atalanta* had cast anchor in the port of Palermo, an officer was dispatched with compliments to the Sicilian viceroy, and to settle with him the grand question of *salutes*. It was agreed that the frigate should salute by firing fifteen guns, and that the citadel should return it by the like number. This arrangement being made, we fired our salute ; but two hours

elapsed before they were in a condition to repay it. We could, however, take no offence at this extraordinary delay, for we saw distinctly the cannoneers labouring, without intermission, to raise from the earth some pieces of ordnance half-buried in it, to lift them up on blocks of wood to serve as carriages, and at length put them in a condition to be fired off. Such was then the state of the Sicilian artillery. The corsairs of the Barbary coast were well acquainted with this, and knew how to avail themselves of it, by coming to cut ships out of the very harbour.

The viceroy sent an officer on board to congratulate us on our arrival, and to invite us to the *conversazione*: this is the name given to the assemblies or domestic parties held in the opulent houses of Italy.

We stopped only three days at Palermo. These I employed in taking a rapid view of what appeared curious in the city and its environs, already known from different relations, and from the beautiful drawings which have been taken of it. I shall describe with similar rapidity what a stay so short permitted me to remark.

The harbour, one of the safest in the Mediterranean, defended by a fortress whose artillery, as  
I have

I have just now said, had nothing formidable, is semicircular. The city, the suburbs, and the walks which surround them, present an amphitheatre equally agreeable and variegated. A chain of lofty mountains, bare and uncultivated, rise behind the city, and render its position more picturesque. It is shut in by four beautiful gates; two streets, which terminate in them, form, crossing each other nearly at the centre, an open place, of no great extent, which they call the *Ottangolo*, and from which you can see the four gates. These streets run in a straight line; they are broad, well built, and paved with great stones. In the evening, a multitude of shops and coffeehouses lighted up, the great number of carriages rolling along, illuminated by flambeaux, the crowds of people on foot pressing by each other, through the longest and the most respectable of these streets, resemble the splendour and the hurlyburly of that of Saint-Honoré, at Paris. The Sicilians, who are not of the laborious class of mankind, never go abroad but in a coach: it would be deemed indecent for a man in affluent circumstances to make use of his legs. The number of carriages is accordingly very great; a stranger may hire a very decent one at the rate of six or seven shillings a day. Every body there wears a sword: the cobbler, with his leathern apron and greasy jacket; the hair-dresser, in his jerkin and his powder-bag on his arm; in a word, the artisan of every



description, going from his habitation in the appropriate garb of his profession, has his side armed with a long sword de Crispin, his head buried in a large old perruque, and generally his nose loaded with a pair of spectacles.

Those who have read Brydone's Tour through Sicily and Malta, know that he has diverted himself at the expense of a Frenchwoman who keeps the only inn for the accommodation of strangers at Palermo. He employs half a chapter of his book in painting, or rather caricaturing, the prattle and vanity of that woman, and takes occasion from it to extend his satire to French women in general, which assuredly is neither just nor consistent with gallantry. But their graces and amability, to which a well-merited homage is generally paid, can suffer no imputation from the sarcastic humour of an Englishman. Brydone is not the only traveller of his nation who has indulged himself in speaking slightly of ours; and, in the eyes of every impartial person, that spirit of jealousy and pride must appear not a whit less ridiculous than the little traits of presumption of Madame Montagne, that is the landlady's name. I ordered a dinner at her house, in order to have an opportunity of talking with her about Brydone, who had visited Palermo a few years before. My hostess knew that he had published many pleasantries of which she was the butt, and



and that both she and her husband were treated unhandsomely in his book ; but she was ignorant of the particulars. I read the offensive passages. On this she proved to me that Brydone had not deviated far from the truth, in representing her as a great talker : she was not soon exhausted in detailing to me a number of little anecdotes which had determined her to desire the Englishman to look out for another lodging, and on this subject pronounced a chapter at least as long as that of the traveller.

The churches of Palermo, like almost all those of Italy, are decorated most magnificently. Some of them, that of the Jesuits, for instance, are so overloaded with ornaments and riches as to offend against good taste. But, besides the beautiful pictures which adorn the inside of most of those edifices, the superb altar of the church of Sainte-Catharine is particularly admired ; the church is constructed of the most beautiful marble, and which, by a singular accident, forms, round the altar, a broad border in festoons. In the cathedral, the attention is arrested on the twenty-four columns of oriental granite which support it, the tombs of porphyry, and an immense tabernacle of lapis-lazuli. A priest, after having drawn aside, and with an air of great mystery, four or five curtains one after another, shewed me a great wooden crucifix, which  
he

he seriously assured me had been begun by S. Nicodemus, who, having fallen asleep in the midst of his labour, was very much surprised, on awaking, to find the work finished. It was hardly worth while, after all, to call in the assistance of a miracle to complete such a miserable production.

If the churches at Palermo are exquisitely beautiful, the temple there reared to nature and the sciences, is in a woful state of decay: a proof that there is in that city more devotion than curiosity, more piety than taste for instruction. The museum is a confused assemblage of very uninteresting objects. The collection of animals is the most wretched that can be imagined, and consists only of some monsters preserved in spirit of wine, and of some skins eaten through by the mites, and falling into tatters. The abbé, who shewed this cabinet, told me, that the Jesuits had carried off or sold the most valuable articles which it contained, at the time of their expulsion from the dominions of the king of Naples. There still remain, however, some curious petrifications and beautiful morsels of antiquity, of which, as my guide informed me, the ingenious Hamilton, ambassador from England at the court of Naples, had given drawings and a description. They likewise shew there anatomical injections of a man and of a woman, perfectly well executed by a Sicilian physician,

cian, who was then alive. Fazello, who has written a history of Sicily\*, and other authors, have made mention of the giants who are supposed to have inhabited this island, and of their skeletons discovered in the trenches which they dig in certain places. There is nothing in the museum at Palermo which has any relation to men of extraordinary stature : I wished to enter into conversation with my conductor on this subject ; but it was impossible for us to understand each other, from the extreme difference of our manner of pronouncing the Latin language, which I was under the necessity of employing, not being sufficiently master of the Italian. Among the whole number of intelligent persons whom I have had an opportunity of consulting, I never found one who had the slightest idea of ever having seen the remains of a giant, or had heard it affirmed that such a thing existed in all Sicily.

The fields of the environs are very pleasant. The *Bagaria*, in particular, a canton three leagues from the city, is remarkable for the beauty of its plains, the variety of its culture, the fertility of its soil, and the numerous rural retreats with which it is decorated. The road which leads to it is bordered with alocs and the Indian fig. There it is we see a shameful monument raised by a prince Palagoni

\* Thomæ Fazelli Decades, de Rebus Siculis. Catania, 1749.

to bad taste, it is too shocking to pass under the simple denomination of *folly*. Let the reader imagine to himself the outside and the avenues of a nobleman's country residence loaded with a prodigious number of statues in stone, rudely hewn, huddled together without order, and representing monsters of a composition so disgusting that they cease to be ridiculous. The interior is in the same style: the walls of the apartments are plated with glass painted into the appearance of false marble; pieces of glass which reflect the images in a thousand different directions form the ceilings. There you find great crucifixes, pyramids composed of cups, of saucers, of coffee-pots, and of another species of vase which certainly ought not to have a place in architecture\*. All these pieces are arranged in such a manner, that they form an assemblage abominable in the extreme. In the chapel, for example, there is a group of beautiful angels, absolutely naked, and of the most lively carnation; in the midst of them is a great figure in wood, of a dead man half devoured by worms. It is, unfortunately, so well executed as to appear natural, on the first glance. I was told that several women, who had indulged their curiosity in viewing this repository of absurdity the most grotesque, fainted away some of them, and some with child sustained very serious injury, by fixing their eyes on that truly horrible

\* Chamber-pots.

figure, after having first contemplated with complacency the beautiful forms and vivid colouring of the angels. The proprietor of this mansion has been put under an interdict, because he ruined himself by the execution of these inconceivably wild ideas; for his city-palace is said to be fitted up in the same taste with his country residence.

The château of prince de *Valguarnera* is close by that of prince *Palagoni*, but has no resemblance to it. The fabric, as well as the furniture, is in a good taste; its situation and prospects are delightful; an elegant theatre, on which dramas are represented for the amusement of domestic circles, superb gardens, fine sheets of water, and, above all, the princely character of the master, concur in rendering this a most delicious retreat.

I likewise made a hasty trip to *Montreale*, a little city built on the summit of a very steep hill. A magnificent road, recently constructed, leads to it. On its softened declivity, from distance to distance, are beautiful fountains, whose living and limpid waters refresh the thirsty traveller, while walls, breast-high on both sides, the whole length of the way, secure him from all danger, and the air which he breathes is sweetly perfumed with the blossoms of a forest of orange and citron trees which grow in the valley. The view expands as you ascend on  
this



this charming road, and on reaching the summit it becomes unbounded. Numerous inscriptions catch the eye every step you take : they contain most of them only a play of words, what the Italians call *concettis*. This one meets you on entering the road ; *Ut faciliùs.—Et quò faciliùs, eò citiùs*. A vast church, reared by William the Good, constitutes the principal merit of *Montreale* ; it is completely incrusted with mosaic work, and the grand altar is of massy silver of exquisite workmanship.

Among the remarkable objects in the vicinity of Palermo pointed out to strangers, they fail not to singularize a convent of capuchins at a small distance from town, the beautiful gardens of which serve as a public walk. You are shewn, under the fabric, a vault divided into four great galleries, into which the light is admitted by windows cut out at the top of each extremity. In this vault are preserved, not in flesh, but in skin and bone, all the capuchins who have died in the convent since its foundation, as well as the bodies of several persons from the city. There are here private tombs belonging to opulent families, who, even after annihilation\*, disdain to be confounded with the vulgar part of mankind. It is said, that in order to secure the preservation of those bodies, they are prepared

\* Our author is a thorough convert to the modern French republican creed.—H. H.



by being gradually dried before a slow fire, so as to consume the flesh without greatly injuring the skin. When perfectly dry, they are invested with the capuchin habit, and placed upright on tablets disposed, step above step, along the sides of the vault; the head, the arms, and the feet are left naked. A preservation like this is horrid. The skin discoloured, dry, and as if it had been tanned, nay torn in some places, is glewed close to the bone. It is easy to imagine, from the different grimaces of this numerous assemblage of fleshless figures, rendered still more frightful by a long beard on the chin, what a hideous spectacle this must exhibit; and whoever has seen a capuchin alive, may form an idea of this singular repository of dead friars.

But let us quit this lugubrious mansion, in which man makes vain efforts to escape the destruction that awaits him, and direct our looks to the smiling and animated picture presented in the various productions of the highly privileged soil of Sicily. Warmed by the heat of a genial sky, and by subterranean fires, the earth yields to almost every species of culture \*. Whether she clothes herself in the most beautiful green, whether she teems with

\* In the garden of the Archbishop of Palermo there were in the open ground several banana plants (*Musa paradisiaca*, Lin.) which bare flowers and fruits.

the golden harvests, the plenteousness of which, in ancient times, procured for the island the name of the *Granary of Rome*; whether the trees of every sort load themselves with flowers and fruits of the sweetest perfume, she at all seasons displays the rich garb of fecundity. What would she be, were she better seconded by the men whom her fertility should render less negligent, were they more active and earnest to multiply the treasures which bountiful Nature lavishes on them with so much grace and munificence?

The women whom I have seen in that part of Sicily which I visited, are in general beautiful; they have the character of being very susceptible of tender impressions—happy disposition, for which they are indebted to the mild influence of the atmosphere. Severity of climate blunts sensibility, and but too often hardens the heart.

Rich pastures feed numerous herds of beautiful oxen, of the same species with those of France. “ They constantly differ, nevertheless, in the form  
“ of their horns, which are very remarkable for their  
“ length, and the regularity of their figure; these  
“ horns have only a gentle curve, and their usual  
“ length, measured in a straight line, is three feet,  
“ and sometimes three feet and a half: they are all  
“ very

“very regularly designed, and of a form absolutely “similar\*.” Game of every kind is there in abundance, and that bird whose flesh, of an excellent flavour, claims a preference even to the bird of Phasis, the francolin (heath-cock), is not scarce in this island †.

The sea appears to contend with the land in generosity, in order to multiply the resources already so abundant which the earth provides for the support and delight of human life. Fish is there found in great profusion: they fish for tunnies with that species of sweep-net which is likewise used along the coast of what was called Provence. They were caught in such quantities during my residence at Palermo, that the fishermen who hawked them through the streets, preceded by a drum, sold them at the rate of five farthings a pound; and some time before, while we anchored at the Vignettes, the same fish cost at Toulon three pence the pound.

\* I have distinguished this observation, respecting the Sicilian oxen, by marks of quotation, because Buffon, who had it from me, has introduced it into the supplement to his *History of Quadrupeds*, *second art. des Bœufs*.

† The francolin is not peculiar to Sicily, as has been asserted in an *abridged Description of Sicily*, printed as a sequel to Brydone's Tour: “There are various species of fowls which are “to be found no where but in Sicily, such as the framolin “(meaning francolin undoubtedly):” but it is well known that this bird likewise inhabits other warm countries.

Another treasure from the sea, near the coasts of Sicily, is the coral, which reddens the bottom of it, and the fishery of which furnishes employment for a great number of boats. Finally, that nothing may appear destitute of life and motion, the *gölands* cleave the air with a rapid flight in all directions, over the masts of the ships moored in the harbour, and oppose the beautiful white of their plumage to the brilliant azure of an atmosphere almost always perfectly pure.

## CHAP. V.

*Passage from Palermo to Malta—Soundings between Sicily and the island of Malta, and between this last and Africa—Coasts of Sicily—Pantalaria—Isle of Malta; its nature, its cities, its productions.*

WE sailed from the beautiful port of Palermo May the 22d, a little after midnight. The frigate had now all her guns mounted; those which had been sacrificed to the accommodation of the passengers, and the absence of which deranged the symmetry of the ship's appearance, were replaced. Our courtiers had taken leave of us. Terrified at the rough weather which we encountered at sea, and particularly at the storm which attacked us off the mouths of Bonifacio, they did not choose to expose themselves any more to the fury of an element so inconstant, and had formed the resolution, after traversing Sicily, to cross over to Naples, and return to France by land. They had been assured at Versailles, and I have heard the same opinion expressed at Paris, that a ship of war defied all concussion in the midst of the waves, and that they would be as tranquil at sea as in their own houses. What was their astonishment to perceive that a fabric so vast and so ponderous,



was merely a crazy plaything to the winds and the foaming billows! We lost an amiable society, and I felt a very sensible regret in reflecting that our separation made me lose the opportunity of landing at Syracuse, and of viewing Etna, which Nature seems to have placed in Sicily to exhibit there, at once, an example of her power in her beneficence as in her wrath.

At some distance from port we lay becalmed till next day at noon. We had around the vessel a multitude of small boats employed in the coral-fishery; we saw a great sea-tortoise, and several of the fishes which the Mediterranean seamen call *moines* \* (monks), and which are a species of *sea-dog*. Four soldiers of the garrison of Palermo made their escape on board, in a boat which they had carried off; we received them, and sent back the boat by a fisherman. Two of those soldiers were French deserters. About two o'clock in the afternoon, a Sicilian officer came off to reclaim them in the name of the viceroy. They were under the protection of the French flag; we refused to give them up, and the officer returned on shore very much out of humour at the bad success of his mission. We had, on our part, lost at Palermo

\* They are likewise denominated *angel fishes*, or simply *angel*. *Squalus squatina*. Lin. Syst. Nat. *Squalus pinna anicarens*, ore in apice capitis. Artedi, Gen. Pisc. p. 507.



two of our ship's company, who had deserted there, and whom it was impossible to recover.

Buffon had with learned sagacity demonstrated that the Mediterranean sea, originally a lake of no great extent, must have received, at distant times, a sudden and prodigious increase at the era when the Black Sea opened to itself a passage through the Bosphorus, and at that, when the sinking of the land which, at the site of the straits of Gibraltar, united Africa to Europe, had permitted the ocean to force its waters that way\*: his idea was, that most of the Mediterranean islands constituted part of the continents, prior to the grand convulsions which changed the face of one part of the globe. In order to ascertain with more precision his opinion respecting these epochas of nature, he had requested me to satisfy myself as to the depth of the sea between Sicily and Malta. It was impossible to have a more favourable opportunity to fulfil his purpose. We had on board a coasting pilot, an old man of great experience, and every way respectable, who, during his numerous voyages, had sounded that depth in many places. I availed myself of the calm, to converse with him at leisure on the subject; and the result of the interesting details with which he furnished me, was perfectly conformable to the ideas of Buf-

\* Theory of the Earth, and Epochas of Nature.

fon. In fact, between the island of Sicily and that of Malta, the depth of water is generally from twenty-five to thirty fathoms; and in the very middle of the channel, where the depth is greatest, we do not find it above a hundred. On the other hand, between the isle of Malta and cape Bon, in Africa, there is still less water, for the soundings do not give above twenty-five or thirty fathoms, through the whole breadth of the channel which separates land from land.

A breeze from the east wafted us upon Saint-Vitto, a lofty promontory cut perpendicularly. The coast all the way from Palermo to this cape, is steep and intersected by vallies, whose soil, loaded with all the richness of cultivation, forms an agreeable contrast with the aridity of the mountains which enclose them. There is a considerable depth of water along this shore, and vessels run no risk in coming very nigh the land. We soon passed between *Maritimo* and *Favoyanno*, two small islands belonging to the king of Naples, and used as a place of confinement for his state prisoners. In steering our course for Malta we could perceive a long extent of the low-lying coasts of Sicily, between cape *Marsalla* and cape *Passaro*, on the extremity of which a fort has been constructed. In the horizon we descried a chain of lofty mountains parallel to the coast. The weather was fine, the sky clear,  
the

the vessel was gliding gently along a surface which a light gale scarcely ruffled, and we could not tire of feasting our eyes with the view of vast plains embellished with all the charms of nature, and by the diversity of the labours of agriculture.

On the morning of the 25th we found ourselves close on *Pantalaria*, an island of much greater length than breadth, elevated in the middle, and terminating in a low point at each of its extremities. It is inhabited, and abundantly fertile. An officer of the ship who, on a former voyage, had been ashore there, informed me that there was but one single spring in the whole island, but that on the summit of the highest of its mountains, that is, nearly in the centre of the island, there was a lake of considerable extent. This lake is undoubtedly the crater of an extinguished volcano, for the same officer had found on the spot all the indications of it, such as the lavas, pumice-stones, &c. &c. The pass of *Pantalaria* is formidable to mariners, especially in winter, for experience has taught them that the seas which surround it are seldom navigated without meeting a violent gale of wind.

In the evening we saw some swallows : we were four leagues distant from *Pantalaria*, with the wind at east. On the 26th, at three o'clock afternoon, we entered the port of Malta, one of the largest

and most beautiful in the universe. The mouth of it is very narrow, and defended on each side by a formidable castle; vessels are obliged to carry beforehand all the sail they can possibly set, in order to acquire the impulse or the velocity requisite to carry them through this passage, in the midst of which they find themselves suddenly becalmed, from the height of the forts, which exceeds that of the mast-head. It was the custom of French men of war to salute the place with thirteen guns, which was returned by eleven; when the ships of the knighthood entered the ports of France, they observed the same etiquette. If the galley of the general of the order was in port, the ceremonial required a second salute of fifteen guns to her, and at the moment when the general came to return the visit which the French commander was expected to pay first, he was received with a discharge of thirteen guns. Every knight of the order, who thought proper to amuse himself by coming on board, was welcomed by the noise of five cannon; thus it frequently happened that a French ship of war, if she was detained any length of time in the harbour of Malta, was obliged to expend more gunpowder than during all the rest of her cruise.

The fortifications which defend the port and city are the best in the world; they are kept up  
with

with extreme attention. It is well known that the united forces of the Ottoman empire failed in their attack of this impregnable rampart. It was a conquest, or rather a new prodigy, reserved for French valour.

The ridge of the houses, as in Italy and all over the East, is a flat terrace. The city Valette; or New-town, is well built; the stones employed in the construction of their edifices, and in the pavement of the principal streets, are of a soft consistency when they come from the quarry: they harden by exposure to the air; but are, at the same time, so extremely white as to injure the eyes, especially when they reflect the rays of a burning sun. The palace of the grand-master was of vast magnitude, and of a beautiful simplicity both within and without.

The order of Malta had a public library, the augmentation of which was abundantly rapid; the private libraries of the commanders were there deposited after their death; the duplicate copies were sold, and the produce served to purchase the books which they had not. Several objects of natural history were exhibited in this library, among which was distinguished a petrified bone of great size; it passed, at Malta, for a piece of petrified wood, but the bony texture was easily discernible, and I con-  
vinced



vinced some well-informed persons of its real nature. It is part of the *femur* (thigh-bone) of a large quadruped; I sent a drawing of it to Buffon.

Another cabinet of curiosities, but much richer, was in the possession of M. Barbaroux. Without being of great compass, it contained some very valuable articles; and the proprietor, who united politeness to science, shewed it to strangers with a very amiable complaisance. This little museum contained several beautiful shells and curious petrifications; a great number of medals were arranged in a cabinet of a very ingenious form. Amidst the productions of art, you viewed there with pleasure, a very large figured pearl, a beautiful head painted in enamel in *clar-obscuro*, and a great medallion of crystal, engraved by Michael Angelo. I must not terminate this enumeration of rarities, without making mention of one of those phenomena, commonly denominated the sportings of Nature, as if Nature could blunder or condescend to trifle, and which are rather proofs of her power and of the prodigious variety of the means which she is pleased to employ. It was the portrait which I saw in the collection of the chevalier Despennes, chargé des affaires from France, of a little girl, on whose forehead was a third eye, much larger than the other two, and which was itself equivalent to two, as it had a double iris and central spot; the



the rest of the face was of the ordinary conformation. At the bottom of the drawing an inscription in Italian informs you that this child was born at the village of Monte Alegra, in Mercia, January 31, 1775; but the inscription did not bear, and no one could inform me, whether the being endowed with such an excess in the organ of vision, lived long.

We had just left a city rendered noisy by the multitude of carriages. Here it is no disgrace to walk, and horses and chariots do not rattle about through the streets, to the annoyance of citizens on foot. The grand-master alone used a carriage with six horses, and he scarcely ever employed it, except in riding to his country-seat. The officers of the order, and other inhabitants, had, for the same purpose, chaises drawn by a single mule, which a man led by a leathern thong; a sage precaution, and worthy of being imitated, wherever the safety of man is attended to in preference to the giddiness of luxury, the bustle of which, in populous cities, is a continual subject of apprehension, and sometimes an instrument of death to the modest and useful citizen. It were to be wished that an equal security were there provided against the dangers incurred in offering sacrifices to Venus, from the multitude of her priestesses who flock thither from all parts. They are the refuse of all nations; and their

their concourse, which formed an epigram with one of the vows of the knights, was singularly pernicious to the crews of vessels frequenting those seductive and perfidious resorts.

Brydone has amused himself with telling tales, respecting the knights of Malta, somewhat similar to those of which poor Madame Montagne, at Palermo, is the subject. On my arrival I found the public mind violently exasperated against him, and there was but too much ground for it. The truth is, he describes the manner of life of the chevaliers, without having been in intimacy with a single one, during the whole time of his residence in the island; his picture, and this is not the only occasion on which the same reproach may be addressed to him, is far from being a likeness; and when he speaks of the mode of duelling between the knights, of the crosses painted on the wall opposite to the spot where one of them has been killed, of the punishments incurred by such as refuse a challenge\*, they are so many errors escaped from his pen, deceived undoubtedly by lying reports, and too inconsiderately adopted. For my own part, I found the utmost politeness of behaviour, and the kindest attentions in the society of the members of the order with whom I had any connexion, and I recollect with gratitude the warm

\* Tour through Sicily and Malta, vol. i. p. 353, &c.

reception and the cordial civilities which I met with from several of them, and particularly from citizen Dolomieux, whom the sciences have ranked in the number of their most respected and most illustrious partisans.

At the distance of a league from the new city stands the old one, or *Citta Vecchia*; it was the residence of the bishop of the island. The cathedral is a very beautiful edifice. There are to be seen marbles the most invaluable, such as those known by the name of the *green and yellow antique*. Though of a vast size, it is lined internally, the whole length of the building, with crimson damask, bordered with a broad lace of fine gold. These religious monuments, more simple at Malta than at Genoa or Palermo, are there likewise, in my opinion, more beautiful, and in a better taste. In truth, the extraordinary quantity of ornaments with which the churches of Genoa are overloaded, presents to the dazzled eye tinsel merely, which, joined to their over-cramped and niggardly construction, if I may be allowed the expression, destroy that idea of magnificence and majesty which one expects to meet in the temples of the Deity. From the turrets of the cathedral, the eye easily discovers Mount Etna and its thick smoke, though at the distance of near sixty-seven leagues.

Near

Near this church is a grotto of no great extent, in the midst of which stands a very good statue of St. Paul. This apostle, every one knows, is held in high veneration among the Maltese, because, they pretend, he landed on their island, and delivered it for ever from the serpents, with which it was before infested. The grotto has been scooped out of a species of white earth, soft and calcareous, commonly denominated *bole of Malta* (*bolus Melitensis*); but the name is improper, for the bole is a clayey earth, more or less pure, consequently capable of being vitrified, and not subject to the attack of acids; whereas the *Maltese earth*, on the contrary, is of a calcareous nature, and produces effervescence with these same acids. Buffon has followed, on this article, the opinion of most of the mineralogists who preceded him, and who, copying from each other, had considered the *Maltese earth* as a bole, or argillous earth, and, in his History of Minerals, he has made a bole of it; but, what is not easily to be conceived, is his mistaking the *Maltese earth* for a red bole, though it be white as chalk, with which it has, moreover, many other points of affinity\*. It is known at Malta by no

\* “ The red bole derives its colour from iron in rust.....It is  
 “ with this bole that they prepare the *terra sigillata*.....They  
 “ likewise give it the names of *Lemnos earth*, *holy earth*, *St. Paul’s*  
 “ *earth*, *earth of Malta*, *earth of Constantinople*.” Buffon Hist.  
 Nat. des Mineraux, art. des Bols.

other name but that of *Saint Paul's earth*. They make tablets of it, on which they impress the image of the apostle, holding a serpent in his hand; these are exported to different countries of Europe, and more particularly to Spain and Italy. It is from this sort of preparation, that it has received in commerce, as well as the other earths and boles to which they communicate various impressions, the name of *terra sigillata* (sealed or stamped earth). It passes, at Malta, as a wonderful remedy in many diseases, and as an infallible specific against fevers; but all its properties are reducible to one, that of furnishing a gentle sudorific.

The common people are not satisfied with ascribing qualities almost supernatural to the earth of Saint Paul's grotto; they maintain besides that its mass underwent no diminution, whatever the quantity extracted from it. It is in the eyes of the Maltese a constant miracle operated by Saint Paul; accordingly the earth which bears his name is considered as a sacred substance in that island. Assuredly it does not appear to undergo any sensible diminution. This easy reproduction may be attributed to the humidity of the grotto, and to the earth's want of consistency. In order to undeceive those who affirm that it loses nothing of its bulk, it would be sufficient to point out to them the clearly apparent cavities formed by the  
edge



edge of the instruments employed in detaching it from the mass. But it is no easy matter to disabuse persons accustomed to explain natural facts by miracles.

A lichen entirely white grows over the interior surface of the vault of St. Paul's grotto.

At some distance from the old city are found vast excavations, which it is easy to dig and to extend, in a soil which presents very little resistance. They are divided into numerous ramifications, multiplied to such a degree that they formed a labyrinth, in which a man might lose himself and perish, had not the precaution been employed of walling up the entrance of some of those subterranean galleries; they were formerly used as a place of sepulture, *catacombs*, the name still given them. Tombs of stone are placed in them on each side, one above another; they are of various sizes; a dome likewise of stone covers some of them, and there is great reason to think that they were all enclosed in the same manner. The part of those stone-coffins on which the head of the dead person rested, is raised about two inches above the bottom, and there was cut into it the form of the head and neck, so that they were enchased in this species of dead pillow. Some coffins, broader than others, presented an excavation for two heads;  
affection



affection had destined them, no doubt, for lovers, or for husband and wife.

These catacombs appear likewise to have served as a place of retreat, in times not very remote, to the inhabitants of Malta, when their island became a prey to the wars which have frequently scourged it. Two ancient mills are here also pointed out to you, and once more that image, the safeguard of a credulous people, the statue of St. Paul.

The island of Malta, situated nearly in the middle of the Mediterranean sea, between Sicily and Africa, is but seven leagues at its greatest length, and four at its extreme breadth. Properly speaking it is nothing but a rock, almost entirely bare. But it is not of that kind of rock which the keen tooth of time can hardly penetrate, and which suggests the idea of complete aridity. It is a calcareous stone, extremely white, of a loose texture, of a consistence by no means solid, and which repels not all cultivation. Though most of the numerous islands of the same sea have been the focus or the result of the terrible explosions of nature, that of Malta has not experienced their violence, and is to be traced up to quite a different origin. No vestige of a volcano is there perceptible; and if you meet with lavas on it, they are those of Mount Vesuvius, imported thither to

serve as grinding-stones for their mills, and to make a pavement for their cities. You do not so much as find in it vitrifiable substances; every thing there is calcareous, if you except the talc, the gypse, and the clay; and besides, this last substance is found in very small quantities, and always mixed with calcareous matter; it is in greater abundance, and more pure, in the isle of Gozzi, which is close by that of Malta, and dependent upon it.

There are, moreover, no mountains in the island of Malta, nor in that of Gozzi; they are nothing but a plain, interrupted by some hills of very little elevation.

It is impossible to tire in admiring the industry of the Maltese farmers, who have succeeded in diffusing fertility over a rock, for the greatest part naked, or scarcely covered by a few inches of earth. In order to reduce a soil, apparently so ungrateful, to a state favourable to vegetation, these laborious men scoop out the rock, and break it down. The parts nearest the surface, and which the contact of the air had hardened, serve to construct, round the field, a dry wall, which, at the same time, clears it of the stony substances which are too solid to be decomposed, and prevents the rain water from washing away the vegetable earth. A part of the rock is reduced, by dint of labour, into small particles,

ticles, and with these they mix a thin stratum of mould, which they go in quest of sometimes as far as to Sicily. This mixture is exceedingly prolific. They cultivate with success the alimentary plants, the millet, the annual cotton\*. The fig and other fruit-trees thrive extremely well; here grow to perfection those beautiful oranges, with a red pulp, and of a delicious flavour, so highly esteemed in Europe.

But it must be acknowledged, notwithstanding the ingenuity and industry of the Maltese, their fields present little that pleases; nay, their aspect is absolutely disagreeable. The walls which enclose their endlessly subdivided possessions, the whiteness of the stones, a soil yellow and parched, almost without trees and without verdure, form a very harsh picture which fatigues the eye. Culture never assumes a smiling aspect, unless when seconded by nature.

We must consider as one of the most powerful efforts of Maltese industry, the formation of a great garden, in which they were employed at St. Antonio, the grand-master's country residence, about half a league from the city. It was really a prodigy in a country where it is so difficult to clothe the ground; any where else it would have been a

\* *Gossypium herbaceum*. Lin.

mere ordinary garden, though it was decorated with a great many flowers, among others with magnificent double poppies\*, and beautiful scabiuſes†. The alleys, covered with fragments of white ſtones, were uneasy to the feet, and tiresome to the ſight. The grand maſter, Rohan, gave us an entertainment at this country palace. In the city, no one could ſit down to eat with that petty ſovereign, and at St. Antonio it was not the right of every one to have a place at his table. Meſſrs. Durfort and Tott, as having the rank of colonels, were alone admitted to it, and even they were ſeparated from the grand-maſter by the whole length of a great table. The other officers ſat at a different board, the honours of which were done by the gentlemen of the palace, and, of a truth, no one of us regretted the oppreſſive and cold etiquette of the firſt table. After dinner, Rohan laid aſide all ceremony; he mingled with his company, and choſe to be of all our parties.

The territory of Malta is likewiſe far from equal to the ſupport of its inhabitants. Moſt part of the corns, of the cattle, in a word, every article of conſumption, the very ſoil, as we have juſt now ſeen, are imported from Sicily, which is literally the granary and the market of the Malteſe. The embarkations deſtined to the purchaſe of provi-

\* *Papaver rhæas*. Lin. † *Scabiosa atro-purpurea*. Lin.

sions, and which they call *spetonaria*, are perhaps the most expeditious that exist, and are manned with the most hardy seamen in the world.

The stones got from the quarries of Malta, are in request for the construction of houses; their softness, before they are exposed to the air, renders them of easy adaptation to a variety of purposes; they are exported ready cut into our southern departments, to Italy, and even to the Levant.

There was discovered, a few years ago, a sparry and calcareous substance, to which they gave the name of *Maltese-stone*. Many pieces of excellent workmanship were manufactured out of it; and the grand-master, Finto, was so jealous of this exclusive possession, that he prohibited the exportation of it, and even its manufacture by any one, except his own people. His successor, Rohan Poldux, was not tainted with a jealousy so contemptible, and I had it in my power to procure specimens of it, both rough and polished, which I have transferred to the national cabinet. But the true nature of that substance appeared to be still a secret: it generally passed for a marble, though its grain, its consistence, and especially its formation, differed exceedingly from the grain, the hardness, and the formation of marble. One of my fellow-travellers, who, with a good deal of sprightliness and volubility,



lubility, but with a very scanty stock of knowledge, was not afraid sometimes to hazard, with a tone of self-sufficiency, opinions the most erroneous, M. Tott, had laid it down as certain, that the pretended marble of Malta was talc. This opinion was favourably received, and the grand-master appeared to be persuaded that it was founded in truth. In support of it, M. Tott produced a fragment of that stone, a part of which was, according to him, evidently talc, and he concluded that no argument was capable of destroying a fact, which was, in reality, nothing more than a supposition more than gratuitous. In fact, on the examination of this fragment, which was to constitute the proof of an absurd assertion, it appeared that the fascicles of needles of which it was composed, had been cut diagonally in certain places, and that these sections presented shining and transparent plates, which exhibited a false appearance of talc, of which our half-philosopher had been the dupe. I was forced, so to speak, to explain myself on this subject before a numerous company. I declared, without reserve, that I could not be of M. Tott's sentiment; and I employed a reasoning sufficiently simple to be easily comprehended by every body: it was, that talc resists every attack of acids, whereas they produce the most powerful effect on matters purely calcareous, which are put to this test. M. Tott's opinion of  
course



course fell to the ground, and that assuming gentleman never forgave me the offence.

It was not difficult, moreover, to fix the place which the pretended marble of Malta ought to occupy among stony substances. For on examining the figure and the disposition of the *fasciculi* of needles of which it is formed; on observing the concentric circles discovered on sawing it transversely; on paying attention to its want of consistence, which prevents the possibility of manufacturing it into tables of any considerable size, without their cleaving asunder; above all, on studying its position in the rocks, you will presently discover those calcareous stalactites, those concrete masses, produced by the infiltration of water through calcareous substances; in a word, the alabaster of naturalists, which must not be confounded with that much harder alabaster that takes a polish so beautiful, and whose dazzling whiteness is so much cried up.

It is found generally in irregular blocks, and whose surface is crusted over with little buttons of the same nature. That of Gozzi is the only one which is sometimes found in strata, but these are irregular, and of no great extent. The calcareous rock which covers these blocks and these strata, is, for the most part, whiter and of a closer grain than

that which composes the rest of the islands of Malta and Gozzi: this is occasioned by the distillation of the waters, which, in passing through that rock, carry along with them the lighter particles of it. The colours of the alabaster of Malta vary, according to the districts where it is found; but they are always a mixture of yellow, gray, and blackish. It admits of a fine polish. I have seen very beautiful tables and large corner-buffets of it in the palace of the grand-master.

The species of lichen proper for furnishing the die known by the name of *orsilla herbæ*, generally grows on rocks bathed by the sea\*. The grand-master proposed to take up with spirit this new branch of commerce in his island, for which it is indebted to the exertions and the researches of citizen Dolomieux.

The sea on the coasts of Malta furnish in abundance various species of fishes. The natives set a high value on a sort which they call *accola*, and the French *thon blanc* (the white tunny). I never had it in my power to ascertain its genus with precision, having seen it only when dressed for the table; it does not attain the size of the common tunny, but its flesh is whiter, and likewise more

\* *Fucus verrucosus tinctorius*. Tournef. Inst. Rei herb.—*Lichen roxella*. Lin.

\* delicate.

delicate. It is very probably that which Certe first described, under the name of *alalunga*, in his History of the Fishes of Sardinia, page 191\*. They likewise fish for coral and a variety of shell-fish. Those most commonly caught are the date-†, whose grubs find no difficulty in securing a lodging in the soft and spongy stone of the shore; the *pinna marina* ‡, of which some attain a very large size, being more than two feet in length; the prickly oyster §, which they catch even within the harbour; the Noah's ark ||; some species of the telline and trumpet-fish, &c. &c.: they likewise sometimes find, though rarely, the *nautilus papyraceus* ¶.

The strata of calcareous substances of the islands of Malta and Gozzi, likewise produce abundantly petrifications and fossils. It were easy to form ample collections of these. I have seen there sea-urchins transformed to spar, very large vermiculars, oöolithes, pisolites, the vertebræ of fishes of an enormous size, huge glossopetres, and very beautiful crapaudines. These two last fossils

\* *Scomber alalunga pinnis pectoralibus longissimis*. Arted. Gen. Pisc. 222.—*Scomber pinnis pectoralibus longissimis, pinnulis caudæ utrinque septem*.....*Scomber alalunga*. Lin. Syst. Nat. See also the Encyclop. method. Hist. des Poissons, art. *alalunga*.

† *Phòlas dactylus*. Lin. ‡ *Pinna nobilis*. Lin. § *Ostrea varia*. Lin. || *Arca Noë*. Lin. ¶ *Argonauta argo*. Lin.

pass

pass with the common people for the tongues and eyes of serpents, though assuredly there is no great resemblance between them: these are, in their apprehension, authentic and irresistible evidence of the miraculous service which St. Paul rendered to their island, by destroying all the serpents. But this is not the only instance to prove that, under the hand of ignorance, the history of nature has become that of superstition.

## CHAP. VI.

*Meteorological observations—Galleys of Malta—Political and philosophical glance at the Order of Malta—Antiquities and idiom of the island of Malta—Maltese dogs—Passage from Malta to the island of Candia—Sailing birds—Arrival in Egypt.*

DURING our stay in Malta, that is, for the space of twelve days, the winds varied from north to north-east, and prevented the sailing of all vessels. It blew violently; the sea was in a dreadful state of agitation, and, what appeared very extraordinary to the inhabitants, it rained incessantly. They never have rain in the island at this season. Persons worthy of credit declared, that for forty years they had lived there, no rain had ever fallen at the beginning of the month of June. Another ground of surprise was, that these rains were accompanied by thunder-claps, though no such thing is heard there in summer-time; whereas they are very frequent and very violent in winter.

This bad weather, which, at this season, passed for a phenomenon, brought in the galleys of the Order. A salute of fifteen guns from the *Atalanta* signalized their entrance into port, and the galley



ley of the general saluted with four. They were manned, or rather embarrassed, with an incredible number of hands; the general alone had eight hundred men on board. They were superbly ornamented; gold blazed on the numerous basso-relievos and sculptures on the stern; enormous sails, striped with blue and white, carried on their middle a great cross of Malta painted red; their elegant flags floated majestically; in a word, every thing concurred, when they were under sail, to render it a magnificent spectacle. But their construction was little adapted either for fighting or for standing foul weather; the Order kept them up, rather as an image of its ancient splendour, than for their utility; it was one of those ancient institutions which had once served to render the brotherhood illustrious, but now only attested its feebleness and decay.

It is well known that the *hospitable brotherhood of St. John of Jerusalem*, on exchanging this modest designation for that of *knights*, became rather a military than a religious association. The series of wars which they had to maintain against the Mahometans, had trained them to habits of intrepidity. Their history is a brilliant succession of military exploits; and, whether in giving way to immense forces and efforts, they were under the necessity of abandoning Rhodes, covered with the  
glory

glory of having made a defence which may be considered as a prodigy; whether in braving, at Malta, the fury and the valour of Soliman, they fixed the boundary of the Ottoman career; we see them displaying, on all occasions, that heroic courage and skill which transform a handful of men into a mighty army.

In order to keep alive this martial ardour, this genius of battles and of victories, it was necessary for them to maintain that observance of rules, those forms of discipline, that austerity of manners, which constitute the force and the permanency of all military establishments. But the indolence, or rather the dejection of the Mussulmans, was the epoch of relaxation in the institutions of the Order. They successively disused their exercises, frivolous in appearance but attention to which had formed a nursery of heroes; luxury assumed the place of the noble simplicity of soldiers; idleness, and the correlative cohorts that march in her train, succeeded to the activity, to the almost severity of warlike exertion; the hardness of camps retired before the effeminacy of cities. The struggle between the knights and Turks had now dwindled into a phantom, of which some pitiful expeditions of corsairs kept up the shadow; the caravans or cruises of the galleys, were now nothing but parties of pleasure to and from the delicious havens of Sicily; the defence

fence of those superb ramparts, the monuments of the glory of the Order, and of their enemy's shame, was confided to foreign and mercenary soldiers; and that social energy, which had made one of the greatest empires of the universe to tremble, was no longer exemplified, except in the sparks of courage occasionally struck from a few individuals.

A horde of priests environed the Order of Malta. Every where ambitious and restless, more audacious under a sky which, with its temperature, heated the imagination, they bore with impatience the yoke of the chevaliers. They had oftener than once attempted to shake it off, by making use of their favourite arts, perfidy, superstition, and falsehood. Reckoning on relaxation of discipline and improvidence, they had dared, not long before our arrival, to take possession of one of the forts which defend the very city. This unexpected stroke roused nevertheless, for a moment, that ancient valour, the exercise of which seemed to be lost. Fifty knights, with the commander d'Anonville at their head, carried the fort by escalade, and seized the greatest part of the insurgents. This revolt is still the subject of much conversation at Malta, and to which the bishop of the island was no stranger.

The sovereignty, at the same time, exercised by the Order of Malta, over the two little isles under  
their

their jurisdiction, was by no means oppressive. If the stateliness of some of its members presented a singular contrast with their state of nothingness, and of dissimilitude to their predecessors, it could affect only the intolerant pride of priests. The most useful class, that of husbandmen, was protected. It was called to recollection through what efforts they succeeded in covering, with the riches of fruitful seasons, a soil which nature seemed to have condemned to barrenness; the sweat of their brow was respected, and they gathered in peaceably, free from participation as well as from imposts, the fruits of their labours. Prosperity cannot but smile at an exercise of authority so rare.

It was undoubtedly a strange policy, that of a perpetual declaration of war, of which difference in religious opinions was the apparent motive: these were, in reality, merely the pretext. Charles V. in permitting the establishment of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, in the islands of Malta and Gozzi, exacted of them alliance with him in this state of constant hostility. But the propagation of the Christian religion was far from being the object which he had in view. The Turks had rendered themselves at that time formidable; they had pushed their conquests in a manner alarming to the powers of Europe, and the monarch found, in an association of warriors accustomed to make head against  
the

the Mussulmans, a rampart capable of protecting his own possessions against their enterprises.

Other nations likewise knew how to avail themselves of the obligations which the Order of Malta had contracted. France, in particular, derived great advantages from them. Though, for many years past, that Order had fallen from its ancient grandeur, though its war with the Turks was now nothing more than an empty bugbear; though, in a word, its actual hostilities, as I have said, were reduced to the cruises of a few miserable privateers, the Maltese name was so formidable in the Turkish seas, that the appearance of the smallest felucca carrying the flag of the Order was sufficient to diffuse terror, and to prevent the ships of the country from venturing out. All carriage of goods, in seas where commerce has much activity, was through the medium of foreign bottoms. Marseilles, and the small ports adjacent, sent into them annually near five hundred. These vessels returned, at the end of three years, during which their crews had subsisted at the expense of the Orientalists, to enrich our ports with the piastres of the Levant, and with about five thousand seamen, whom that species of coasting trade had formed and inured to the navigation of a sea extremely difficult and embarrassed with a labyrinth of islands and shallows. These commercial and maritime riches France  
owed



owed to the institution of the knights of Malta, and, in this political view, she had an interest in maintaining it.

But if politics be the philosophy of governments, philosophy is, in its turn, the politics of humanity, and she took pleasure in contemplating with a lively interest, in this same institution, formed of various elements, the germ of concord among nations. In truth, an association of men of almost all the nations of Europe, selected, in general, from among those whom a liberal education rendered susceptible of the honourable impressions of the soul, and of just reasoning; constrained to live in an island, where they were secluded from all society but that of their companions, and from all pleasures but those which they enjoyed in common; habituated to the same exercises, subjected to the same regulations, to the same regimen; such an association, I say, was exceedingly well adapted for softening down the disparities existing between nation and nation, and for melting away the harsh shades of their character. And when it is considered that the greatest part of these same men, on returning to their several focuses, were destined to the exercise of important employments, frequently to fill great political stations; when they were all viewed as members of the families styled *illustrious* and *puissant*, there is no possibility of

doubting that, by themselves or by their influence, they should not frequently moderate the hatred and vehemence of cabinets against the compatriots of their comrades, of their friends. These remote causes have, perhaps oftener than once, stopped the rivulets of human blood, which have but too often moistened and profaned the earth; and perhaps too they have prevented the effusion, at the moment it was going to break forth. It is thus that the Maltese fraternity, by a slow but certain operation, would, probably, have realized that delicious dream of philanthropy, universal peace.

It is abundantly evident, and it answers no purpose to make the remark, that these reflections, presented such as they struck me when on the spot, could be of no weight but under the ancient order of things, that is, at the era of my voyage: they have since ceased to exhibit the same interest. The French republic, which, in the space of a few years, has hurried through ages of glory, has just superseded the existence of the Order; it has looked down with disdain on the advantages which that institution procured to France, and the hope of concord of which it opened a glimpse to the nations. Speculations like these were too narrow for the immensity of her power. Mistress of the Mediterranean,

ranean \*, by means of the conquest of Malta and Gozzi, she has extended her departments as far

\* Witness the complete destruction of the Toulon fleet, by a British squadron under Lord Nelson, off the Mouth of the Nile, the 1st and 2d of August 1798, an event well known in France previous to the publication of M. Sonnini's Travels. Let the following authentic list declare the state of French sovereignty in the Mediterranean, when this vain-glorious rodomontade was issuing from the press at Paris :

## FRENCH LINE OF BATTLE.

1. Le Guerrier,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Taken.</i>
2. Le Conquérant,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Taken.</i>
3. Le Spartiate,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Taken.</i>
4. L'Aquilon,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Taken.</i>
5. Le Souverain Peuple,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Taken.</i>
6. Le Franklin,	80 guns,	800 men— <i>Taken.</i>
7. L'Orient,	120 guns,	1010 men— <i>Burnt.</i>
8. Le Tonnant,	80 guns,	800 men— <i>Taken.</i>
9. L'Heureux,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Taken.</i>
10. Le Timoleon,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Burnt.</i>
11. Le Mercure,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Taken.</i>
12. Le Guillaume Tell,	80 guns,	800 men— <i>Escaped.</i>
12. Le Généreux,	74 guns,	700 men— <i>Escaped.</i>

## FRIGATES.

14. La Diane,	48 guns,	300 men— <i>Escaped.</i>
15. La Justice,	44 guns,	300 men— <i>Escaped.</i>
16. L'Artémise,	36 guns,	250 men— <i>Burnt.</i>
17. La Sérieuse,	36 guns,	250 men— <i>Disasted and sunk.</i>

*London Gazette Extraordinary, Oct. 2d, 1798.*

“ Mistress of the Mediterranean !” Witness the blockade of the remainder of the naval force of France in the ports of the Mediterranean, by a British squadron under Earl St. Vincent, this 12th July 1799. “ Let not him who putteth on his harness, boast as he that taketh it off.” (BIBLE.)—H. H.

as the seas of the Levant, and thus appropriated to herself the commerce of it; while, by her intimate alliances with the nations who can no longer have an interest separate from hers, she has accomplished the great work of social order, the fraternization of mankind\*.

Before the island of Malta became the domain of the Brotherhood of St. John of Jerusalem, it had passed successively into the hands of several potentates. From the Carthaginians down to the Arabs it underwent a frequent change of masters; the vestiges of antiquity in it are accordingly not few. There was printed at Malta itself, in 1794, a work in Italian, on the subject of those ancient remains, produced from researches made by digging up the ground in 1788 †.

If certain persons are to be believed, the Maltese language is still more ancient than most of the ruins discovered there, though it has long passed for an uncouth mixture of Arabic and Italian. A learned gentleman of Malta, Antonio Vassali, has

\* This, translated into the language of truth, means unlimited subjection to the tyrannical rule of, they say, thirty millions of despots.—H. H.

† Degli Apanzi di alchuni antichissimi Edifici, scoperti in Malta; Dissertazione storica-critica del March. Barbaro Archit. con copiose Annotazione del medesimo Autore, 1794, in 4to. fig.

lately

lately vindicated his nation from the imputation of having no idiom peculiar to itself, and he demonstrates that their language is entitled to rank with the most copious living languages\*.

There is rarely to be seen now in Malta, the beautiful species of spaniel, with a long silky fleece, which goes by the name of the *dog of Malta*, and is different from the *lap-dog*, with which it has been confounded in books of natural history. The breed of these little dogs seems to be almost extinct even at Malta, for you seldom meet with one. But it was easy to procure there puppies of a beautiful species of pointers. This calls to my recollection that I no where saw so many and such beautiful terriers, as in the streets of Genoa.

The storm having spent itself, and the wind come round, we left the port of Malta June 7th, 1777, at three o'clock afternoon, and set sail for the island of Candia. We had then in company a felucca, of which M. Tott had made a purchase, for the purpose of examining the coasts which the frigate could not approach; she was manned with Maltese seamen. This was one of the ideas with which the

\* Vocabulary of the Maltese Language, by Antonio Vassali, printed at Rome in 1796. See the Encyclop. Mag. interesting and valuable collection, Vol. IV. of the second year, p. 139.



somewhat whimsical imagination of M. Tott frequently teemed : it was subjecting the navigation of the frigate to a very unpleasant embarrassment, the felucca not being able to sail at the same rate, and totally unfit for encountering a gale of wind. The captain soon tired of such a convoy, and I have been informed that soon after he left Alexandria he staved and sunk her.

On the morning of the 8th, the weather being extremely fine, and a light breeze from the north-west, a bird of prey, which appeared to me to be a male sparrow-hawk \*, came and perched on the yards of the frigate; we were from fourteen to fifteen leagues from all land. The sailors called him a *corsair*, because he cruises to catch on their passage quails, and other migrant birds which cross and re-cross those seas, a transit exposed to manifold dangers. Sometimes precipitated into the billows by the impetuosity of the blast; sometimes torn in pieces by the cruel pounces of cruisers winged like themselves, those interesting and defenceless creatures, on arriving upon the shores which promised them repose, after so many dangers and fatigues, rarely escape the death prepared for them by man, the most voracious and the most pitiless of all their enemies.

\* Epervier, Hist. Nat. des Ois.—*Falconisus*. Lin.

Our course lay eastward, and the wind soon came to blow from that quarter. It not only remained contrary for two days, but likewise became very violent, and agitated the sea to such a degree that the ship laboured exceedingly. The bird, the forerunner of storms \*, appeared in our wake, and we prepared for what was hastening to overtake us.

On the 12th, with a clear sky, and our sails filled with a favourable gale, we came in sight of the island of Cerigo, the ancient Cythera, where Venus landed when she arose out of the foam of the ocean. Situated at the entrance of the Archipelago of the Levant, that island actually constitutes part of the French Republic, under the name of the *department of the Egean sea* †. It befitted the most amiable nation in the universe to possess a spot which antiquity has consecrated to the loveliest of goddesses.

We likewise discovered, at a small distance from the department of the Egean sea, four parched rocks, uninhabited, and cut perpendicularly: *Ovo* (the egg), whose form is, in reality, abundantly

\* L'Oiseau de tempête,—*procellaria pelagica*, Lin.

† “Department of the Egean sea!!!” What ridiculous republican jargon! “The most amiable of nations—the loveliest “of goddesses!!!” and all this nonsense in a grave book of travels through Egypt.—H. H.

similar to that of an egg; the two *Couffes*, which are a tolerable representation of the species of panniers that go by that name in the commerce of the Levant; finally the *Cerigotte*, or little *Cerigo*. On the 13th we dropped anchor in the deep bay of Suda, in the isle of Candia.

The day after our departure from Malta, the very day that a hawk perched on the frigate's sail-yards, two other birds, a little gray sparrow \*, and a yellow wagtail †, likewise alighted on the rigging. But less in a condition to support the fatigue of a long flight, they suffered themselves to be caught. As their size did not promise a great repast to the appetite of the glutton, I prevailed so far as to have them committed to my care. I carried them into the great cabin, and there, after having lavished caresses on them, which their state of disquiet permitted them not to feel, I set them at liberty. Whether they had a presentiment of the tempest which attacked us the day after, whether that, discovering no land, they were afraid to venture themselves on a boundless sea, after a few moments of uncertain flight, they re-entered by the same window from which I had let them go. From that moment they quitted not the great

\* Passerinette, or little sparrow. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 579, fig. 2. *Motacilla passerina*. Lin.

† *Motacilla baarula*. Lin.

cabin ;

cabin; and if, terrified by any extraordinary noise, they flew out by one of the poop-windows, or by a port-hole, they returned presently some other way. Though of different species, they lived on the best terms with each other; they hopped about merrily on those terrible machines which hurl from afar thunder and death; nay, on a cannon was placed their little portion of fresh water and their crumb of bread; this was likewise their place of repose. Their confidence became complete: they fluttered around a daily and somewhat noisy table of twenty persons; and these lovely guests cheered with their warblings, and by their lively and graceful movements, a habitation so dry and so monotonous. On our approach to the coast of the isle of Candia, our pretty and interesting navigators were eager to take their flight thither, and withdrew from us, regaling our ears with airy whistlings, the sweet accents expressive of their joy, perhaps of their gratitude. Charming birds! you forsook a mansion of dulness and insipidity to which you communicated an appearance of life, and you went to animate enchanting groves already embellished by all the bounties of indulgent nature. May you long remain there a testimony of your prosperous voyage, and there recollect, that amidst the horror of tempest, and of billows in a rage; that amongst men whom the necessity of braving, night and day, dangers incessant, seemed

to render little susceptible of the gentler affections of the soul, you met with beings sensible and compassionate.

I had occasion to return twice afterwards to ancient Crete: the observations which I made there, will naturally find their place in my *Travels through Greece*, which will immediately follow the present publication. On the other hand, the pages of my journal, which contained the passage from the bay to Suda to Alexandria, are lost; but I recollect perfectly, that they contained no detail of much importance. We made a short stop at Palco-Castro, on cape Solomon, the easternmost point of the isle of Candia. This is a region destitute of every species of habitation, except the huts of shepherds. The sight of a ship of war, accompanied by a felucca, made us pass, in the imagination of those harmless swains, for a Maltese armament; they took to flight with their flocks into the interior of the island, and abandoned to us a coast which our very appearance had in an instant converted into a desert. It did not require much time to waft us to Alexandria, and a few days were sufficient to convey us to the low and sandy shores of Egypt.



## CHAP. VII.

*Deserts of Libya—Coasts of Egypt—Towers of the Arabs—Landing at Alexandria—Its ports—Its commerce—Glimpse of the city of Alexandria.*

WHEN in going before the wind eastward, in sight of the coast of Africa, you have passed *Derna* \*, where vessels loaded by the Turks sometimes stop, there remains, up to Alexandria, a long extent of shore entirely unknown. It is in the midst of those burning plains of Libya, a domain never to be rescued from sterility, that we are to look for the western boundaries of Egypt; boundaries left undetermined from the remotest antiquity. Disputes had arisen between the two colonies settled on the banks of the lake Maréotis, now dried up, respecting the confines of Egypt and Libya; they consulted the oracle of Jupiter-Ammon; his decision was, as Herodotus relates, that all the country which the Nile inundated, by its overflowing, should belong to the former of these two countries; a very uncertain line of demarkation, as it depended on the greater or less degree of labour and industry employed to convey the waters of the river to different distances. Of

\* Probably the *Derrhis extrema* of Strabo and Ptolomy.

what importance is it, after all, to make an exact division of those sandy heaps, those immense blanks on the habitable globe, and which no nation can have an interest to parcel out, as no man can possibly convert them into a habitation ?

But if those shores present nothing attractive to commerce or to curiosity, they oppose tremendous risks to navigation. Scarcely raised above the level of the sea, they are not perceptible at any distance. A vessel with this coast on her lee, under a wind blowing in-shore, in that prodigious bay laid down in our geographical charts under the name of the *Gulf of the Arabs*, has no shelter to expect ; no port, no road opens to her a safe retreat ; and if it be impossible for her to brave the impetuosity of the winds and waves which are driving her toward the land, she must be lost. There is no confidence to be placed in the assertion of certain Arabs who indicated to me, in the gulf which bears their name, three ports, one of which they represented as affording excellent anchorage, and which they called *Port Soliman*. It would be madness in navigators to expose themselves, on the faith of information so very problematical ; and on the supposition that they might, in reality, have the good fortune, in desperate situations, to find some refuge there, they would run an incredible risk, unless their ships were better armed than most of those

those which cover the seas of the Levant, of a total loss, in a region abandoned to the pillage of Africans.

To make the land of Alexandria is likewise attended with difficulty and danger: this part of Egypt is so low, that much circumspection is requisite toward a safe approach to it. If your course is from the Libyan side, that is, from the west, the first indication of the land of Egypt is *Abousir*, called by Europeans, *the Towers of the Arabs*. These are two eminences, on each of which a tower is constructed. They are distinguishable at sea four leagues off. One of these towers is round, the other square. At least this is the appearance which they presented to my eye, on viewing them from the offing. It would appear, nevertheless, that their forms are different from what I supposed them at a distance; for Granger, who seems to have made a survey of the edifices, describes them differently\*.

That

\* “ On the western extremity of this lake (Maréotis), is to be seen the tower of the Arabs, called, by the people of the country, the castle of Abousir. It is indeed a square tower, fourscore feet high, the faces of which are each two hundred and fifty feet broad; built of very beautiful hewn stone; the walls are fourteen feet thick. At the distance of a quarter of a league from this castle, there is a tower, square below, and the upper part round; and, six leagues from thence, still to the westward, there is another, on the walls of which

That part of the coast of Egypt which is situated to the east of Alexandria, is easily distinguishable from that to the westward. It is not so low, and is intersected by more inequalities; neither is it quite so naked: some traces of cultivation are discernible, some date-trees and human habitations. In a word, it is a sure sign that you are in the direction of Alexandria, when you get sight of Pompey's pillar, and, previous to that, of two little rising grounds, which are behind the present city, and within the precincts of the old. But from whatever quarter you approach those dangerous shores, it is impossible to employ too much circumspection, because all these indications are not visible at any great distance, and because the currents get hold of ships, and carry them towards Africa with a rapidity which it is easier to foresee than to calculate.

Two ports, equally spacious, present themselves to vessels intending to cast anchor close to Alexandria. The one, which is to the westward of the city, is called the *old harbour*: its entrance is somewhat difficult, on account of two shallows, which leave but a narrow channel between them; but its interior is a deep bason, where there is good

"which are to be seen the remains of an Arabic inscription.  
 "All these edifices are fallen into ruins."—Granger, Relation of a Voyage to Egypt in 1730, page 221.

anchorage

anchorage and shelter in the worst of weather. The other, which is to the east, and separated from the former by a peninsula of no great breadth, has got the name of *new harbour*; it has but a small depth of water; it is encumbered with a multitude of rocks and shelves, and is entirely exposed to the north winds. If, notwithstanding, any one were to imagine that this last port is almost entirely neglected, he would deceive himself. Fanaticism, in this case, carried the day against a rational and intelligent regard to interest. While the Alexandrians cheerfully associated with the nations of Europe in commercial operations, they refused to European vessels the means of maintaining, without risk, an intercourse from which they derived so many advantages. The vessels of the disciples of Mahomet alone were permitted to enter the old harbour; and, were the ships of other nations to be wrecked, for want of a safe retreat, they had not the power of penetrating into a sanctuary so absurdly and so impolitically privileged.

At the entrance of new harbour is a shelf called the *Diamond*. It is necessary to steer very close to it, in order to escape the shallows which are on the other side, and which, covered only with a few feet water, are but the more dangerous. The *Diamond*, as well as the rocks adjacent on a level  
with



with the water, may probably be part of the ruins of the ancient Pharos; so that in modern times vessels are shipwrecked on the fragments of the noblest monument that ever was reared for their preservation.

The sandy bottom of new harbour is filled with rocks and rubbish; and this humid field of ruin frequently becomes that of the most horrible desolation. Cables are worn and cut to pieces by continual friction on the stones. Ships pressing on each other in one line of direction along the ridge, are hardly able to resist the violence of the north wind, and the fury of the billows which it raises, especially in the winter-time, that is, during the months of November, December, and January; the period when the air is a little cooled by the rains and stormy gales. On the approach of those tempests, the crews desert their ships, for fear of being dashed in pieces with them on the merciless shore. The first ship whose cables give way falls upon her next neighbour, and forces her from her moorings; the two together are driven with increased violence upon a third, which is incapable of withstanding the increased shock, and, in an instant, the whole series is confounded, crashed to fragments, swallowed up. Scarcely a year passes at Alexandria, without exhibiting disasters of this sort,

sort, which would be sufficient to render its port unfrequented, could the love of gain be discouraged by dangers.

Ships of war, which require a depth of water, are under the necessity of mooring as soon as they have doubled the *Diamond* and the two *shallows*, that is, just in the mouth of the harbour. The frigate *Atalanta* passed above a month in this situation, violently strained by a continual rolling; a most uncomfortable position, which, however, I preferred sharing with my friends to a settlement on shore, though I had it in my power, as it was my destination to remain in Egypt. This abominable harbour is still more rocky to the east. It is unapproachable to any thing deserving the name of a ship, and landing is impracticable. We endeavoured, to no purpose, to get on shore in a small boat, with a design to take a view of the obelisks which are on that side. It was well we did not perish by the violent and repeated strokes which the boat suffered on the stones from the agitation of the water.

The harbour, detestable as it is, nevertheless seldom fails to be crowded with ships. The perpetual movement in it indicates the restlessness of commerce. Here the riches of Asia and Africa are loaded for the ports of Europe, and here are un-

loaded the productions of European arts and manufacture. A geographical position of such high importance could not escape the genius of Alexander. Amidst the rapidity of his conquests he perceived, that in this place might be erected the theatre of mutual communication with all nations, and suddenly he presented Alexandria to the admiration and to the commerce of mankind. Dinocrates had traced the plan of it under the eyes of Alexander, and superintended the execution of it. He was one of those men of vast and bold conceptions, whom Nature is frugal in shewing to the world. History has transmitted to us a remarkable and characteristic trait of his genius. With a design to perpetuate the name and glory of the greatest of conquerors, by a monument that should last for ever, he had proposed to consecrate to this purpose a part of the globe itself; by cutting an enormous mountain, Mount Athos, into a statue of him that should never be removed, having the solid earth for its basis; a work that must have effaced all the prodigies which even Egypt has produced. Sublime idea! It renders the artist worthy of ranking with his hero.

With an Alexander to order the plan of a city, and a Dinocrates to carry it into execution, some conception may be formed how grand and magnificent this city must have been. The kings of  
Egypt

Egypt farther embellished it by admirable establishments, the loss of which must excite regret. Under the reign of one of the Ptolemies, Sostrates, another architect of Cnidus, constructed a pharos, which the ancients reckoned among the seven wonders of the universe. Another king founded an immense library. Alexandria, in a word, became the centre of science and riches: it was the spot of the globe where commerce flourished to the greatest extent. Josephus assures us, that it contributed more to the Roman treasury in a month, than all the rest of Egypt did in a year. The useful and the agreeable arts were there cultivated with similar success. Luxury crept in, and soon attained its full height; lively and brilliant pleasures degenerated into licentiousness: fastidiousness in delicacies became proverbial; morals were corrupted, and Alexandria was undone. A terrible example, but constantly thrown away upon the nations.

I shall not undertake to give a description of that renowned city of Alexander. Many others, without my aid, have endeavoured to execute that task. Besides, details of this kind belong to the province of History, and I must not forget that a traveller is to give an account of what he has seen, and not of what he has read. Monuments which once promised to brave the attacks of time, have

crumbled into dust with the city which they were reared to decorate : the flames which ferocity and ignorance directed have devoured the library of the Ptolemies : the pharos is buried under the waters of the sea, and the tower which, in modern times, serves as a lighthouse, does not so much as indicate the spot where it stood. Modern Alexandria occupies only a very small part of the ground encompassed by the city which Alexander raised ; it is merely a city, or rather a town, of yesterday, containing nothing of the ancient city but a few scattered fragments. The character of the inhabitants, the state of science, of the arts, of commerce itself, in short, every thing is narrowed ; and if the mind were not supported by feeding on the remains of a city once so superb, no one could have the courage to speak a word of that which now is.



## CHAP. VIII.

*Modern Alexandria—Its inhabitants—Jews—Spirit of revenge—Assassination of the Consul of Alexandria, and of a Dutchman—Language—Ruins.*

I MUST advertise the reader, that having sojourned oftener than once at Alexandria, I shall present my observations in a regular series, though made at different eras. I shall quit therefore, for a few moments, the form of the relation, and shall describe, by a single stroke, what I saw there at several intervals, and without restricting myself to the order of the dates of my several remarks. I shall observe the same rule, which appeared to me more natural, and more commodious to the public, when I have to speak of any other object which I may have visited at different times.

“To write on the subject of the city of Alexandria minutely, after so many great personages,” says an excellent observer who travelled in Egypt in the reign of Francis I. “would be only to say “the same thing over again\*.” Since the era at which Bellon wrote, many authors, among whom may be reckoned *more than one great personage*, have

\* Bellon, Observ. book ii. ch. 19.

given a description of the remains of that celebrated city, and it is not possible, at present, to avoid *repetitions*. But, without mentioning some new observations with which the remains of ancient Alexandria have furnished me, the curiosity of those who may be disposed to read my book would be little gratified, and their expectation would be disappointed, if, in order to make them acquainted with what still exists in regions of such high renown, I should refer them to any other books besides my own. Besides, I shall speak only of objects which I have personally examined.

The latitude of Alexandria has been laid down, by ancient astronomers, with sufficient accuracy. Ptolemy, who was himself an Egyptian, had placed it, in his Geography, in  $31^{\circ}$  of north latitude, and in  $30^{\circ} 58'$  in his Almageste. Eratosthenes, more exact, fixed it at  $31^{\circ} 12'$ , which comes extremely near the observations of modern astronomers, to whom the progress of the science, with the assistance of better instruments, procured superior advantages. It has been determined by Chazelle, of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, to be in  $30^{\circ} 11' 20''$ . Its longitude is  $47^{\circ} 56' 33''$ .

The new city, or rather the town of Alexandria, is built, the greatest part of it at least, on the brink of the sea. Its houses, like all those of the Levant,  
have

have flat terrace roofs : they have no windows, and the apertures which supply their place are almost entirely obstructed by a wooden lattice projecting, of various form, and so close, that the light can hardly force a passage. In those countries, more than any where else, such inventions, which transform a mansion into a prison, are real *jalousies* (jealousies, window-blinds). It is through this grate of iron or wood, sometimes of elegant construction, that beauty is permitted to see what is passing without, but eternally deprived of the privilege of being seen ; it is in this state of hopeless seclusion that, far from receiving the homage which nature demands to be paid to it by every being possessed of sensibility, it meets only contempt and outrage ; it is there, in a word, that one part of the human race, abusing the odious right of the more powerful, retains in degrading servitude the other part, whose charms alone ought to have had the power to soften both the ruggedness of the soil and the ferocity of their tyrants.

Narrow and awkwardly disposed streets are without pavement as without police ; no public edifice, no private building arrests the eye of the traveller, and, on the supposition that the fragments of the old city had not attracted his attention, he would find no object in the present one that could supply

matter for a moment's thought. Turks, Arabians, Barbaresques, Cophits, Christians of Syria, Jews, constituted a population which may be estimated at five thousand, as far as an estimation can be made in a country where there is no register kept of any thing. Commerce attracts thither besides, from all the countries of the East, strangers whose residence is extremely transient. This motley assemblage of the men of different nations, jealous of, and almost always hostile to each other, would present to the eye of the observer a singular mixture of customs, manners, and dress, if a resort of thieves and robbers could repay the trouble of observation.

You see them crowd on each other in the streets, running rather than walking : they likewise bawl rather than speak. I have frequently stopped to consider some persons who had all the appearance of being agitated by violent rage : they gave to their voice all the intensity which a broad and brawny chest could supply ; their physiognomy wore all the traits of passion ; their eyes sparkled ; violent gestures accompanied modes of expression which seemed still more violent. I approached them under the apprehension that they were going instantly to cut each others throats, and was astonished to learn that they were only driving some petty bargain, that not a word was of a threatening complexion ;

complexion ; that their exterior alone was in motion ; that, in a word, all this vehemence was only their usual mode of buying and selling.

This custom of giving to the voice the most powerful inflection of which it is capable, in speaking, is common to almost all the eastern nations, the Turks excepted, whose habits and deportment are more grave and composed \*. There is no person amongst us but who must have remarked that the Jews, that nation which has contrived to preserve its own character and usages, in the midst of other nations among whom they have been dispersed, likewise speak extremely loud, particularly to one another. If you except a few individuals of them, whose constraint, in an affected imitation of our manners, sufficiently evinces that they are not natural to them, you see them likewise, when they march through our streets, with the body stooping forward, and without bending the knee, taking short but brisk and hurried steps, which come nearer to running than the usual process of walking. They are found again in Egypt, where they live in a state of abjection still greater than else-

\* “ The Hindoos speak in a very loud tone of voice, which appeared to me disagreeable, till habit, which reconciles us to every thing, rendered it familiar to me.” Letter of a gentleman who passed several years in the military service of the English East India Company at Bombay, inserted into *Voyages in Europe, Asia, and Africa*, by Mackintosh, vol. i.

where,



where, such as we know them to be, avaricious, dexterous, insinuating, and low cheaters. Their depredations are not like those of the Bedouins and the other thieves of Egypt, neither committed with manly intrepidity, nor with open violence: they are, as in Europe, ingenious sharpening tricks, officious over-reachings, which fill their own purse, and, without making a noise, empty that of their neighbour. Such are the Jews wherever I have met with them; in all places their indelible vices of character appear, so long as they persist in keeping within the line which they have drawn between themselves and other nations; it is likewise observable, that in all places they practise the same methods, the same craft, the same knavery, the real plagues of social order; in a word, that same insensibility, that same ingratitude, with which they have recently repaid the generosity and magnanimity of the French nation.

Some Jewesses of Alexandria had, during my residence there, opened their houses for the reception of Europeans; they were deficient neither in beauty nor wit: their society was by no means without its allurements, and if there was ground to accuse them of rather an immoderate appetite for filthy lucre, the distinctive characteristic of the male part of their nation, their imposition was at least more palatable, their deceptions less provoking,

voking, and it was no difficult matter to forgive them.

It is abundantly obvious of what excesses men are capable, who, in the most ordinary transactions, display the symptoms of fury. When their soul is elevated, when it partakes of the impetuous movements of the body, they disdain all restraint. Like an overbearing torrent, which strikes terror at once by its noise, and by the ravages which it commits, they abandon themselves to all the vehemence of passion; then it is they really approximate to the savage animals which come to dispute with them the possession of the sands which they are equally eager and intelligent to stain with blood. Hence the insurrections, the tumultuous riots by which Europeans have often suffered so severely. It is worthy of being remarked, that this irritable character, this proneness to sedition, likewise was, though with a less rage, that of the ancient inhabitants of Alexandria.

If there be altars dedicated to the demon of revenge, in Egypt undoubtedly are the temples which contain them: there she is the goddess, or rather the tyrant of the human heart. Not only the generality of the men, whose combination constituted the mass of the inhabitants, never forgive, but, however signal the reparation made, they  
never

never rest satisfied till they have themselves dipped their hands in the blood of the person whom they have declared to be their enemy. Though they smother resentment long, and dissemble till they find a favourable opportunity to glut it, the effects are not the less terrible: they are not for that more conformable to the principles of reason. If a European, or, to use their term, a *Franc*, has provoked their animosity, they let it fall without discrimination on the head of a European, without troubling themselves to inquire whether the party were the relation, the friend, or even the compatriot of the person from whom they received the offence: thus they purge their resentment of the only pretext which could plead its excuse, and their vengeance is downright atrocity.

Alexandria was still ringing, at the time of my arrival at that city, with the noise of an assassination committed, a few years before, on the person of the representative of the French nation in that port \*. A French hair-dresser was taking the diversion of shooting in the environs of the town; an Arab picked a quarrel with him, which unfortunately terminated in his discharging his piece at

\* Citizen Volney has related this anecdote in his *Travels through Egypt and Syria*. Our accounts do not perfectly agree. I give the fact as I had it from eye-witnesses, and whose recollection of it was still fresh.

the Arab, and killing him. This murder was presently noised abroad. The people took fire, and, in their transport, resolved to sacrifice every European they could lay hold of. Their fury was with no little difficulty appeased, by delivering up the murderer to them, whom they hanged in the public square; but an Arab, the brother of him who was killed, though a witness of the execution, did not think himself sufficiently revenged; he bound himself by an oath to sacrifice the first *Franc* he should meet to the manes of his brother.

All Europeans confined themselves to their homes for three whole months, in hope that the wrath of this man would subside. At the expiration of that period, and on information sufficient to set their minds at rest, they believed it safe to go abroad. For eight days they appeared as usual, in the city and in the country, and no one had been in the least molested. The consul had not hitherto dared to shew himself: at length he thought that he too might take the air, without running any risk. He went to walk with a janisary of his guard on the bank of the canal. Unfortunately for him, the Arab, who, with the sentiment of revenge carefully treasured up in his heart, went constantly armed with a determination to gratify it, happened to be in the same quarter. He approached the Frenchman, who was under no manner of apprehension, and,

and, dastardly as cruel, brought him down to the ground by a gun-shot fired through his back. The janisary, instead of taking vengeance on the assassin, or at least of assisting the man whom it was his duty to protect, fled off as fast as his heels could carry him, and the unfortunate consul died of the wound a few hours after. The French merchants dispatched a fast-sailing boat to Constantinople, to demand justice. The Ottoman Porte sent officers with strict and severe orders on the subject; but these orders, at first evaded, remained finally unexecuted. The villain did not so much as quit the city, but shewed himself openly with impunity. The merchants were under the necessity of concealing their resentments for the sake of their own safety; and, beside the affront offered to the French nation by the unpunished assassination of her delegate, the national commerce had to regret the expenditure of considerable sums, fruitlessly laid out in demanding a just reparation.

Events of this kind, unhappily, were not sufficiently rare to ensure the tranquillity of those who were obliged to live in Egypt, and in some parts of Syria, where the people, beside their vicinity, have a considerable resemblance to those of Egypt. Toward the end of October, 1731, the Dutch *drogman* or interpreter at Aleppo, was walking for amusement with his consul. The peasants of a  
village



village adjacent thought proper to accuse him of having occasioned the death of a young man who had drowned himself, and whose body they were dragging out of the water. An accusation so absurd was supported by the whole village. The cry for vengeance was universal. They sent a deputation to the Pacha of Aleppo, demanding that the Dutchman might be given up to them. The governor refused. The villagers stirred up the populace of Aleppo. A formidable mob threatened to set fire to the city, and to massacre all the *Franks*, unless the *drogman*, who had fled for refuge to the Pacha's palace, was delivered up to them. That officer, though perfectly convinced of the Dutchman's innocence, was obliged, in order to prevent the most dreadful outrages, to order the ill-fated European to be strangled, and his body to be given to the mutineers, who hanged it up on a tree.

The picture which I have just presented of the manners of the inhabitants of modern Alexandria, gloomy as it may be, is by no means overcharged. I have painted them such as I have seen them. I might appeal, in support of what I have said, to the testimony of the most respectable travellers, and especially to that of the Europeans whom public employments, commercial speculations, or curiosity, may have induced to reside any length of time

at

at Alexandria, and who have been the witnesses, perhaps the victims, of this character of ferocity. If, on the entrance of a victorious army, they knew how to assume the appearance of good people, it is not to be wondered at. The cruellest of men is commonly the most abject: he has no valour, unless when he is sure of being the stronger; he fawns the moment he feels himself weak; but he retains his character of perfidy and treason, and those arms of grovelling souls he will certainly employ, as often as he thinks he can pass undiscovered.

The Arabic is the language generally spoken at Alexandria, as well as all over Egypt. But most of the Alexandrians, those in particular whom commercial intercourse brings into contact with the merchants of Europe, speak likewise the Italian, adopted in the ports of the Levant. The *Moresco* or *lingua Franca* is likewise spoken there; it is a compound of bad Italian, Spanish, and Arabic. A stranger could, more easily there than any where else, provide himself with domestics, who, if they were not of approved fidelity, had at least the facility of making themselves understood by persons not well versed in the Arabic. A *Serdar*, an officer of no great consideration, had the command there, and his power did not always extend so far as to overawe an ungovernable populace.

A wide

A wide extent of sand and dust, an accumulation of rubbish, was an abode worthy of the colony of Alexandria, and every day they were labouring hard to increase the horror of it. Columns subverted and scattered about; a few others still upright, but isolated; mutilated statues, capitals, entablatures, fragments of every species overspread the ground with which it is surrounded. It is impossible to advance a step, without kicking, if I may use the expression, against some of those wrecks. It is the hideous theatre of destruction the most horrible. The soul is saddened, on contemplating those remains of grandeur and magnificence, and is roused into indignation against the barbarians who dared to apply a sacrilegious hand to monuments which time, the most pitiless of devourers, would have respected.

## CHAP. IX.

*Enclosure of Alexandria by the Arabs—Cleopatra's needles—Cleopatra—Palace of the kings of Egypt—Pompey's column.*

THE enclosure of the city of Alexandria, once so vast, being several leagues in circumference, and containing near a million of inhabitants, had been contracted by the Arabs on their invasion of it. It is this new enclosure, formed of a hundred arched towers and solid walls, which encompasses modern Alexandria, the state of which, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, was so deplorable. But, too small for a zone of such extent, the existing city is far from occupying the whole interior of it: it is separated from the precinct by prodigious intervals, which present only the image of the most complete devastation, of piles of rubbish, and of wreck scattered about. Some authors pretend that these are the very walls which Alexander had ordered to be built. This opinion, long ago abandoned, has of late been revived by M. Tott\*; but their architecture has nothing similar to that of the Greeks or of the Romans; it is evidently in the style of the Arabs, and of the

\* Memoirs of the Baron de Tott, vol. ii. p. 180.

same kind with that of the walls of Cairo, which were incontestably built by them. The columns, and other fragments of monuments really antique, employed in building them, prove, beyond the power of contradiction, that their construction is more modern; and the inscriptions in Arabic and Kufique characters, with which the towers are charged in several places, leave no doubt with respect to their origin. It never was called in question by the greatest part of travellers, of whom I shall satisfy myself with quoting one, the learned Pocock, whose researches into antiquity are, of all others, the most profound. "It was," says he, "in the year 600 of the Hegira, answering to the year 1212 of the Christian era, that one of the successors of Saladin, who had just taken Egypt out of the hands of the caliphs of the race of Fatima, ordered the walls of modern Alexandria to be reared: he employed in this work, which is two French leagues in circumference, the wreck of the ancient city. The walls, and the hundred towers which flank them, are composed of fragments of marble and broken columns, confounded with common stones\*."

The thick walls, and the hundred towers with which they are flanked, embrace only, as we see from this quotation, a circuit of about two leagues;

\* Richard Pocock's Travels, vol. i. p. 493.



whereas, according to the most accurate measurements, the city of ancient Alexandria was from seven to eight leagues in circumference\*. The materials employed in the construction of some of those towers, besides the fragments of the more ancient monuments, are of a singular species, and of which no traveller, so far as I know, has taken notice. Common stones are to be seen only in places which have been repaired, or more recently constructed. Originally the mason-work was composed of stony masses, consisting of a prodigious quantity of small fossile and sparry shelly concretions, mixed, without any order, with a species of cement which binds the whole together; so that this substance, which is of the hardest consistency, appears to be a composition, an aggregation of art, rather than a natural stone.

The solidity of the walls, the vast capaciousness of the towers, which may be considered as so many forts, rendered the enclosure of the Arabs a rampart capable of making a stout resistance. In defiance of the dispositions and the efforts of the Mamelucs and their troops, a handful of Frenchmen, without cannon, and almost without ammunition, carried the place by escalade, in a few moments. Alexander had laid the foundations of a city, the memory of which has been perpetuated by its

\* Richard Pocock's Travels, vol. i. p. 493.

commerce,





2

*Cleopatra's Needle*

*Pompey's Column.*

commerce, by the cultivation of science, and by prodigies of art: Buonaparte has rescued the remains of that very city out of the hands of barbarians, whose presence sullied the ruins of it; he has restored it to the general commerce which its position ensures, and which will recall its ancient splendour. It is not easy to determine whether of these two heroes, the founder or the restorer, will excite most admiration in the eyes of posterity.

Toward the eastern extremity of the crescent, formed by the new bridge, and near the coast, are two obelisks. It has been agreed to give them the name of *Cleopatra's needles*, though it is by no means certain that they were the work of that Egyptian queen. To her likewise have been ascribed, without any one historical proof, the excavations which go by the name of *Cleopatra's baths*, and the construction of the canal which still conveys the waters of the Nile to the cisterns of Alexandria: a piece of homage rendered to the great qualities of the last queen of the race of the Ptolemies. Thus, while the name of the men who reared most of the astonishing edifices of ancient Egypt, is absolutely unknown, posterity carefully preserves the memory of a woman, rendered illustrious by her magnificence, her genius, her heroic character, and her incomparable beauty; of the woman, whose charms triumphed over the

greatest of the Romans; of the woman, finally, whom we can reproach only with the sallies of a passion, not easily restrained in an ardent soul, and under a burning sky, at which the graces disdain not to smile, and which nature does not disavow.

One of Cleopatra's needles is still upright on its base; the other is thrown down, and almost entirely buried in the sand. The former shews what the hand of man can do against time; the latter, what time can do against the efforts of man. I had it not in my power to take their dimensions; but an ancient French traveller, who seems to have measured them with extreme accuracy, assures us that their height is fifty-eight feet six inches, and the breadth of each face of their base seven feet\*. They are each cut out of a single block of granite, and charged on each side with hieroglyphical characters. The first figure of plate I. represents that one of the two needles which is standing, viewed from the north. The impression of the hieroglyphics was still very distinct on the faces of this needle, and might be easily decyphered, except those which look eastward, for these are entirely effaced.

Adjoining to those obelisks stood the palace of the Egyptian kings. Superb vestiges are still discernible of its grandeur and magnificence. They

\* Travels of M. de Monconys, 1695, vol. i. p. 307.







are an inexhaustible quarry of pieces of granite and marble, which the Alexandrians of to-day are dishonouring, by employing them in common with ordinary materials, in the construction of their dwellings and other common edifices. Very superficial digging in the site of this palace furnished, more abundantly than elsewhere, medals and engraved stones: they had become rarer, and indeed were hardly to be found at all, when I was at Alexandria. From those ruins too was extracted the fossile grinding tooth, represented in the size of nature, plate II. It passed for a human tooth, and consequently that of a giant. But this opinion is inadmissible by every one who has the slightest knowledge of anatomy. On comparing this tooth with those of known animals, there is a complete conviction that it must have belonged to an elephant.

As you go out of the enclosure of the Arabs, by the gate of the south, the eye is struck with one of the most astonishing monuments which antiquity has transmitted to us. Proud of not having sunk under the wastes of time, nor under the more prompt and terrible attacks of superstitious ignorance, rears its majestic head, the grandest column that ever existed. (See figure 2, of plate I.) It is of the most beautiful and the hardest granite, and is composed of three pieces, out of which have been cut the capital, the shaft, and the pedestal.

pedestal. I had not the means of measuring its height, and travellers who have gone before me are not perfectly agreed on this point. Savary assigns to it a height of a hundred and fourteen feet \* ; whereas Paul Lucas, who declares he had taken an accurate measurement of it, makes its height no more than ninety-four feet †. This last opinion was generally adopted by the Europeans of Alexandria. The height of the column was admitted there to be from ninety-four to ninety-five feet of France. The pedestal is fifteen feet high; the shaft with the socle seventy feet; finally, the capital, ten feet; in all, ninety-five feet. The mean diameter is seven feet nine inches. Admitting these proportions, the entire mass of the column may be estimated at six thousand cubic feet. It is well known that the cubic foot of red Egyptian granite weighs a hundred and eighty-five pounds. The weight of the whole column, therefore, is one million one hundred and ten thousand pounds, eight ounces to the pound.

However hard the substance of the column may be, it has not escaped the corroding tooth of time. The bottom of the shaft is very much damaged on the east side, and it is very easy to separate, on the same side, thin laminæ from the pedestal. It has

\* Letters on Egypt, vol. i. p. 36.

† Journey of Paul Lucas, in 1714, vol. ii. p. 22.



been already remarked, that the hieroglyphics of Cleopatra's needle were corroded on the face exposed to that point of the compass. It is most probably the effect of the wind blowing from the sea. Some have pretended, that on the opposite face, that to the west, a Greek inscription was discernible, when the sun bore upon it: but with all the attention I could employ, it was not in my power to perceive any thing of it.

The ground on which the pillar is raised having given way, part of the pivot which supports it has been laid open. It is a block of six feet only in the square: it bears the weight, as a centre, of a pedestal much larger than itself; which proves the exact perpendicularity of the whole. It too is granite, but of a species different from that of the column. The people of the country had built round the pivot, in the view of strengthening the pedestal. This piece of masonry, totally useless, was formed of stones of various qualities, among which fragments of marble, detached from the ruins of some antique edifice, and sculptured with beautiful hieroglyphics, attracted notice. While some were exerting themselves to prevent the falling of the monument, others, the Bedouins, as I was told, endeavoured to bring it down, in the hope of finding treasure under its base when burst to pieces. For this purpose they had employed the action of gunpowder;



powder ; but very fortunately they had no great skill in the art of mining. The explosion only carried away a portion of the mason-work so idly intended to be a prop to the pedestal.

→ Paul Lucas relates, that in 1714, a mountebank having got upon the capital with a facility which astonished every body, declared it was hollow at top\*. We have some years ago indications more positive on the subject. Some English sailors contrived to get upon the summit of the column, by means of a paper-kite, which assisted them in fixing a ladder of ropes : they found, as well as the man mentioned by Paul Lucas, a great round hollow in the middle of the capital, and moreover, a hole in each of the corners. It is therefore certain, that this chapter served as a base to some statue, the fragments of which seem to be irrecoverably lost. Some friends of M. Roboli, who had been French interpreter at Alexandria, have assured me that he had discovered near the column, pieces of a statue which, to judge from the fragments, must have been of a prodigious magnitude : that he had them conveyed to the house occupied by the French, but that, notwithstanding the most diligent researches, not being able to procure the other pieces of it, he had ordered the first to be thrown into the sea, close by that same house. They were shewn

\* Journey of Paul Lucas, in 1714, vol. ii. p. 22.

to me, but it was impossible for me to distinguish any thing, for they are almost entirely buried under the sand of the sea. I was farther informed, that those fragments of a statue were of the most beautiful porphyry.

We have nothing beyond conjecture, more or less supported by evidence, respecting the era, and the motives which dictated the construction of the column of Alexandria. The name *Pompey's column*, by which it is generally designed, indicates the origin commonly ascribed to it. Cesar, we are told, ordered it to be erected, to perpetuate the memory of the victory which he had gained over Pompey, in the celebrated battle of Pharsalia. Relying on the testimony of an Arabian author, Savary pretends that it was a monument of the gratitude of the inhabitants of Alexandria to the Roman emperor, Alexander-Severus\*. Finally, others ascribe the elevation of the pillar to a king of Egypt, Ptolemeus-Euergetes.

Mr. W. Montague, whom his extensive erudition and singular adventures have raised to celebrity, had formed, during his long residence in the East, a new opinion on the same subject. He maintained that the column was the work of Adrian, another Roman emperor, who had travelled in

\* Letters on Egypt, vol. i. p. 37.

Egypt. But he could adduce no proof in support of this assertion: wishing, nevertheless, to give currency to his idea, he was under the necessity, in the view of persuading others of the truth of what he had persuaded himself, to employ a little ingenious fraud. I have the fact from a witness of undoubted veracity. The sly Englishman had got one of his people to introduce a small coin of the emperor Adrian, in a spot agreed on, between the ground on which this pillar rests, and its sous-base. He afterwards repaired to the place, attended by a numerous company, and, after affected researches, he dextrously unearthed the coin with the blade of a knife, and ostentatiously displayed it as an incontestable proof of the truth of his position. He sent an account of the discovery to his own country, where it did not meet with much credit, and indeed hardly could, with persons who knew the column. The Greeks, it is true, from the time of Adrian, had diffused over Egypt the principles of a beautiful architecture, and of elegance in all the arts. A judgment may be formed of this from the remains of the city which that very emperor had caused to be built in the upper part of that country, in honour of Antinös, a young man celebrated in ancient history for his extraordinary beauty of person, and his generous devotedness to a Roman who has been more cried up than he deserves. The columns which still subsist at Antinöe are cut with greater delicacy,

delicacy, and have forms more elegant than that of Alexandria. Not that this last wants beauty; but its principal merit consists in the prodigious magnitude of its dimensions, and the truly astonishing enormity of its mass.

The same considerations which suggest a doubt respecting the ascription of this pillar to the time of Adrian, apply still more forcibly to that of the emperor Severus. Abulfeda, quoted by Savary, only says, "Alexandria possesses a renowned pharos, and the column of Severus\*." He adds not a word more, and does not so much as point out the spot where the column of Severus was reared. The city of Alexandria contained such a number of columns, that it is impossible to ascertain to which of them the passage of the Arabic historian is applicable. Alexander-Severus traced his pedigree up to Alexander the Great: it was natural for him to prize a city founded by the conqueror his ancestor, and it is by no means wonderful, that he should endeavour farther to embellish it by works of various description, to supply the place of such as had been thrown down or destroyed, with those which had already rendered it so magnificent. On the other hand, on comparing the column dedicated to Severus, and still existing in the ancient city of Antinœ, with that of Alexandria, we shall find it im-

\* Description of Egypt, Savary's translation.

possible to conclude that they are both of one and the same period. The hieroglyphics with which the granite-pivot, the immoveable support of the column, is sculptured, farther appear a new proof of the period of its elevation, much more ancient than the reigns of Adrian and Severus, and they indicate a production of the most remote antiquity. This consideration, united with the silence of historians on the subject, seems to throw back even to an era more distant than that of the defeat of Pompey, the construction of the column which bears his name. If amidst these uncertainties, which, in defiance of the researches of the learned, frequently involve the past and the future in the same obscurity, I durst venture to hazard an opinion of my own, I should be tempted to ascribe the honour of the erection of the column of Alexandria to the ancient times which produced so many prodigies in Egypt, to those eras when myriads of men were employed, for years together, in transporting masses of stone, the movement of which seemed to exceed human strength, and to demand the exertions of beings more than mortal.

Whatever be in this sentiment, it would be difficult now to change the appellation so long affixed to the column of Alexandria, and, whatever good reasons may be alleged to the contrary, it is very probable it will still retain the name of *Pompey's*



*pey's column.* Nevertheless it is likewise probable, that posterity will recollect that this column was the head-quarters, from whence Buonaparte issued orders for the escalade and capture of Alexandria ; that the bodies of the heroes who perished as the victims of their own bravery, are deposited round the pedestal, and that their names are engraven upon it ; it is likewise probable that, more struck with the genius of the victory, and of the sublime combinations connected with it, than with that which has conferred celebrity on ancient Egypt by her works of stupendous magnificence, absorbed in the immortality of the French nation, shall be disposed to fix the era of this dawning glory, and that to future ages the *column of Pompey* shall be the *column of the French Republic.*

I have heard it said at Alexandria, that an idea was formerly entertained of transporting to France the column so much admired there. The Levantins and the navigators of Provence considered this enterprise as impracticable ; they forgot, or perhaps they never knew that this very mass of granite had been conveyed from the quarries of Syène, that is, more than two hundred leagues : they did not know that Caius Cesar had transported from Egypt to Rome an obelisk of a hundred cubits, or twenty-five fathoms, in height, and eight cubits, or two fathoms, in diameter ; that Augustus  
intended

intended to put Rome likewise in possession of the two obelisks reared at Heliopolis by Sesostris, and which are each a hundred and twenty cubits high ; that Constantine ordered the transportation of another obelisk no less considerable, and in the construction of which Ramases, king of Egypt, had employed two thousand men ; they did not know finally, that within these few years, Petersburg has conveyed into her bosom, from a very considerable distance, a huge rock of three millions of pounds weight.

Grand enterprises are the real monuments of the glory of great nations. It would be worthy of that nation which, in a few years, has surpassed in acts of heroic valour, all that the page of Roman history displays, to appropriate to herself the column of Alexandria. If extraordinary means are requisite for this purpose, the genius of the sciences, inseparable from that of true glory, is there to devise them, and the arts, which likewise rise with the people who cultivate them, will not fail in the execution. In the midst of one of the squares of Paris, that of the *Revolution*, for example, the column could not fail to produce the most majestic effect. A colossal statue might surmount its capital ; this should be the image of Liberty : it would look down on the palaces of the depositaries of power, and by its bold and imposing attitude would strike terror into the heart

heart of whoever dared to abuse authority, to oppress or betray a nation of men, of whose power it would be at the same time an eternal emblem\*.

\* Here the cloven foot is completely uncovered. A principle is avowed, from which justice turns away her face, and at which humanity shudders. Gracious Heaven! what *right* has France to plunder Rome of her pictures and statues, and Egypt of her columns? The right which our author himself, a little ago, execrated in the bitterest terms; the right of the stronger to oppress the weaker, the right of the tiger to tear the lamb. Thus Paris is to be enriched and embellished at the expense of all the nations of the globe, and the sacred name of liberty is vilely prostituted to abet democratic tyranny. *Ex uno disce omnes.* It is the interest of all mankind surely, to resist a principle so abominable, and to unite in crushing every attempt to reduce it to practice.—H. H.

## CHAP. X.

*Ruins—Canal of Alexandria—Cisterns—Culture of the country adjacent to the canal—Salt-wort—Birds—Sparrows—Catacombs—Cameleons—Jackals.*

IF on taking your departure from the pillar of Alexandria, you proceed southward, you cross an oblong gullet, spacious, and of considerable depth. It contains the relics of ancient buildings, among which are distinguishable, on a level with the sand, thick and solid walls, disposed in form of the letter T. Toward the extremity of the longitudinal branch of this T, there are two fragments of columns of granite, and at the very extremity, a subterraneous excavation, the entrance into which is now completely blocked up. The people of the country call this place *Guirgé*. Thence you arrive at the canal or kalish of Alexandria.

In the times of Alexander and of the kings of Egypt, Alexandria was not, as it now is, in the midst of sands: it was not encompassed with that zone of sterility, which renders its environs at present so disagreeable. A lake, the Maréotis, which was at no great distance, and two wide canals, one of which descended from Upper Egypt, and

and the other issued from the branch of the Nile, to which the name of *Bolbotic* has been given, preserved there a salutary coolness, at the same time that they favoured vegetation and agriculture. These works, which attested the grandeur and the power of ancient Egypt, and the maintenance of which was equally called for by the real wants and the innocent pleasures of human life, were still kept up, under the domination of the caliphs. Abulfeda, an historian of Arabia, speaks of Alexandria as a very great city, encompassed by superb gardens\*. The destruction of what had cost so much pains and labour was reserved for the Turks. Their spirit of devastation had dried up those reservoirs of water which, with their moisture, diffused fertility, as it has quenched the sources of knowledge, and of all mental energy in the people who have been so unfortunate as to be subjected to a despotism the most horrible.

Of these nothing now remains, and that too in a state of degradation, but the canal of Lower Egypt: during the inundation it received the waters of the Nile at *Latf*, opposite to *Fouah*. It is passable by three bridges of modern construction. Near the first, toward the sea, is the entrance of the subterraneous conduit, which conveys the provision of water for the inhabitants of Alexandria into the

\* Description of Egypt.



cisterns, the arches of which supported the whole extent of the ancient city, and which the whole world is agreed in considering as one of the most beautiful monuments on the face of the globe\*. The mouth of this aqueduct was walled up, but when the water of the canal had attained, by the swelling of the river, a certain height, the chiefs of the city went in great ceremony to break down the dike. When the cisterns were filled, it was built up again, and the waters in the canal continued to flow into the sea at the old harbour. It was by means of a communication so easy, that, in former times, the transportation of merchandise was conducted all over Egypt. The dangerous passage of the mouths of the Nile, and the hazards of the sea, were thereby avoided. When I was at Alexandria in 1788, it was not much under a hundred years since it had been navigable by boats; but this canal, whose benefits are inestimable, was neglected by barbarians indifferent to their real interests. The walls which supported its borders were going to ruin every day; the pavement of the bottom was covered with successive layers of mud; there was no longer water sufficient to float a boat; a yellowish and ill-tasted water could hardly force its way so far as to the cisterns, which were themselves half destroyed; the inhabitants were, of course, in danger of a total failure of that necessary fluid, and

\* It was not in my power to see them.

modern Alexandria would have disappeared in the sand, leaving only a resort for ferocious animals, which seemed already to threaten it, as they roamed round and round its walls.

The brink of the canal is animated by some of the rich productions of living nature: at a greater distance she appears dead; nothing is to be seen on all sides but sands, rocks, and sterility. Trees and shrubbery grow by the water's side, and some spots of verdure extend to the vicinity. Small ramifications of water carry fecundity into the plains, in which they sow barley, and cultivate a variety of leguminous plants, particularly artichokes in abundance. The culture of this district once extended much farther: it would have been easy for the modern Alexandrians to push it still farther; but they had no activity, except for committing robbery; and it is not a matter of surprise that people who were at no pains to preserve the only water that they could drink, should not employ themselves in procuring the other necessaries and comforts of life.

Such are the vestiges of the agriculture with which ancient Alexandria was surrounded; the remains of those superb gardens which contributed to its magnificence, and the deliciousness of which Abulfeda cried up, down even to the times of the

Arabs. In truth, a few trees scattered up and down, and scarcely vegetating on that sandy district, are far from being sufficient to veil its aridity and ruggedness: several species of salt-wort, acrid and saline plants, whose Arabic name *kali* has been given to alkaline substances, are nearly the only sort which possess the property of thriving on those coasts, and even there they rather creep than rise. The Alexandrians burn them, and derive from their ashes a fixed salt, which is an object of commerce.

The verdure, the coolness, and the shade, had attracted to the banks of the canal a multitude of small birds. It was in the month of October: I could distinguish the fig-pecker\*, the common lark †, and sparrows. Bird-catchers employ themselves in taking the two first species, and in thereby destroying the only beings which could confer on their habitations some appearance of gaiety. But these birds, the sparrows excepted, were merely birds of passage at Alexandria: they rested themselves from the fatigue of a long voyage near the waters of the canal: these were hastening to

\* Bec figue. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 668, fig. 1. *Motacilla ficedula*. Lin.

† L'alouette. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 363, fig. 1. *Alauda arvensis*. Lin.

a state which was to present to them nothing but a bed of mud; they were already stagnant, and of a brackish taste, and the birds which had the good fortune to escape the snares laid for them on all sides, when they arrived, prepared to seek toward the Delta, a land more fortunate, a situation more cheerful, and retreats more tranquil.

The sparrows, on the contrary, more habituated to the society of man, because their flesh, less delicate, provokes not his appetite, do not migrate; except in some excursions, in quest of more ample means of subsistence, they leave not inhabited places, and make them likewise their own residence. They are domesticated birds, forming round us a voluntary aviary of impudent parasites, who partake, whether we will or not, both of our food and of our habitation; they have, in Egypt, the same character which we know them to possess in Europe, the same familiarity, the same effrontery, the same voraciousness. They are there likewise the uninvited guests of the Alexandrians; they are to be seen in all the inhabited districts of Egypt; they are in like manner diffused over Nubia, and even over Abyssinia. Excessive heat, therefore, does not disagree with them; at the same time they are not to be found along the western coast of Africa; from cape Blanc, or near about it, they

are replaced by the bengalis\*, the senegalis †, and the little sparrows of the Senegal ‡. Not being able, after what I have just now said, to ascribe the cause of this fact to the excessive heat, I think I can account for it from the difference of the alimentary plants used in those parts of Africa. Wheat and its kindred grains are cultivated in Egypt, in Nubia, in Abyssinia, just as on the Barbary coast; they cease to be so toward the vicinity of cape Blanc; other nutritive plants supply their place to the negroes which inhabit to the south of that promontory; and the grains of those plants are no longer a food suitable to sparrows; so that if they do not frequent all the corn-bearing countries, it is at least certain that they never fix a residence in those where that species of grain and its kindred plants are not cultivated.

The rapid glance which we have just taken of some of the productions of animated nature, refreshed the imagination, fatigued with hovering over fragments and rubbish. Thanks be to the mother of all beings! Eternal praises be ascribed

\* The bengali, Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 115, fig. 1. *Fringilla bengalus*. Lin.

† The senegali, Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 157, fig. 1. and the striped senegali, *ibid.* & pl. enlum. No. 157, fig. 2. *Fringilla senegala*. Lin.

‡ Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 280, fig. 2.



to her unchangeable beneficence! It was her will to preserve on a parched and red-coloured soil, and amidst the horrors of destruction, a point in which she knew, in defiance of the efforts of barbarians who discerned her not, how to make some articles of her beautiful dress to appear in shining colours. It is with regret that the feet withdraw, that the eyes turn aside from a spot which comparison renders so enchanting. My pen exerts itself to communicate to the reader the delightful sensations there excited in my own bosom. But we must hasten to reach a country on which Nature has lavished her treasures. That thought revives my courage: for we have still to wade through sands, and must first plunge into the gloomy mansions of the dead, into the catacombs.

They are at a short distance from the canal: they are galleries lengthening a prodigious way under ground, or rather into the rock. They have, in all probability, been at first the quarries which furnished stones for the construction of the edifices of Alexandria, and, after having supplied the men of that country with the materials of their habitations, while they lived, are themselves become their last abode after death. Though vast, they did not require very painful labour, the layer of stone being soft and calcareous; it is as white as that of Malta, and, like it, the consistence is increased by the impression

pression of the air. But the rock of Malta is bare, whereas that of Egypt is, for the most part, covered with the sands. It is undoubtedly on account of the want of hardness in the rock, that the ancient Egyptians had plastered over the interior of the galleries with a kind of mortar, which has acquired a wonderful solidity, and which it is very difficult to break. Most of those subterraneous alleys are in a ruinous state. In the smaller number of those into which it was still possible to penetrate, you might see on both sides three rows of coffins, piled on each other: they are not, as at Malta, cut lengthwise, but transversely: their greater sides are on an inclined plan inwardly, so that the bottom of the coffin is much narrower than the upper part. At the extremity of some of those galleries there are separate apartments with their coffins, and reserved, no doubt, for the sepulture of particular families, or of a peculiar order of citizens.

If the Arabs are to be believed, the catacombs have a subterranean communication with the pyramids of Memphis. Such an opinion of their immense extent has an appearance of exaggeration: it is not, at the same time, beyond the other gigantic labours of the Egyptians, and the fact well deserves to be ascertained. It is more certain that they extend as far as the sea, at the bottom of the old harbour; at least the three grottos or cavities  
cut

cut out in the rock on the coast, and which Europeans have decorated, improperly enough, with the name of *Cleopatra's baths*, seem to be a continuation of them.

At the entrance of the catacombs I have seen several cameleons\*. It is now well known, that the changing of their colours is not to be ascribed to the objects presented to them; that their different affections increase or diminish the intensity of the tints, with which the very delicate skin which covers them is, as it were, marbled: that they are not satisfied with nourishment so unsubstantial as air; that they require more solid aliment, and swallow flies and other insects; and that, finally, the marvellous stories which have been told respecting this species of lizard, are merely a tissue of fictions, which have disgraced the science of nature down to this day. I have preserved some cameleons, not that I was tempted to repeat the experiment of Cornelius Le Bruyn, who after having gravely assured us, that the cameleons which he kept in his apartment, at Smyrna, lived on air, adds, that they died one after another, in a very short space of time †; but I wished to satisfy myself to what a point they could subsist without food. I

\* Cameleon. Lacepede, Natural History of oviparous Quadrupeds.—*Lacerta chameleon*. Lin.

† Voyage to the Levant, vol. i. p. 515.

had employed every precaution to prevent entirely their having any, without ceasing to be exposed to the open air. They lived thus for twenty days : but what kind of life ! From being plump, as they were when I caught them, they soon became extremely thin. With their good plight, they gradually lost their agility and their colours; the skin became livid and wrinkled, it adhered close to the bone, so that they had the appearance of being dried before they ceased to exist.

The catacombs likewise frequently serve as a retreat for the jackals, which swarm in this part of Egypt: they always march in numerous squadrons, and roam around the habitation of man. Their cries occasion much disturbance, especially in the night-time; it is a sort of yelping which may be compared to the shrill complainings of children of different ages. They greedily devour cadaverous substances and the garbage on laystalls; in a word, cruel as voracious, they are an object of apprehension even to man.

It is of the jackal that we are to understand all that authors have said of the wolf, and even of the fox of Africa; for, admitting that these animals have, to a certain degree, a relation to each other, it is however well known, that there are neither wolves nor foxes in that part of the world. The name  
given

given to the jackal in Egypt is *deib*: the *fellahs*, or the peasantry of the country, likewise call them, after some popular legend no doubt, *abou Soliman*, Soliman's father.

These ferocious animals are not afraid of advancing close up to Alexandria; they traverse its enclosure during the night; they frequently spring over it by the breaches made in the wall; they enter into the city itself in quest of their prey, and fill it with their cries: a species of association worthy of the men by whom it was inhabited.

But an animal more gentle, and at the same time more extraordinary, which occupies subterraneous apartments in the vicinity of Alexandria, is the gerboise or jerbo.



## CHAP. XI.

*Natural history of the jerbo of Egypt, with remarks on natural history in general, and a note respecting a plan of travelling into the interior of Africa.*

WHAT the reader is now going to peruse has been already published, a great part of it at least, in the Journal of Physics of the month of November 1789. I at that time determined to lay before the public my observations on the jerbo, because Buffon, not having been able to procure a single individual of this genus of quadrupeds, nor accurate information respecting their manner of life, has described it from very defective information. The work of Mr. Bruce, who has preceded me in the publication of his travels, as he had likewise preceded me in the expedition itself, had not yet appeared at the period when my memoir was printed. That illustrious traveller has confirmed what I had said on the subject of the jerbo, and he has enabled me to rectify a mistake in nomenclature into which I was led, and Buffon before me, on the authority of one of his compatriots, Dr. Shaw, by a false application of name. But however interesting the notes respecting the jerbo may be, which are introduced into Mr. Bruce's travels,

mine,

mine, beside the merit of priority in point of time, contain more facts, and present a history more complete, of those singular animals; this is at least the idea entertained of them, at the time, by the learned world; I satisfy myself with quoting the authors of the *Encyclopedic Journal*. In the account which they gave of the fifth volume of *Travels in Nubia and Abyssinia*, by Mr. James Bruce, and after having transcribed his chapter on the jerbo, they add: “The ancients had described this  
 “ animal. Herodotus, Theophrastus, and the  
 “ Arabs, make mention of the jerbo; but among  
 “ the moderns, no naturalist has described it better  
 “ than M. Sonnini, &c. who has travelled several  
 “ years to promote the progress of natural history.” The compilers of that publication afterwards give an extract from my observations\*.

The memoir, which I printed in 1787, will here, therefore, naturally find a place, and the rather, that it will now appear accompanied with additions highly interesting to natural history.

Since the time that the eloquent compositions of Buffon have given a powerful impulse to the science of nature, which he has had the skill to render so attractive and so amiable, varieties have been

\* *Encyclopedic Journal* for the month of September, A. D. 1792.

discovered

discovered in the family of the jerbo. But the first result which I have obtained from an attentive examination, and accurate descriptions of several of those animals, has ascertained to me, that there existed but one variety of them in Egypt, where they are multiplied without end. In fact, among all those which I have observed at different times and in different places, I never remarked the least dissimilitude of either form or colour.

For the facility of pronunciation, I shall distinguish this gerboise of Egypt, by the name of *jerbo*, under which Buffon has given a description of it \*, though its real name, its Arabic name, be *jerboa*. It is a mistake in Hasselquitz, which Bruce has likewise corrected †, to say that the Arabs call it *garbuka* ‡.

That travellers, unacquainted with natural history, and consequently without taste for observa-

\* Natural History of Quadrupeds, art. Gerboise.—*Lepus caudá elongatá*, Lin. Syst. Nat. edit. 9. *Mus jaculus*, ibid. edit. 12. *Dipus jaculus*, ibid. edit. 13.—*Mus jaculus pedibus posticis longissimis, caudá extremi villosá*. Hasselquitz, Travels in Palestine, vol. ii. p. 6, and Mem. of the Acad. of Upsal, 1750, p. 17.—*Gerbo*. Cornelius Le Bruyn's Travels, p. 406.—*Gerboise*. Paul Lucas, Travels, vol. ii. p. 73.—*Jerboa*. Shaw's Voyage, p. 248.—The two-footed mouse of the mountains, called by the Arabians *jerbo*. Michaëlis, quest. 92, &c. &c.

† Travels in Nubia and Abyssinia, vol. v. 151.

‡ Hasselquitz, in the place above quoted.

tions of this kind, should, at first sight, and without farther examination, have imposed false denominations on foreign animals, from some apparent relation, whether in respect of form or mode of living, with known animals, is not a matter of surprise: their manner of viewing objects was superficial and vulgar, the results had the same defects. But there is good reason to be surprised, that naturalists by profession, that Hasselquitz, for example, the pupil of an illustrious master, should have fallen into the same errors. He is so much the less excusable, that he did not fix on the denomination to be appropriated, till after a long and even minute examination. But he had, like his master Linnæus, the mania of referring to the same genus, beings which nature had separated. This union of objects, frequently very remote from each other in the true system of nature, was founded merely on certain approximations in the exterior forms: approximations isolated, vague, taken by chance, and so destitute of foundation, that they might be given up, and were in fact given up, to assume others equally precarious, by means of which, the same animal changed place or genus, at the pleasure of the nomenclator\*.

After having examined each form in particular, to catch and to compare their combination; above

\* See the proof of this in the nomenclature introduced in the first note, bottom of the preceding page.

all to study the manners, the modes of life; to bring to the observation of nature neither prejudice, nor the spirit of system; to see things as they are, and not as we would have them to be; such is the character of the real naturalist, whereas that of the vocabulary-compiler is to confound every thing. The jerbo furnishes us with an example of this confusion in the science of nature; certain resemblances, each taken separately, have suggested comparisons between it and the hare, the rabbit, the rat, the field-mouse, &c. though they so evidently differ from each other that any man without the slightest knowledge of natural history, provided he possessed a sound understanding, would readily distinguish them. Nevertheless these very improper denominations of *hare*, *rabbit*, *rat*, *field-mouse*, &c. have been indiscriminately applied to the jerbo, by naturalists and ill-informed travellers; and it is worthy of remark, that erudition without genius, sometimes produces the same effects that ignorance does.

It is in the burning climates of Africa, principally, that Nature seems to have taken pleasure in varying, in a manner altogether singular, the forms of the beings which she has placed there, and in deviating from the rules and the proportions which she seemed to have adopted, if, however, that can be called a deviation, which is a proof of her boundless and inexhaustible fecundity. On that fiery soil  
it



it is we find the giraffe or cameleopard, remarkable for the disproportionate height of his fore-legs \*. We likewise find an extreme disproportion between the legs of the jerbo; but the hinder legs are, in this animal, excessively long, whereas the fore scarcely appear. These long limbs, or, to express myself with greater precision, these long feet, for it is the tarsus which is so immoderately lengthened, are of use to the jerbo only in his progressive movement: those before, which may be considered as little hands, are useless to him in removing from place to place. He hops after the manner of birds; and this kind of motion, which would be very constraining to every other quadruped, is so much adapted to him, that his running, or rather his leaping, is very nimble and very speedy. He then is an animal which, with four feet, seems to be withdrawing from the class of quadrupeds, to assume somewhat of the impress of that of birds. Placed on the first step of the passage from the one to the other, he constitutes the first degradation of quadrupeds, and commences the progression from these to birds. The celebrated man who has carried the torch of philosophy into the sanctuary of nature, was the first to establish this sublime and important truth: that the workmanship of Nature had not been intersected by wide intervals, nor by sudden

\* Giraffe. Buffon, Nat. Hist. Quadrupeds.—*Camelopardalis giraffa*. Lin.

breaks ; that all her productions were mutually connected ; that the transition from class to class, from genus to genus, from species to species, was conducted by gradual shades of difference ; and that those classes, those genera, those species were, in the eyes of the philosopher, only so many signs calculated to relieve the mind, so many divisions to assist the memory.

Though the transition from quadrupeds to birds has not been hitherto distinctly traced, though all the points of it be not yet ascertained, we are not the less warranted to consider this union as existing : we have the commencement of it in the jerbo, and the last gradation in the bat. There is all the reason in the world to believe, that the series of successive shades will unfold itself in proportion as good observers shall devote themselves to travelling, in countries not yet disclosed to natural history. I am convinced that the interior of Africa, a region to this day virgin in respect of discovery, contains a multitude of new and valuable objects, the knowledge of which would diffuse light inconceivable on all the parts of general physics. May I be permitted, in this place, to communicate the design which I had formed, some years ago, of penetrating into those regions which, till now, have been deemed inaccessible ? My intention was to range the whole length of the continent of Africa, through  
its

its middle, from the hardly known Gulf of Sidra, to the Cape of Good Hope. I claim the honour of having conceived this project, which scares the imagination, and of having felt myself possessed of courage to put it in execution, had government deigned to second my views. I shall return, afterwards, to unfold the plan which I had traced, and which, had it been followed out, would have ensured to France the glory of an enterprise till then unattempted, and which other nations seem desirous to take out of her hand. But I proceed to the description of the jerbo.

His size is nearly that of a large rat: the head is broad, large in proportion to the body, flattened a-top, and of a clear pale red with a blackish shade; the upper jaw projecting beyond the lower; both the one and the other furnished with two incisive teeth only; those above broad, cut in right angles, flat and divided lengthwise, by a groove passing through the middle; finally, those of the under jaw longer, convex externally, pointed at their extremity, and bent back inwardly. It is evident that these teeth are, or not far from it, disposed and formed as those of the hare, of the rat, and of the field-mouse, and this resemblance has procured all these names to the jerbo. It would have been just as reasonable to take him for a beaver, or for a porcupine, which are equally destitute of canine teeth,

teeth, and have only four incisives. The snout is short, broad, and obtuse; a number of stiff hairs extend from side to side, and form long whiskers. The nose is naked, white, and cartilaginous: the eyes, large and prominent, have the iris brown; the ears are long, large, and covered with hair so short, that unless you look at it close, you would suppose them naked. Externally, they are white in the lower part, and gray through the rest of their length: their inside, as well as the sides of the head, are of a very clear pale red, with a mixture of gray and blackish; they entirely surround, for about a third of their length, the auditory passage, so that they represent exactly the upper part of a paper cornet. This conformation must increase, in animals, the faculty of hearing, and, above all, guard the interior of the organ against extraneous substances which might otherwise find admission.

The body is longish, broader behind than before, and well clothed with hair, long, soft, and silky. That which covers the upper part and the sides of the body is ash-coloured almost the whole length through, and of a clear pale red toward the point, which is blackish: but as the ashy part is not apparent, it may be said that the fleecy coat is a clear pale red, and variegated with blackish lines running zig-zag. These tints, somewhat dark, contrast

trast agreeably with the beautifully shining white of the under part of the body.

The fore-feet are so short that they scarcely project beyond the hair; they are white and have five toes, the greatest of which, or interior toe, is very short, rounded at the extremity, and has no nail. The other four, the second whereof outward is the longest, are of considerable length, and armed with great hooked nails. The heel is very much raised, and the inside, or sole of the foot, is naked and flesh-coloured. I have already remarked that they might be taken for hands; in truth they are of no service to the jerbo for walking, but only for laying hold of his food and carrying it to his mouth, and also for digging his hole.

The hinder legs are clothed with long hair of a faint red and white: the long feet are almost entirely naked, especially on the outside; which must of necessity be the case, as the animal, whether in motion or at rest, is continually supported on this part of the body. Those feet, so excessively lengthened out, have three toes; that in the middle is somewhat greater than the other two; they are all furnished with short nails, but broad and obtuse; they have besides on the heel a species of spur, or rather a very small rudiment of a fourth toe, which constitutes a point of re-



semblance between the jerbo of Egypt and the *alagtaga* of Tartary, described by Gmelin\*, and which has probably escaped Hasselquitz, as well as many others. Moreover, the toes and the heel are furnished, on the under side, with long hair, all of gray tinged with yellow, excepting those which cover the root of the toes, and whose colour is blackish. The nails, both before and behind, are of a dingy white.

According to Hasselquitz, in the passage above referred to, the tail of the jerbo is three times longer than the body; I never found it, however, longer than a little above one-half more. Its circumference is not much greater than that of a large goose-quil; but it is quadrangular, and not round; it is gray-coloured, deeper on the upper than on the under side, and covered with a sleek hair down to its extremity, which terminates in a tuft of long silky hair, half black, half gray.

On comparing this description with that which Gmelin has given of the *alagtaga*, in the New Commentaries of the Academy of Petersburgh (vol. v.), it will appear, that the jerbo has a strong resemblance to it; they have both the same number of toes on the fore-feet, the spur on the hinder, the same length of tail, &c. which is a proof of two

\* *Nov. Comment. Acad. Petropol.* tom. v. art. 7.

things :

things: first, that the jerbo and the alagtaga are one and the same animal; secondly, that the descriptions which have been given of the jerbo are not very accurate. What chiefly suggested doubts to Buffon's mind, respecting the identity of the jerbo and the alagtaga, was the disparity of the climates which each inhabited, the former being resident in Africa, and the alagtaga being found in the cold regions of Siberia. But this is not the only instance which might be adduced to the same effect. Many species of animals are scattered over the icy countries of the north, and over the sultry districts of the south. Rats take pleasure to reside in very hot climates, and they live very comfortably in the north of Sweden. Hares inhabit with equal convenience the burning sands of Africa, and the snows of Lapland, of Siberia, of Greenland, &c. &c.

It is likewise certain that the gerboise of Cyrenais, or the desert of Barca, described by Mr. Bruce, in vol. v. of his Travels in Nubia and Abyssinia, is only a variety in the tribe of the jerbo; the slight differences remarked not being, by far, sufficient to constitute two distinct species. To the researches of Mr. Bruce we are farther indebted for the exact knowledge of another animal, which had very improperly been confounded with the jerbo, and to which he has given the name of *daman-israël*, or  
*lamb*

*lamb of Israël.* So far from having the singular and very distinctive character of the jerbo, namely, the excessive length of the hinder legs, this *daman* has all his legs equal, or nearly so, and he has no tail, whereas that of the jerbo is very long. Dr. Shaw\* was the first who fell into the mistake of confounding two animals so very unlike; and this error was successively copied, till Mr. Bruce detected it, whose observations have thrown much light on a subject formerly involved in doubt and darkness. By taking the jerbo for the *daman-israël*, the same which the Hebrews called *schafan*, all that Arabian authors have said of the second has been ascribed to the first. In truth, on reading the philological dissertations which have been composed on the subject, and after the jerbo was well known, a man was embarrassed in attempting to discover in that quadruped, the mode of living, the instinctive sagacity, the profound wisdom, which the writers of the East have so much cried up, and which Solomon celebrates in his Proverbs†. Thus, it is ascertained, that whatever has been written by the Hebrews or the Arabians, on the subject of the superior qualities of a species of animals which dig

\* Travels through Barbary.

† *Quatuor sunt minima terræ, & ipsa sunt sapientiora sapientibus* ..... *Lepusculus*; it is thus that the Vulgate translates the word, but the *schafan* is the animal described: *Plebs invalida, quæ collocat in petrâ cubile suum.* Proverbs, xxx. 24. 26.

their

their common habitation in a body, in certain parts of the East, is to be understood of the daman, and not of the jerbo: with this addition, nevertheless, that a naturalist might reasonably expect some allowance should be made for certain exaggerations in the oriental style.

I present a table of the principal dimensions of the jerbo. It is the mean term of measurements taken of several subjects, and these females, because females first fell in my way. The difference of magnitude between the sexes is besides very inconsiderable.

	Inches.	Lines.
Length of the body, from the tip of the nose to the root of the tail —	5	6
Length of the head, taken in a straight line, from the tip of the nose to the nape — — — —	1	8
Breadth of the snout at its extremity	0	4
Breadth of the aperture of the mouth, taken from one corner of the jaw to the other — — —	0	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Projection of the upper jaw beyond the under — — — —	0	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Length of the upper teeth — —	0	2
Length of the under teeth — —	0	3
Distance between the two nostrils —	0	1
		Distance

	Inches.	Lines.
Distance between the tip of the nose and the anterior angle of the eye	0	10
Distance between the posterior angle of the eye and the ear — —	0	2½
Distance between the two angles of the eye — — — —	0	5
Distance between the anterior angles of the eyes, taken in a straight line	1	0½
Length of the ears — —	1	6
Breadth of the ears, at the base —	0	5
Distance between the ears — —	0	9
Length of the tail — — —	8	6
Thickness of the tail at its root —	0	2
Total length of the fore-legs —	1	7
Length of the great toe — —	0	1½
Length of the second toe measured with the nail — — —	0	3
Total length of the hinder-legs —	6	2
Length of the middle toe measured with the nail — — —	0	10
Length of the spur — — —	0	1

The female has eight teats, the position of which is remarkable; they are situated more outwardly than those of other quadrupeds. The first pair is beyond the joint of the shoulder, and the last is rather under the thigh than under the belly. The other two pairs, being on the same line, are thus placed rather on the sides than under the body.

The



The male is modelled on a scale somewhat smaller than the female, but the difference is very trifling. The tints of their fleece are likewise, in general, not quite so deep. The testicles do not appear outwardly. The penis, in its ordinary state, is itself concealed in a very thick sheath: when erected, it is fifteen lines long, and two and a half round, at the root. The aperture of the gland is formed by two cartilaginous rings; the prepuce has, in its upper part, two little hooks, likewise cartilaginous, white, and three lines long, which, bending forward, come to terminate nearly on the brim of the prepuce itself. These hooks, pretty thick at their insertion, terminate in a point surmounted by a small yellow button, resembling the antheræ of certain flowers. The whole of the prepuce is garnished, besides, with very small white points, cartilaginous, and bent backwards toward the root of the penis. From this singular conformation of the parts, there is reason to believe that the copulation of the jerbos must, like that of cats, be accompanied with moments of pain, or even that the gland, once inserted into the female organ, cannot be for some time extracted, as is the case with the canine species.

With a mighty apparatus, relative to the small size of the jerbo, for the business of propagation, it is presumable, that their amorous affections are  
ardent.

ardent. It appears that they are equally prolific; for they are very numerous in Arabia, in Syria, in Egypt, and in Barbary. In the north, probably, these faculties are enfeebled; nay, I presume to conjecture they are lulled to sleep there, during the most rigorous part of the season, and that, for this reason, they do not multiply so fast as in more southern climates.

During my residence, or, to speak more properly, during my rambles in Egypt, I dissected some jerbos; but as time is almost always wanting in travels of this kind, I satisfied myself with examining, whether the interior of those animals, so singular as to their external forms, presented any thing extraordinary. My principal object was to ascertain more particularly, that they had but a single stomach, and that, of consequence, they had not the faculty of ruminating. This would have been a reply to one of the questions which Michaëlis, professor at Gottinguen, had addressed to the travellers dispatched into the East, by the king of Denmark; namely, "Is the "jerbo a ruminating animal \*?" A question always originating in the same mistake, that of confounding the jerbo with the daman-israël, or the schafan of the Hebrews. Some subjects, pre-

\* The intelligent and curious Travellers, or Instructive Tablets, vol. ii. p. 321.

served in brandy, were destined as a supplement, in the sequel, to what I had not been able to describe. But a long immersion in the fluid, and frequent transportation from place to place, had affected the viscera to such a degree, that they were almost equally livid, mollified, and macerated. The subject in highest preservation, presented to me the following details :

On being taken out of the brandy, this jerbo weighed four ounces six grains. As it was very much impregnated with the fluid, its real weight could be, at most, four ounces.

At the aperture of the abdomen, the brandy filled the cavity of it : the altered viscera had lost their natural colour.

The stomach was not perceptible.

The small intestines presented, on the first sight, only confused lineaments, so sunk were they; the greater were somewhat more distinct : the colon formed in the right side two spiral windings apparent outwardly; the rectum descended almost in a straight line to the left.

Finally, the bladder, quite compressed, shewed itself in the under part.

The

The stomach was situated almost altogether to the left, very much sunk and concealed by the liver. I wished, to no purpose, to examine the dimensions and the forms of the stomach and of the intestinal canal: on the slightest attempt to raise those parts, or to remove them from each other, they separated, and presented only formless fragments. The case was the same as to the mesentery, the vessels, &c. &c.

The liver was composed of three lobes and one lobule. Two lobes were exterior, the one right, the other left, contiguous and separated only by a deep scissure, in which passed a little of the cellular texture, a vestige of the suspensory ligament. The posterior lobe was entirely situated to the left; in other respects, those three lobes presented to me neither semicircular incision nor appendice; but under the right lobe, in the posterior part, I found an irregular lobule, to which adhered some of the cellular texture, that seemed to be the vesicle of the gall. I say *seemed*; for here, as frequently in other cases, the bad condition of the membranous parts very much macerated, rendered it impossible to distinguish the first forms of them. The structure of the liver it was more easy to ascertain; at the same time its parenchyma was not the less separable from it by a slight pressure.

The

The right kidney was in a state of tolerable preservation ; its figure was oval, convex above, flattened below : it was five lines and a half in length, and three in breadth. On the upper side, in the membranous fragments, I distinguished a very small gland, oval, and somewhat hard.

The left kidney was not in such a good state of preservation as the right ; it appeared somewhat more considerable. The bladder was very muscular, flattened, oval, and narrower at bottom ; it was in very good preservation, and was five lines long and two broad in the upper part.

The jerbo is commonly found in Lower Egypt, principally in the *Bahiré*, or western part. The denomination of *rats*, or *mice of the mountain*, has been improperly applied to them ; for all the lower part of Egypt is a plain. Hasselquitz, in the passages already quoted, alleges, that these denominations have been invented by the French. This is not the only occasion on which this traveller has fallen into error, from an inclination to speak slightly of our nation. The small number of Frenchmen trading to Egypt, do not know what *rat of the mountain* means ; the literati of other nations are the persons chargeable with transforming the jerbo into a rat\*.

\* See the nomenclature at the beginning of this chapter.



The sands and rubbish which surround modern Alexandria, are very much frequented by the jerbo. They live there in troops, and with their nails and teeth dig a habitation for themselves in the ground. I have been told that they can penetrate even through the softish stone which is under the layer of sand. Without being actually wild, they are exceedingly restless: the slightest noise, or any new object whatever, makes them retire to their holes with the utmost precipitation. It is impossible to kill them, but by taking them by surprise. The Arabs have the art of catching them alive, by stopping up the outlets of the different galleries belonging to the colony, one excepted, through which they force them out. I never ate any of them, but their flesh does not pass for a great delicacy; the people of Egypt, however, do not reject it. Their skin, which is soft and shining, is used as a common fur.

I fed for some time, while I was in Egypt, six of those animals in a large cage of iron wire. The very first night they had entirely gnawed asunder the upright and cross sticks of their prison; and I was under the necessity of having the inside of the cage lined with tin. They lived on wheat, rice, nuts, and every species of fruit. They were very fond of basking in the sun: the moment you put them in the shade, they clung close to each other,  
and

and seemed to suffer from the privation of warmth. We have been told that the jerbo slept by day, and never in the night-time ; for my own part, I have observed precisely the contrary. In a state of liberty, you meet them in broad daylight, gathering round their subterraneous habitations, and those which I fed under my own eye never were more lively nor more awake than when exposed to the full blaze of the sun. Though they have much agility in their movements, gentleness and tranquillity seem to form their character. Mine suffered themselves to be stroked with great composure ; there was among themselves no noise, no quarrelling, even when food was scattered among them. Besides, they discovered no symptom of joy, of fear, or of gratitude. Their gentleness was by no means amiable, it was not interesting ; it appeared to be the effect of a cold and complete indifference, approaching to stupidity. Three of those jerbos died one after another, before I left Alexandria ; I lost two more on a rough passage to the island of Rhodes, where the last, through the negligence of the person who had the charge of him, got out of his cage, and disappeared. When the vessel was unloaded, I had diligent search made for him, but all to no purpose ; he had undoubtedly been devoured by the cats.

It seemed difficult to preserve those little animals in a state of captivity, and still more so to transport them into our climates. It is of importance, besides, to advertise those who may be disposed to import them into Europe, of the precautions which it is indispensably necessary to employ in keeping them while on ship-board: they are the same with those used in bringing over the *aguti*\*, or *acouchi*†, and the other quadrupeds with gnawing teeth, of America. They must be kept closely shut up in cages or in casks, without a possibility of their escaping; their natural disposition inciting them to devour every thing, they might occasion very considerable damage to a ship in the course of a voyage: and, being capable of eating through the hardest wood, might endanger her sinking.

I had scarcely published my observations on the gerboise of Egypt, in 1787, when there appeared on that subject, in the Journal of Natural History‡, a letter of M. Berthout-van-Berchem. That learned gentleman charges me with two mistakes, gratuitously enough, as in the two contested points I

\* Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Animaux Quadrupèdes.—*Cavia aguti*. Lin.

† Id. Supplem. to the Hist. of Quad.—*Cavia acuschy*. Lin.

‡ By Messrs. Bertholon and Boyer, A. D. 1788, No. 12.

have

have truth upon my side. I had prepared my answer, but citizen Lamethrie, to whom I proposed the insertion of it in the *Journal de Physique*, as composing a sequel to my observations, remarked to me, that having refused to publish M. Berthout's critique, it would have had an awkward appearance to let my reply appear in it. I give it in this place; and as I employ, in disculpation of my pretended mistakes, only the words and the quotations of M. Van-Berchem himself, I begin with transcribing his letter. This little discussion, moreover, will not be wholly useless; it will furnish new elucidations on the natural history of the gerboise, at the same time that it will shew how far criticism, when it lays stress on minutiae, runs the risk of misleading.

*Letter on the true nomenclature of the gerboise; by M. Berthout-van-Berchem the younger, perpetual Secretary to the Society of Physics, at Lausanne.*

“ In a work on quadrupeds which I have just  
 “ published, will be found a detailed history of the  
 “ gerboise. I satisfy myself at present with giving  
 “ the true nomenclature of that animal, which  
 “ proves that the *alagtaga* and the *gerboa* are two  
 “ different species, that M. Sonnini has committed  
 “ an error in classing them together (*Journal de*  
 “ *Physique*,

“ *Physique*, November 1787, by M. de Lamethrie),  
 “ though his memoir contains, in other respects,  
 “ some very interesting remarks on those animals.

“ It is to M. Pallas that we are indebted for the  
 “ best natural history of the gerboise. But as it  
 “ would be tedious to transcribe here the exami-  
 “ nation which he has made of the nomenclature  
 “ of those animals, I must refer the reader to his  
 “ book \*; and will say, after him, that there are  
 “ two species of gerboise. The first, of which M.  
 “ Buffon speaks under the name of *alagtaga*, and  
 “ which ought to be written *alak-daaga*, has five  
 “ toes on the hinder feet; the second has only  
 “ three, and differs from it likewise in several other  
 “ characters. In order to distinguish this first spe-  
 “ cies, which M. Pallas denominates *mus jaculus*,  
 “ I shall call it *jalma*, from the name given to it by  
 “ the Calmucs, and shall preserve to the second spe-  
 “ cies the name of *gerbo*, or *gerboa*. M. Pallas has  
 “ observed three varieties in the *jalma*, which ap-  
 “ pear to differ principally in the size. The most  
 “ common, which is of a middling size between  
 “ the other two, is the *jalma*, or *alak-daaga*. It is  
 “ often found in eastern Tartary, in the deserts of  
 “ Siberia, and in the regions beyond the Baikal †.  
 “ It is likewise found in Syria, nay even so far off

\* *Nova Species Quadrupedum*. *Mus jaculus*, p. 275.

† *Ibid.* p. 285.



“ as India. M. Pennant says it is to be found in  
 “ Barbary \* ; but there is no authentic evidence  
 “ that the *jalma* is an inhabitant of Africa : he even  
 “ remarks that it prefers colder countries than what  
 “ suit the *gerboa*, an inhabitant of warmer climates †.

“ The second variety is the largest of all ; it is  
 “ more rare than the first : they give it the name of  
 “ *marine jalma*, and it is to be found in the grassy  
 “ hills of the Tanaïs, of the Volga, of the Rhyrnus,  
 “ and of the Irtis ‡. It is to this variety we are to  
 “ refer the animal which Dr. Shaw has erroneously  
 “ described under the name of *daman-israël*, and  
 “ which is of the size of the rabbit.

“ The third variety is found, with the large one,  
 “ toward salt meridional marshes of the Caspian  
 “ sea, and with the middle-sized one, in the vic-  
 “ nity of the Volga, and of the Rhyrnus. They  
 “ give it the name of *choin-jalma* || ; it is the small-  
 “ est of the three. The largest, or *marine jalma*,  
 “ is of the size of a squirrel ; the middle-sized, or  
 “ *jalma*, is about as big as a rat, and the smallest is  
 “ scarcely so large as a field-mouse.

“ All these families have five toes on the hinder  
 “ foot ; and in the great number which M. Pallas

\* History of Quadrupeds, p. 429. † Pallas, book already  
 quoted, p. 286. ‡ Id. *ibid.* p. 284. || Id. p. 291.

“ examined, he never saw a single variation as to  
 “ the number of toes. But what has led Messrs.  
 “ Buffon and Sonnini into an error, is the faulty  
 “ description given by Gmelin, who never saw any  
 “ but a single individual, probably disfigured, and  
 “ which presented to him only three toes and a  
 “ spur, or four toes\*. He is likewise mistaken with  
 “ respect to the manners of this animal, in ascribing  
 “ to it those of the *lepus ogotona* : an error which  
 “ has been since copied by the younger Gmelin.  
 “ Messer-Chmidt, who had left a good description  
 “ of this animal, does not pretend to say that it had  
 “ only four toes†. It must be admitted then that  
 “ this species is entirely distinct from the follow-  
 “ ing, which has only three toes on the hinder foot.

“ The gerbo, of which M. Buffon has given us  
 “ a very good description, after M. Allamand‡, and  
 “ which M. Pallas calls *mus sagitta*||, and M. Pen-  
 “ nant *Egyptius gerboa*§, is found in Asia, between  
 “ the Tanais and the Volga, where M. Pallas fre-  
 “ quently saw it, and in the sandy hills to the south  
 “ of the Irtis, as well as in the schistes of the Olta-  
 “ ique mountains. In general, it inhabits countries  
 “ more meridional, and digs its hole in sandy and  
 “ soft ground, not inhabited by the jalma. It is

\* Pallas, book already quoted, p. 282.

† Id. p. 282.

‡ Buffon, Supplem. vol. vi. p. 292.

|| Pallas, above, p. 306.

§ Hist. of Quadr. p. 427.

“ well

“ well known that this animal likewise lives in  
 “ Egypt, Barbary, Palestine, and the deserts be-  
 “ tween Bassora and Aleppo.

“ I shall only indulge myself in one remark more  
 “ on an assertion of M. Sonnini, that the gerbo  
 “ was never more lively and alert than when ex-  
 “ posed to the full blaze of the meridian sun. This  
 “ is a very singular affirmation, for M. Klokner,  
 “ who was in possession of some of those animals,  
 “ declares positively that they sleep in the day-  
 “ time, and are afraid of the light (Buffon, Supp.  
 “ vol. vi. p. 264). I have likewise seen at Lau-  
 “ sanne, in the collection of M. Doyat, four or  
 “ five gerboises, which he brought with him from  
 “ Arabia, and which kept themselves concealed and  
 “ at rest in the daytime; finally, M. Pallas says,  
 “ in positive terms, of the *mus jaculus*: *Protracti in*  
 “ *hæcæm diù, vix pedibus insistent, quasi stupidi vel*  
 “ *ebrii, mutique, nec aures faciliè vitali vigore eri-*  
 “ *gunt, vixque ad saltandum excitari possunt, car-*  
 “ *cere calidiore forsàn lentiores redditi* \*. M. Pallas  
 “ adds, that those animals grow benumbed in win-

\* Pallas, the work already quoted, p. 288. When exposed to the light for any considerable time, they become incapable almost to stand, as if they were stupified or drunk, and, struck dumb, they want animal vigour sufficient so much as to prick up their ears, nor can any stimulus excite them to dance about, being perhaps rendered sluggish by the increased heat of their prison.

“ ter.

“ter. I finish this letter with observing, that not  
 “only M. Pallas, but likewise Messrs. Pennant,  
 “Zimmerman, and all good zoölogists are of the  
 “same opinion on the subject. I have the honour  
 “to be, &c.”

*Lanazle, June 1st, 1788.*

*Sonmini's Reply to M. Berthout-van-Berchem, &c.*

Permit me, Sir, to address this note to you, relative to my memoir on the subject of the gerboise of Egypt, in the same journal in which it has been published \*. This memoir seems to have been the sole object of your letter ; and this consideration, the attention which you have paid to it, and the handsome terms in which you have mentioned it, would be reasons sufficiently powerful to induce me to make an attempt to efface certain blemishes which you think are perceptible in it. As the researches of naturalists ought to have a tendency toward one and the same centre, toward a common focus, truth, to deviate from that object, in whatever manner it may be, is to commit a *crime*. In this view, nothing can be more just, nor at the same time more noble, than to acknowledge and dis-

\* I mentioned before the reason which prevented the insertion of my reply in the *Journal de Physique*.

avow error, against which no man stands secure. This is the track which Buffon constantly pursued; this is the great, the manly example he has left to all who write on natural history, and which I would be zealous to imitate, were I not convinced, that classing together the *alagtaga* and the *gerbo*, as two animals of the same species, I am not only free from the blame which you impute to me, but that not even the slightest mistake can reasonably be laid to my charge. In fact, Sir, you will please to remark, first of all, that, in my memoir, it was no part of my intention to compose the nomenclature of the gerboise race. I employed myself as little as I possibly could in that dry, unacceptable, and too frequently useless labour. My design simply was to speak of the gerboises which I have seen in Egypt, and to represent them exactly as they fell under my observation. In describing the *jerbo*, the only race of this genus to be found in that part of Africa, I was struck with its resemblance to another animal of the same genus, a native of northern countries, and which Gmelin has described under the name of *alagtaga*; and I have said: *the jerbo and the alagtaga of Gmelin, appear to me one and the same animal*; though I felt some difficulty in becoming the proselyte of this approximation, on account of the extreme opposition of climates. Nay, I acknowledge that, if reflection had not suggested to me other species of quadrupeds, living equally in cold



cold regions, and under a burning sky, I should have been extremely diffident in assigning a decided identity to two animals, the descriptions of which, nevertheless, presented me with numerous and unequivocal conformities.

Buffon, who never had an opportunity of observing the jerbo, and who had not seen, any more than myself, the alagtaga, except in Gmelin's description, had presumed that these two quadrupeds were of the same species. I, who have examined the jerbo very closely, was enabled to express myself in a more positive manner. But neither Buffon nor I have advanced that the gerboises of *eastern Tartary, of the deserts of Siberia, and of the regions beyond the Baikal*, were all similar to that of which Gmelin has spoken, nor even that this last existed in those countries. We have only admitted the testimony of a man of gravity, whose remarks are deposited in the collection of the Imperial Academy of Petersburg, and this testimony, it must be admitted, is still far from being destroyed.

I shall confine myself, Sir, to your own quotations. It is certain that when M. Pallas, whose celebrity is most honourably acquired, communicates his particular observations, not the shadow of doubt can be raised against them. We must, accordingly, consider as incontestable that, in the

northern countries which I have just named, there are gerboises, called *alak-daaga*, which differ from the *alagtaga* of Gmelin, as they have five toes on the hinder foot. M. Pallas adds, that, common in the north, they are nevertheless *scattered over Syria, and even as far as to India*, countries in which lives equally the jerbo, that is, the gerboise with three toes, with a spur or rudiment of the fourth toe, the *alagtaga* of Gmelin. The British Pliny, Mr. Pennant, asserts that they are met with likewise in Barbary, and I can see no good reason why M. Pallas should call this last fact in question, on the remark that they *prefer colder countries than the gerboa likes, who is the inhabitant of warm climates*; as if several districts of Syria were not as hot as Barbary, at least as the parts into which the observers have penetrated.

Here then we have two races closely allied, in other respects, that of the *alak-daaga* and of the jerbo, which exist together to the south, though the latter be more numerous there than the former. Is it not probable that both the one and the other may be found in like manner to the north, where the jerbo will, in his turn, be much scarcer? This conjecture becomes more probable, or rather it ceases to be one, when we read in your letter, Sir, that the intelligent naturalist, M. Pallas, *has frequently seen the jerbo in Asia, between the Tanais and the*

*the Volga, and in the sandy hills to the south of the Irdis, as well as in the schistes of the Altaïque mountains; that is, in the north of Russia, in Tartary, and in Siberia.*

After this, it is assuredly very possible, as you rightly observe, Sir, that Gmelin may have fallen in with only a single individual of the race of the jerbos, always becoming scarcer and scarcer as you advance northward, and that he should have given it the name of *alagtaga*, or, if you will have it so, of *alak-daaga*, under which the people of those countries, not much accustomed to employ themselves in reckoning the number of the toes of animals, and in taking their dimensions, comprehend the whole generation of gerboise. But it is not credible that a well-informed traveller, and accurate with respect to other objects of much greater importance, should not have possessed the skill to distinguish an animal mutilated to such a degree as to be deficient in some of its members, and of curtailed dimensions, as you are pleased to suppose. It is still more difficult to believe that he should have amused himself with describing a creature of the imagination, and that, by a chance still more inconceivable, this creature of pure invention should really exist in other climates widely remote and totally opposite.

Gmelin

Gmelin has not then committed a mistake, in describing what he saw, and which, conformably to the more modern observations which you, Sir, produce, he must have seen in the countries which he traversed. On the other hand, it is inconsistent with good logic to impute error to him, when all that can be alleged against him amounts to one or two negative proofs, which are totally insufficient to annihilate one single positive proof. It has appeared to me, for some years past, that travellers and naturalists indulged themselves rather too lightly in contradicting their predecessors. This is not the place to examine whether science has gained much from this general tone of criticism; but it has induced me to insist on M. Gmelin's justification, independent of its connexion with my own. In truth, on the supposition that this observer had carried imposition so far as to paint a quadruped, the forms of which were not such as he had ascribed to it, we should not be the less warranted to affirm that the jerbo of Egypt has a very striking resemblance to another gerboise described in the Commentaries of the Academy of Petersburg, under the denomination of *alagtaga*; this is all I pretended to say, without presuming to pronounce respecting its reality, any more than respecting the degree of confidence to be granted to the traveller who had described it.

The opinion which affirms that the jerbo and the alagtaga of Gmelin are but one single and the same species, has been adopted by the judicious M. Allamand, one of the foreign naturalists on whom Buffon set the highest value. In giving his details relative to a gerboise sent from Tunis to M. Klokner, and after having said that it was of the same race with the jerbo of Buffon, the Dutch professor adds: *It (the jerbo) forms a genus apart, and that a very singular one, with the alagtaga, of which M. Gmelin has given us the description and the figure, but which approaches so nearly to our jerbo, that it is impossible not to consider it, with M. de Buffon, as a variety of the same species* \*. On the other hand, Buffon, who, in describing at first the jerbo after Edwards and Hasselquitz, had made only one species of it with the alagtaga of Gmelin †, has persisted (that is his expression) in not separating them in his Supplement to the natural History of four-footed Animals, and no one, Sir, is better qualified than yourself to appreciate the weight of the opinion of the French naturalist, when, not disdaining to dart the glance of genius on a discussion rather of words than of facts, and after having weighed the more recent authorities to which you yourself appeal, he finds himself confirmed in his first sentiment.

\* Buffon, Suppl. to Nat. Hist. of Quadrup. Add. of the Dutch Editor (M. Allamand), art. Gerboise or Jerbo.

† Nat. Hist. of Quadrupeds, art. Gerboises.



As to your second remark on my assertion, that *the jerbos were never more lively and alert than when they were exposed to the full blaze of the sun*, a fact which to you appears *extremely singular*, you must permit me, Sir, to observe in my turn, that my proposition, such as I stated it, did not pretend to describe jerbos in general, nor those which live in perfect liberty, but only certain individuals which I kept confined in a cage. The expression I made use of rendered it impossible to misunderstand my meaning, for my words precisely are : *those which I fed never were more lively and alert, &c.* It is not matter of much surprise that animals which, left to themselves, find a habitation, and pass the greatest part of their life in holes dug out of an inflamed sand, and a burning layer of chalk, should suffer from the privation of heat, on finding themselves exposed to the impressions of the open air, to the winds, to the coolness of the night season ; and this reason alone would be sufficient to account for the different character of mine, shut up as they were for the most part in the shade, and recovering new life and motion from the genial influence of the rays of the sun.

I was not ignorant that the gerboise, sent from Tunis to Mr. Klokner, slept during the whole day, and awoke at the approach of night \* ; but what

\* Suppl. to the Hist. of Quadr. by Buffon ; Art. of the add. of profess. Allamande.

inference can be deduced from the habits of a little isolated and very delicate animal, when, forced away from the heat of its natal soil, it finds itself transported into a climate cold and humid, like that of Holland? This reflection applies with equal force to those which M. Doyat preserved alive at Lausanne. I have likewise, in favour of my opinion, testimony not liable to suspicion; in the first place, that of my own eyes, which are sufficiently good to merit some confidence; next, that of many Europeans who saw my jerbos at Alexandria; and, finally, that of the crew of the polacre, *the Fortune*, on board of which those jerbos were for a whole month.

But I have extended my proposition, I acknowledge, and have advanced that jerbos were to be met with in the daytime in the vicinity of their subterraneous habitations; which supposes that they are not continually lulled to sleep. Could the Arabs interpose between you and me, they would assure you, Sir, that they shoot the jerbos with their fowling-pieces the moment they issue from their holes. But an undeniable testimony, because it proceeds from a *good zoölogist* and an illustrious traveller, is that of Mr. Bruce. He relates that, in an unfortunate journey through the part of Africa formerly known by the name of Cyrenais or Pentapolis, and where the jerbo is more common than elsewhere, he employed his attendants, and the  
Arabs

Arabs who accompanied him, in killing them with sticks, to prevent any injury being done to their skins \*. A little farther on he adds, that the Arabs of the kingdom of Tripoli, who hunt the antelope, find much amusement in teaching their greyhounds to turn suddenly on the jerbo; that a beautiful little greyhound, presented to him by the prince of Tunis, frequently afforded him the pleasure of this kind of hunting; that the chase lasted long, and that he has several times seen, in a large court well enclosed, the greyhound a full quarter of an hour on the pursuit before he could seize his nimble prey †. All these circumstances, assuredly, sufficiently demonstrate that the jerbos are not indisturbable sleepers in the daytime.

The passage from M. Pallas, *protracti in lucem*, &c. which you quote at full length, to run down my assertion, makes not the least against it; and this remark will no more escape *good zoölogists* than all men of good sense, as, in this passage, the animal in question is of a species and country different from the *mus jaculus* of M. Pallas, that is to say, of the alak-daaga, or gerboise of the north, which you have taken too much pains to distinguish from the jerbo, to admit of their ever being henceforward

\* Travels in Nubia and Abyssinia, by James Bruce, Esq. vol. v. p. 149.

† Id. *ibid.* vol. v. p. 151.

confounded with each other. Recollect, Sir, on the contrary, that M. Pallas has frequently seen his *mus sagitta*, the jerbo, *in the sandy hills*, &c. Now, I should be glad to know, how it was possible frequently to see animals that sleep all day long, in subterraneous galleries ?

Besides, I never meant to assert that the jerbo did not sleep at all in the day, and did not keep awake at all in the night. My sole intention was to limit the too general assertion of those who lulled him asleep all day long, and kept him awake the whole night through. I am even strongly disposed to believe that his sleep is longer and less interrupted, when the sun is above the horizon than when he has left it. This is a relation which the jerbo would have with many other quadrupeds which seek for the means of subsistence, and engage in their running and hunting parties, rather in the shade than by the light of day. It is unnecessary to produce instances of this; they are abundantly well known.

More than enough, undoubtedly, has been said in the discussion of a question not of superior importance. In attempting to keep the gerbo awake, it is far from being impossible that we may have set the reader asleep. I shall therefore subjoin only a single word: I had presumed that the gerboise  
fell

fell into a state of numbedness and stupefaction in the north, during the most rigorous part of the season, and that accordingly propagation must go on much more slowly than in meridional countries. You have satisfied me, Sir, that M. Pallas completely verifies my conjecture, which flatters me beyond conception. I am not the less disposed, on this account, publicly to express my respect for you.



## CHAP. XII.

*French factory—Statue—Adanson and his misfortunes—Augustus, another French interpreter—Antique tomb—The name of Alexander still respected in Egypt—Venetians and English—Commerce—Germes—Fishes.*

WHILE at Alexandria, I lodged in the house occupied by the French consul and the merchants of that nation: it is close upon the sea, at the bottom of the new harbour. It forms a square, the sides of which enclose a large court, and around it, under arcades, a series of warehouses. The arcades are supported by columns, or, to express myself more accurately, by the fragments of columns pilfered from the rubbish of the ancient city: several of them are of granite, and one of porphyry.

There was likewise in this court, a statue, of the size of nature, in white stone, and representing a woman sitting, with a child standing by her side. It is a tolerable piece of sculpture; the drapery, in particular, has a great deal of merit. Some Arabs had found this statue buried in ruins, and sold it to a French interpreter, who intended to have it transported

transported to his own country. But he died before he had an opportunity of executing his design; and from that time to the present, the statue has remained in a state of exposure to the shocks of bales of merchandise, which are incessantly moved about in the court, and which had even mutilated it, without exciting any concern either to preserve it, or to convey it to its place of destination, where assuredly it would have met with a cordial reception. The genius of destruction must have domineered with unbounded sway over regions bestrewed with the dismal effects of her power, seeing it had forced a passage into the enclosure dedicated to the use of a civilized nation.

The lodging apartments are over the warehouses; the casements are of consequence very lofty, and a single gate, of great solidity, shuts in this vast range of building. They farther strengthen it, on tumultuous emergencies, by bales piled a-top of each other. If the commotion did not subside, and there was ground of apprehension that the populace would break in, all the inhabitants of the factory slid down from the windows in the night-time, and fled for refuge on board of some vessel.

In former times there was only a vice consul at the head of this establishment; but M. Tott, in the course of his inspection, had recalled the consul

from Cairo, where it was impossible to protect him from the insults and persecution of the Mamelucs, and fixed him at Alexandria. It is easy to judge that here he was not much more secure. The French flag waved on the terrace of the factory; it would have been better, perhaps, not to display it at all, as it was impossible to procure respect for it from those barbarians.

Among the few Frenchmen who resided there, and whose generous and obliging character can never be obliterated from my memory, I must distinguish a name dear to the sciences, that of Adanson. The brother of the Academician of Paris, devoted, from his youth up, to the study of the oriental languages, had for a long time fulfilled the delicate functions of an interpreter in the Levant. He had undergone, in Syria, one of those cruel inflictions which are equally the reproach of the government which orders them, and of that which suffers them to pass unrevenged. The victim of his duty, he was likewise so of the detestable barbarity of a Pacha. Enjoined, in concert with his colleague, and in the name of the French nation, to present well-founded remonstrances, they were both doomed, by order of the ferocious Mussulman, to the horrid punishment of the bastinado on the soles of the feet. The other interpreter expired under the hands of the executioner, and  
Adanson,

Adanson, still more unfortunate perhaps, his feet mangled and exquisitely painful, almost entirely deprived of the power of walking, survived his execrable chastisement, and the affront offered to France, which her government left unpunished as well as that of the assassination of her consul at Alexandria.

A catastrophe so terrible would have been alone sufficient to awaken the liveliest interest in favour of M. Adanson, had he not been, in other respects, highly estimable, for his talents and extensive illumination. But the rewarding of modest and distant merit did not enter into the detail of ministerial arrangements. Their gilded folding-doors scarcely ever opened, except to gaudy embroidery or importunate insignificance. The man who possessed talents only lived, for the most part, isolated, unnoticed, unrewarded, if, however, this state of sequestration were not a retinue more brilliant and more honourable than that of unjust and undistinguishing power. Adanson vegetated at Alexandria, and there partook of the functions of interpreter with M. Augustus, whose wit and amenity of disposition were almost a phenomenon in that country, and which would have raised him to honourable distinction in every country in the world. Had I only to express my satisfaction in having received  
certain

certain formal civilities, I should have dispensed with making particular mention of these two interpreters, without knowing whether they are still within reach of hearing this expression of my gratitude ; but to them, and to their illuminated complaisance, I stand indebted for the facility with which I was enabled to make my observations in countries of no easy access ; and travellers will feelingly perceive the value of such encounters ; for they know, as I do, how rare they are.

I had heard mention made of a curious monument, a kind of antique tomb, deposited in a mosque without the precincts of Alexandria ; to no purpose did I express a desire to see it ; I was assured that the attempt would be dangerous, and withal impracticable. The French consul and M. Adanson earnestly entreated me not to think of it. M. Augustus, however, less timid, engaged to conduct me thither by stealth, and without the privity of other Frenchmen. A janisary of the factory accompanied us : the scheick of the mosque, *iman* as called by the Turks, *curé* by the Christians, was waiting for us, and we were permitted to examine every thing tolerably at our leisure, in consideration of a certain *douceur* agreed upon between M. Augustus and the priest. This temple is very ancient ; it was reared by one of the Caliphs ; the  
walls



walls are incrustated with marbles of various colours, and there are still to be seen some beautiful remains of mosaic work.

The tomb, the object of our curiosity, and which may be considered as one of the most beautiful morsels of antiquity preserved in Egypt, had been transformed, by the Mahometans, into a kind of little pool, a reservoir consecrated to contain the water for their pious ablutions. It is very large, and would form an oblong rectangle, were not one of the shorter sides rounded in shape of a bathing-tub. It was probably, of old time, covered with a lid: but no traces of it are now visible, and the laver is entirely open. It is all of a single piece, and of a superb marble spotted green, yellow, reddish, &c. on a ground of a beautiful black; but what renders it peculiarly interesting, is the prodigious quantity of small hieroglyphical characters with which it is impressed both inside and outwardly. A month would scarcely be sufficient to copy them faithfully: we have not hitherto, of course, had exact drawings of them. That which I saw, in my return from Egypt, in the possession of the minister Berthin, at Paris, could only serve to convey an idea of the form of the monument, the hieroglyphics having been traced purely from imagination, and as chance directed. It is nearly the same thing as if, in trying to copy an inscription,

tion, one should content himself with writing down the letters, without order and without connexion. Nevertheless, it is only by copying, with scrupulous accuracy, the figures of this symbolical language, that we can attain the knowledge of a mysterious composition, on which depends that of the history of a country once so celebrated. When that language shall be understood, we may perhaps learn the origin of the sarcophagus, and the history of the puissant man whose spoils it contained. Till then it is but the vague and flitting field of conjecture.

By the side of the coffin, on a piece of gray marble, of which the pavement of the mosque is composed, I perceived a Greek inscription, but in Roman characters : as they were in a great measure obliterated, it must have required more time than we could spare to decipher them. All I was able to distinguish, at the first glance, was the word CONSTANTINON.

It was formerly impossible to procure admission into this mosque, and this accounts for the silence of travellers on the subject of the sepulchre which renders it so interesting. A duke of Braganza was the first European who visited it, or rather who discovered it, for chance merely led to the discovery. He happened to be passing by the temple ;  
the

the gate was open; he perceived no one within sight, and had the curiosity to step in. Some children who had observed him, flocked together and surrounded him with loud outcries. Had they been heard, it would have proved fatal to the Portuguese prince; he pulled out his purse, and silenced the children by throwing some pieces of money among them, which purchased him a free and peaceable exit. Since then, M. Montague, whom I have formerly had occasion to mention, offered in vain a very considerable sum for permission to visit the interior of the mosque. But some time afterward, being committed to the charge of a scheick, whose thirst of gold triumphed over the laws of fanaticism, it was opened for the admission of every stranger who was disposed to pay a chequin for it. The same year that I arrived at Alexandria, several Englishmen went in without ceremony; some of the populace perceived them, and murmured aloud. The commandant of Alexandria hastened to reprimand the scheick, and laid him under an injunction to admit no Christian whatever. The noise occasioned by this incident, in a country where Europeans live in a state of continual alarm, was too recent not to leave some solicitude behind. But our visit to the mosque was so prudently conducted, that no injury ensued, and no one ever received information on the subject.

I was

I was witness, one day, of the terror excited in the minds of the French belonging to the factory, from the idea only of a seditious tumult at Alexandria. A merchant arrived with intelligence that an European had killed a native of the country. The gate of the factory was instantly shut; the bales began to be put in motion to strengthen the bulwark; inquiries were made on board what vessel they could run for safety, by dropping from the windows, when, fortunately, information was received that one Mussulman had killed another.

Nevertheless, if a perpetual communication with the different nations of Europe had not hitherto been able to soften the manners of the Alexandrians, it must be acknowledged that it had already disposed them to less intolerance on some particular points. Alexandria was, for example, with Rossetta, the only city of Egypt where Europeans were allowed to retain their native garb. Every where else they were prohibited to appear except in the oriental habit. It was not safe, however, to make an imprudent use of this indulgence; for, if we shewed ourselves in numerous bodies, or made any thing like an ostentatious appearance, particularly at a distance from the shipping, we run the risk of being insulted.

It was impossible to refrain from bearing some good-will to the inhabitants of this country, for having preserved to their town the name of the ancient city. We find *Alexandria*, in the Arabic name *Escanderié*; and the indignation, which you are unable to restrain, against the barbarians by whom the new city was rather infested than peopled, ceased for a moment on hearing them, which happened to me oftener than once, pronounce the name of Alexander with marks of respect. It is with them the attribute of courage and of victory. *Ennté Scander*, say they sometimes, *thou art an Alexander*; this is in their eyes the highest eulogium of valour. So true it is that monuments of brass and marble are not those which perpetuate the memory of men. Great actions alone possess the power of transmitting their names from age to age. Every thing else is effaced, every thing perishes: virtue and benefits conferred remain, as unchangeable monuments reared in the heart, the eternal heritage of admiration and gratitude.

The Venetians and the English had likewise commercial establishments at Alexandria. The former, just as the French, pursued, in carrying on trade, the same track with their predecessors. The English, on the contrary, employed themselves in striking out new paths. The frequent voyages of their agents to India, their prodigality, which secures to  
them



them the good-will of the chiefs of the country, always disposed to favour those most who pay them best, in a word, their activity in conducting operations which they take care to keep secret, all announce the project which they had conceived, and which they had already in part effected, of appropriating to themselves the exclusive commerce of India through the Red-sea.

The city of Alexandria, so contracted in modern times, did not furnish a consumption of any importance. The commerce accordingly there carried on is a commerce of deposit; but, as I have said, it was considerable, and may become immense. The custom-houses returned very large sums: the collection of this revenue was intrusted to a company of Christian merchants of Syria. To form a judgment of their address, it will be sufficient to say that they had supplanted the Jews, to whom that branch of the revenue had been formerly committed.

The merchandise transported in European bottoms to Alexandria, is conveyed by water-carriage to Cairo, from whence, after having furnished a supply to the necessities and to the luxury of that populous city, it is dispersed over all Arabia, over Upper Egypt, and even over Abyssinia. The little barks employed in carrying goods from Alexandria

to Rossetta, the first city of Egypt on the Nile, and to carry back to Alexandria the commodities of Egypt and of Arabia, go by the name of *germes*. They are good stout boats, and of a tolerably handsome construction. They are not decked, and draw but little water, and, according to their size, have two or three masts, with very large triangular sails, the yards of which, fixed to the top of the mast, cannot be lowered; so that whatever weather it may be, the seamen are obliged to mount to the mast-head to take in the sails, a process as tedious as it is difficult. Their burden is, in general, from five to six tons. It would be very easy, no doubt, to construct vessels with decks, of a much larger size, and which should not require a greater draught of water. Goods would not be so much exposed, on board of such boats, to be wet and injured by the sea-water, as is frequently the case, and conveyance would not be subject to retardations, sometimes prejudicial to commerce, from a swell of sea which forbids the navigation of the *germes*. Though the distance they have to run at sea is scarcely more than twelve leagues, and though there is a bay on the passage, in which they can find a safe retreat, at Aboukir, this coasting voyage is far from being without danger. If a violent gale raises a swell on the shallows, where it is always most tumultuous, they run the risk of filling and sinking. But the most

imminent danger which they have to encounter, is at the discharge of the western branch of the Nile, the ancient *Bolbitica*, now called the *Branch of Rossetta*. It is a bar formed by the sands, on which the billows driven by the winds from the sea, and met by the current of the river, break with inconceivable impetuosity. A little islet, dividing the discharge of this branch, leaves, on either side, a strait called in the language of the country, *boghass*, canal or strait: but this passage is far from practicable the whole breadth through. There is only a very narrow channel which the moveableness of the sands and the agitation of the water are changing every day. A pilot, *reis*, or master of the *boghass*, is continually employed in taking the soundings of this ever-varying pass, that he may indicate them to the *germes*. Notwithstanding these precautions, they frequently run aground, and very soon, filled with masses of sand and water, perish with their lading and their crews. Accidents are more frequent in entering the Nile, than on the outward passage, the *germes* coming from the sea not having it in their power to dispense with taking the pass, when they come close upon it; whereas, on going down with the current of the river, they can easily get back, if, on approaching the bar, they find the passage hazardous. During the increase of the Nile, the waters being more elevated, accidents seldomer happen :

pen: but when the river has retreated into its bed, it is so shallow at the place of discharge, that boats can hardly get through without touching the ground. However habituated the Egyptian mariners may be to the business, they never pass this way without trembling. Some of them have been pointed out to me, who had undergone such paroxysms of terror from this cause, that their beards were turned white by it. During the summer of 1778, there was no more than three feet water in the channel. It has even been observed, that the bottom rose progressively from year to year. The same thing has happened in the Damietta branch, the *boghass* of which, though surrounded with banks of sand, which long practice had taught the seamen to shun, did not pass for dangerous: it was not even taken into consideration in the arrangements made by merchants respecting the freight of *germes*. Nevertheless, toward the end of 1777, during my residence at Rossetta, this passage was absolutely closed up, after the rise of the Nile was at its height, and the first barks which attempted to pass were lost. The danger incurred on that of the Rossetta branch was increasing every year, in proportion as the bottom rose; and, as it was useless to expect, from the ignorance and apathy of Egyptians, the skill and labour requisite to confine the current, and to procure a greater depth of water in the

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channel,

channel, there was all the reason in the world to presume that, in a little time, no boat whatever would venture to encounter that formidable bar. In this case, they must perhaps have thought of clearing out the canal of Alexandria, or, if the carelessness of the inhabitants had infatuated them to such a degree as to neglect a work of so much importance, all communication by water must have been interrupted between Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, and commerce reduced to employ the expensive transportation of merchandise by land carriage.

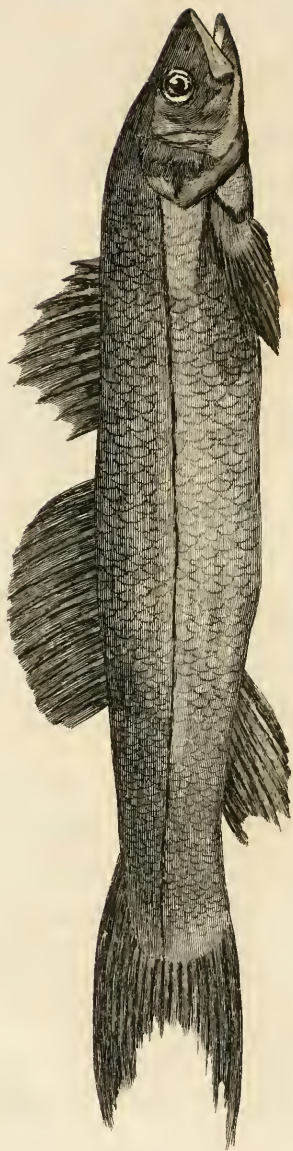
This is the mode generally adopted by the travellers and traders of Europe, as well as by those who prefer a slight increase of expense to the risk of being drowned in the *boghass*. This is the conveyance I made use of in all the excursions I ever undertook between Alexandria and Rossetta.

Before I quit the coast, I must take notice of the sea fishes which I had occasion to remark, among the numerous species of which their fishery consists. I have seen there that species of thornback known by the name of the *sea-eagle* \*, the flesh of which is hard and ill-tasted ; the sea-

\* *Raia corpore glabro, aculeo longo serrato in caudâ pinnata.*  
Arted. Gen. 45.—*Raia aquila.* Lin.







*Perca, a Fish of the Country of Egypt.*

*Published by T. Roddick.*

*cat* \*, which is not much better; the *palamides*, a species of small tunny †; the pointed fish which they call the *eel* ‡, and the *mullet* §, which you see frisking about in calm weather, in shoals innumerable, on the surface of the water. They likewise catch there that fish which on the tables of the Romans occupied a distinguished place, and to which they gave the name of *wolf*, from its voraciousness ||. The seamen of Provence call it *carousse*. I have had a drawing made of one of those fishes, which was two feet and a half long. (See plate III.) Its head was bluish; it had red spots on the opercles of the gills, and the body of a blue blackish, and shaded with gray; these tints were deep above the lateral line, and clearer under it, with a yellowish mixture. Finally, what is more interesting to the lovers of good cheer, you may eat excellent roaches there ¶.

\* *Squalus dorso vario; pinnis ventralibus concretis.* Arted. Gen. 44.—*Squalus catulus.* Lin.

† *Scomber pelamis, pinnulis inferioribus septem; corpore lineis utrinque quatuor nigris.* Arted. Gen. 25.—*Scomber pelamis.* Lin.

‡ *Esox rostro cuspidato, gracili, subteriti, spithamali.* Arted. Gen. 10.—*Esox belone.* Lin.

§ *Trigla capite glabro lineis utrinque quatuor luteis longitudinalibus parallelis.* Arted. Gen. 171.—*Mullus surmuletus.* Lin.

|| *Perca labrax, pinnis aorsalibus distinctis, secunde radii quatuordecim.* Arted. Gen. Pisc. 30.—*Perca labrax.* Lin.

¶ *Trigla capite glabro, cirris geminis in maxilla inferiori.* Arted. Gen. 171.—*Mullus barbatus.* Lin.

## CHAP. XIII.

*Journey from Alexandria to Rossetta—Maadié—Heracléa—Rossetta and its environs—Glance over the Delta.*

PLACED between the Mediterranean sea on one side, and a sea of sand on the other, modern Alexandria is isolated, and seems to belong to no country. In order to arrive in other lands, it is necessary to trust the inconstancy of the waves, or to force a way through immense wastes, impressed with the seal of the dereliction and the reprobation of nature. It is, or almost so, a desert which you have to cross, in travelling by land to Rossetta. I have performed that journey several times; the first in company with the inspector-general Tott, attended by a numerous retinue, among whom Savary was one. We left Alexandria July 12th, 1777, at seven o'clock in the evening. This train, I had almost said this rabble of foreigners dressed as Frenchmen, gave umbrage to the inhabitants; we encountered, in passing through the city, insults of various kinds, and were even pelted with stones, one of which, too well aimed, gave me a rude stroke on the breast. If I had possessed any faith in augury, I should, undoubtedly, have relinquished a journey whose commencement

commencement was so inauspicious. A misadventure of another kind overtook us at some distance from the city. The ass, loaded with the provisions for the belly, enraged at bearing a burden of so much importance, shook off her panniers: bottles, plates, pies, &c. all was reduced to shivers. Half an hour almost was spent in collecting the wreck of this halt, and a horse, less headstrong, was loaded with the fragments. We were speedily overtaken by the night; it was impossible to have been darker, and besides the irksomeness of marching a long time without seeing any thing, in regions utterly unknown, it was to me just as if I had not quitted Alexandria. I had, as my particular suite, an old servant well versed in the art of travelling, a young draughtsman, and a naval gunner. We proceeded in a close platoon, and, together with a janisary, composed the advanced guard. After having got half way on our route, we halted to take a little rest. When it became expedient to put the body again in motion, every one had to run in quest of his own beast which he had let loose, and which the darkness prevented him from finding or distinguishing: all was outcry, wrangling; the muleteers were beating each other, the janisaries beating every body. In the midst of this hurly-burly, my little cohort was mounted, from the moment that the signal for decamping was made, and we enjoyed at our ease, the comic



scenes which were passing around us. We had taken care to range our mules apart, and could resume them at pleasure. A complete hour was wasted in rectifying a disorder which might easily have been prevented; and this observation is not foreign to the purpose: it proves that in travelling, as in military expeditions, order and attention are equally indispensable, and that by neglecting them, inconveniences are sometimes incurred still greater than even that of the loss of precious time.

We arrived at Rossetta at six o'clock in the morning, and slept till dinner-time, without minding the preparations going forward under the direction of a capuchin almoner, for celebrating a solemn mass, which was to be followed by a *Te Deum*. In the afternoon we set off for Cairo with the same rapidity; remained almost continually close shut up in that city for a month, and returned to Rossetta with the same speed that we left it. This is what our gentlemen of *bon ton* call travelling. They return afterwards to Europe, to reason with assurance on every subject, and sometimes to write of, and to describe, objects which they never saw.

It is, moreover, the custom to travel between Alexandria and Rossetta in the night-time, in order to escape the sultry heat of a burning sun. But devoted, for a long series of years, to pursue my  
travel

travels through climates of fire, I had learned to support all the ardour of the orb of day; fully convinced, besides, that there is never too much light for a traveller who wishes to procure useful information. I have since travelled over the same ground in the day-time: it is computed to be a journey of about twelve hours. Carriages not being in use there, they employ mules, which you find ready for hire, both at Alexandria and Rossetta, at a fixed and very moderate price. Their pace is a very long amble, by means of which they can cover a great deal of ground, without fatiguing themselves too much. These animals were so habituated to the road, that it was unnecessary to guide them. and that, whether by night or by day, they never deviated from their course, which, on a moving sand, can neither be traced nor formed into a path; they had, accordingly, neither bridle nor bit, but only a sorry halter.

Though there be no place of habitation on this route, it is not, properly speaking, a desert. You see on one side, for half the way, and at a little distance, a few straggling houses and a town; and, through the remainder, you meet with signs which indicate that the habitations of men are not very remote. Besides, the traveller has no reason to be apprehensive of the violent gusts of wind from the south, so formidable in the vast plains of sand with  
which

which Egypt is surrounded. Savary, who was acquainted with no desert but this, has applied to it what he has heard related of such as are really so. "Wo be to him," exclaims he, "whom a whirlwind from the south surprises in this solitude ! Unless he is provided with a tent to shelter him, he is assaulted by clouds of burning dust which fill his eyes and mouth, and deprive him of the power of respiration and of sight. The wisest course is to perform this journey by night\*." Nothing assuredly can be more terrible than those whirlwinds from the south, but it is certain that nothing of this kind is to be apprehended between Alexandria and Rossetta ; that no one there ever lost his life by clouds of burning dust, and that it is physically impossible such a calamity should befall the traveller in those parts. In fact, the wind is cooled as it comes from the south, by the waters of the lakes and of the canals which it crosses, and they would intercept the columns of sand carried along by the wind, if, besides, it could raise a very great quantity in passing over the cultivated plains of *Bahira*. There existed a danger more real ; that of being plundered. There were, it is true, guards established to protect the roads. They were to give notice in both the cities, whenever they perceived any suspicious body of men ; travelling then underwent interruption till proclamation was made that

\* Letters on Egypt, vol. i. p. 45.

the track was clear. But the expeditions of the Bedouin robbers, and, according to circumstances, they all are so, are executed with so much promptitude, overtake the traveller so unexpectedly, from cantons out of which no human being was looked for, that the very act of robbery is the first signal of their presence, and that it is far from a thing uncommon for travellers to become the victims of it.

On leaving Alexandria, the course is to the east-north-east, and you travel along the base of a promontory which, from Alexandria, rises towards the north. At its extremity is *Aboukir*, a town built on the ruins of Canopus. The coast of this promontory, as I have already remarked, is not so low as that of the tower of the Arabs, and though formed of hillocks of sand, neither has it the same aspect of solitude and sterility: human habitations, and land in a state of cultivation, meet the eye.

After riding about six leagues, you find yourself on the brink of a kind of lake, a remainder of the Canopic branch of the Nile. At present, to speak properly, it is nothing but a salt-water marsh, which has no longer any communication with the Nile, except at the season of its greatest height. It is fordable on horseback when the river, in its inundation, or the sea raised by a tempest, have not increased its depth; in these cases it is crossed  
by

by a boat, which was perhaps the least safe and the most incommodious of all ferries. The mouth of this ancient branch of the Nile is very much straitened, and formed by a bar of sand. The *goëlands*\* graze at all times the surface of the water, to surprise the small fry from the sea which enter by it; I have likewise seen there the coot † and the pelican ‡. On the eastern bank is a vast square building, the construction of which is similar to that of the French factory at Alexandria; it is similar to that of all the *caravanseras* in Egypt, *hockals*; but in giving them the name of inn §, it must be allowed that certain travellers have done rather too much honour to a place where there is absolutely nothing else to be had but a well of detestable water. '

This place is named *Maadié*, which signifies *passage*. With an intention to discover some vestiges of the ancient *Heraclea*, the position of which Dr. Shaw determines by that of *Maadié*, I visited with all the accuracy of observation this building, as well as its environs; but whether it

\* *Mouette cendrée*. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois.—*Larus canus*. Lin.

† *Foulque*. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 197.—*Fulica atra*. Lin.

‡ *Pélican*. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 87.—*Pelicanus onacratulus*. Lin.

§ Cornelius Le Bruyn.



be that Heraclea was situated elsewhere, or whether the sands have completely concealed its ruins, I could perceive nothing that indicated the edifices of a remote period; the house, constructed of white stones, and these not very hard, is entirely modern. Except the gate, in rearing which they have employed a large block of granite, and another fragment of gray marble enriched with sculpture, nothing antique is there to be seen. But about half a league farther on, you remark on the coast some ancient walls and wrecks, which the eye can pursue, in calm weather, advancing a considerable way into the sea, and these are probably the traces of Heraclea.

After having rested a few hours under the shade of the walls of the building of Maadié, we got into the open plain. The land is so low in this gulf, for from *Aboukir* the sea forms a vast bay, that, but for dikes of a very solid construction, the waters would cover a great extent of country: in stormy weather they force themselves over the dikes, spread behind the elevated coast of the promontory of *Aboukir*, and inundate all the vicinity. You keep close by the sea for almost four leagues, on the sand which is bathed by the billows, the dry sand being too much in a moveable state. You trample under foot shells of every species, among which I could distinguish muscles, pholads,

pholads, limpets, and trumpets. Sea-larks\*, chevaliers †, maubêches ‡, hop and flutter about on the shore; some curlews § likewise resort thither in quest of their prey, while swarms of goëlands, of the great and of the small species, cross each other as they skim incessantly along the face of the waters; numerous tribes of porpoises reflect the vivid colours of the rainbow from their arched and humid backs; the waves themselves which, as they return in succession to spread over the beach, seem to play among the feet of the mules; all these objects compose a spectacle which inspires pleasure and attracts attention, when for a long time one has been encompassed only with a steril uniformity; they agreeably fix the eyes, and prevent their roving toward the south, where all that presents itself to view is a sandy wild, terminating in hills of the same description, and sadly interrupted by here and there an isolated and straggling palm-tree.

Travellers are glad to stop for a few moments at the tomb of a holy Mahometan, built close by the sea; an Arab, who lives there, presents coffee and

\* *Alouette de mer*. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 581.—*Tringa cinclus*. Lin.

† *Chevalier commun*. Id. ibid. No. 844.—*Tringa littorea*. Lin.

‡ *Maubêche commune*. Id. ibid.—*Tringa callidris*. Lin.

§ *Courlis*, first species. Id. ibid. No. 818.—*Scolopax arquata*. Lin.

brackish and warm water, which the thirst, occasioned by the heat of the sun and by the dust, makes a man swallow with delight. A small brick tower admonishes you that you must quit the shore\* ; other little towers, which you perceive in the same direction, that of east-south-east, serve as a guide into a moving plain, in the midst of which you might easily lose yourself, and so much the more that the city of Rossetta, begirt, toward the west, by accumulated sands, is not discernible till the very instant that you enter the first street. You reckon, before you arrive, eleven of those little towers, some of which having a greater circumference than the others, are not massy, and present, in their interior, a shelter to travellers, and a place of prayer to the Mahometans †.

Here

\* This little tower of brick is probably that which Danville calls *Casa Rossa* in his chart of Egypt.

† Dr. Shaw (vol. ii. of his Travels, p. 22) says, that the caravans are directed from Medea to Rossetta, a space of four leagues, by great stakes driven into the ground, similar to those of *Schibkah el-low dea*, or *lake of the marks* in Barbary. But, without mentioning the calculation of the distance, in which there is a small mistake, these marks of *Schibkah el-low-dea*, according to the same Dr. Shaw (vol. i. p. 274), are nothing but trunks of the palm-tree, whereas those which indicate the road to Rossetta are towers built of brick. I would not have pointed out this slight inaccuracy in the work of a traveller less estimable, and whom I consider as one of the most intelligent and

the

Here the scene changes, as it were, by enchantment; the transition could not be more sudden, nor the contrast more striking: it is no longer a series of those overwhelming ruins, of plains rendered hideous by sterility: it is Nature decorated with all her costliness of apparel, and scattering her gifts with magnificence unexampled, and with a profusion equally varied and uniformly supported. The eye, inflamed by a scorching sun, torn by grains of sand scattered through a burning atmosphere, reposes deliciously on a horizon which presents to it images the most refreshing, and smiling with the gayest aspect.

Rossetta is a handsome city, very populous, simply but agreeably built. It is modern, and if it does not contain edifices of an imposing architecture, it displays nothing, at least, to excite disgust. The Nile bathes its walls on the east side; rendered less impetuous by the waters which it furnishes, as it flows, to canals and watering conduits, repelled besides by the bar which separates it from the sea, at the place of its discharge, it has not the dangerous rapidity of great rivers; it carries with

the most correct of those who have traversed that part of Africa. The most rational supposition that can be formed on the subject is, that Shaw, just as almost every other body, travelled by night from Alexandria to Rossetta.

tranquillity

tranquillity the riches of three quarters of the globe, and diffuses abundance over its shores ; its vicinity has nothing to create an alarm, and its very extravagations are benefits.

A vast cultivated champaign extends to the north of the city ; it is laid out in garden-grounds : these are not divided and enclosed, in a dry harsh manner, by gloomy walls ; odoriferous hedges surround groves of perfume still more odoriferous. Neither must you go thither in quest of those straight-lined alleys, of those stiff flower borders, or those methodical compartments, the monuments which art rears in our monotonous enclosures. Every thing there seems to be the arrangement of chance : the orange and the citron trees interlace their branches, and the pomegranate hangs down by the side of the corsosol. Under a sky which never knows the blighting of a hoar-frost, their flowers exhale, at all seasons, a perfume which the sweet odour of the clusters of the *henna* \* renders still more delicious. Pot-herbs grow luxuriantly under this balmy shade. The date-tree, rearing its summit above the other trees of its vicinity, presents a deviation from the slightest appearance of uniformity : no one tree, no one plant, has a determinate place ; every thing there is varied, every thing is scattered about with a species of irregula-

\* A tall shrub, of which I shall say more presently.



rity subjected to no law but profusion, and which may be reviewed, day after day, with new pleasure. Is not this confusion, after all, the symmetry of nature? The sun has scarcely power to force his rays through the foliage of those tufted orchards; small streamlets convey thither, winding as they flow, the coolness and the aliment of vegetation; serpentine paths lead to them. There it is that the indolent Turk, seated all day long with his pipe and his coffee, seems to meditate profoundly, and thinks of nothing. More worthy of enjoying those enchanting retreats, had he the skill to share them with a beloved female companion; but the example of the birds, the amorous cooing of the turtle-doves, which animate those bowers of nature, are incapable of disposing his soul to tenderness, or of stealing him out of his cold apathy, out of his melancholy insensibility. He flees, with disdain, the commerce of a sex whose presence would confer additional charms on scenes of delight, and, under the dominion of proud indifference, would repel the hand of the Graces, were they to attempt to raise there an altar to conjugal bliss. The unsocial Mussulman respects, at least, what he disdains to imitate: those same turtle-doves, emblem of love and fidelity, live by him in perfect security; he never thinks of disturbing their repose; he takes pleasure in beholding them court his society; in a word, they are to him sacred birds. The European  
alone

alone dared to violate this asylum: I have sometimes seen him, regardless of the murmurs of the natives, making it a pastime to scatter terror and death among a winged generation of lovers; barbarous amusement, for which the pretext of displaying address as a marksman, or the slight motive of utility, could plead no excuse, as those birds, habituated to the haunts of man, never shun the presence of the stranger, and as, on the other hand, their flesh furnishes but a sorry repast.

If the eye is carried to the other side of the river, a plain expands to view which has no boundary but the horizon: this is the Delta\*. Issuing out of the bosom of the waters, it preserves the freshness of its origin: to the golden tints of exuberant autumn succeeds, the very same year, the verdure of the meadows. Orchards, similar to those in the vicinity of Rossetta, groups of trees, green all the year round, others scattered about at random, flocks of every kind diversify the points of view, and enliven this rich and verdant portion of Egypt. Numerous towns and villages enhance

\* I am well aware that the ancients took the base of the Delta from the Canopic branch of the Nile (Strabo, book xvii.); but this Canopic branch being lost, and the land contained between it and Rossetta being sandy, sterile, and uninhabited, the Delta, which is associated with the idea of fertility, ought no longer to be taken but from the Holbitic branch, that of Rossetta.

the beauty of the landscape ; here, the cities display in vista their lofty and pointed turrets ; there, expand lakes and canals, a source of fecundity inexhaustible ; every where are distinguishable the signs of an easy cultivation, of an eternal spring, and of a fertility incessantly renovated and endlessly varied\*.

Rossetta is likewise the place of Egypt whose tranquillity is the least liable to discomposure. Nothing is known there of those insurrections, those tumults, that restless agitation which disturb the peace of the other cities. There the stranger was in perfect security, and could walk about at his ease, without being obliged to assume the dress of the country, which it was impossible for him to do in any other part of Egypt. He rambled over the plains, he penetrated into enclosures, he traversed the gardens in every direction, trampled vegetation under his feet, while no one took offence at what he did. In the course of those delightful excursions, which I loved frequently to repeat, the husbandman or the gardener invited me into his cottage, and treated me with coffee. With the same manners, the same usages, the same ignorance and fanaticism, the inhabitants of Rossetta would have remained, as those of the ruins of Alexandria, as

\* An idea may be formed of this part of Egypt, by casting the eye over plate VIII. of this work.

those

those who live at the bottom of the parched rocks of Upper Egypt, the most ferocious barbarians on the globe; but, planted on a soil fertile and smiling, whose freshness and copious productions temper the ardour of the climate and the dryness of the atmosphere, their manners are softened, their character has lost its asperity: a change to be ascribed to the happy dispositions of nature, and to the influence of agriculture, which is, still more than commerce, the first instructor of nations, and the most direct method to draw them from a state of barbarism, and to stimulate them to a rapid and assured progress towards civilization.

## CHAP. XIV.

*Disturbances at Cairo—Oriental dress—Boats of the Nile—Winter—Rossetta—Commerce—Rice, its culture, and its antiquity in Egypt—Trefoil—Oxen and cows.*

WHETHER it be that the traveller, after having dwelt for some time in the dust, and amidst the ruins of Alexandria, after having traversed the twelve leagues of scorched plains, which separate that city from the banks of the Nile: in a word, after having surmounted the hills of sand which run close up to Rossetta on the west, arrives there, or rather seems all at once to drop into it; or whether he has quitted a disagreeable and dangerous residence at Cairo, a habitation at Rossetta becomes a most desirable retreat, which comparison renders delicious. With an intention to penetrate into Upper Egypt, and afterwards into Abyssinia, I had, at first, made a rapid progress to Cairo, as I have mentioned, in company with M. Tott, who left me there. Circumstances could not have been more unpropitious. The dissensions which so frequently arise among the potentates of Egypt had reached the highest pitch of fury. The Saïd was filled with combatants, and infested with robbers;



robbers ; while at Cairo, the European, confined to his own home, or, at least, to a narrow quarter of the town, trembling every moment for his life, durst not shew his face amidst a confusion, an uproar, of which it is impossible to form an idea, without having lived in this capital of Egypt. I waited in expectation that the troubles would subside, and permit me to enter on the execution of my design ; but wearied out with the anxious state of inaction to which I was reduced, tired of living the life of a recluse, and seeing no prospect of the era when Egypt was to resume a tranquillity which could admit of travelling through it without being exposed to certain danger, I resolved on returning to Rossetta, a privileged country, which the commotions of the rest of Egypt did not reach, and in which the stranger had it in his power to walk about unmolested, especially if he had the prudence to conform to the customs of the country.

I had, at Cairo, laid aside my European dress, and assumed the Turkish habit. To this I was obliged to make a sacrifice of my hair ; an enormous turban, *à la Druse*, enveloped, in various rounds, my close-shaven head, and sheltered it from the attacks of an ardent sun ; vestments long and wide, which a silken girdle hardly confined, covered my body, without compressing it, and left every limb perfectly at ease. No part is cramped,

nothing strains in the Oriental garb; and, after having worn it for some time, you become sensible how incommodious are the strictures of our narrow and scanty apparel, and you find the resumption of it uneasy. My draughtsman and my two French attendants had, in like manner, changed their garments; but they wore a habit less ample and more spruce; that of the *serrachs*, foot soldiers attached to the beys: mustachios garnished our lips, and long scimitars dangled along by our sides.

We left Cairo with heart-felt satisfaction, October 20th, 1771, at one o'clock in the afternoon, and embarked on board a *kanja*, a species of boat employed in the navigation of the Nile. Their construction is elegant, and they sail remarkably well; you have them of various sizes. At the same time that they serve for the conveyance of merchandise, they have in the after-part, for the accommodation of passengers, one or more well-aired apartments, which would be abundantly agreeable, were they not infested with myriads of fleas, lice, bugs, and other vermin. During the two days and two nights of our passage to Rossetta, it was impossible for me to close my eyes for a single instant, and my companions were in the same deplorable condition. A prey to the incessant bitings of a prodigious quantity of those  
abominable

abominable insects, we were tormented in a manner altogether inconceivable ; our bodies were an uninterrupted continuity of little wounds and smarting blisters. I had been exposed, in South America, to the stings of innumerable swarms of musquitos, but I do not remember that I ever suffered so much as in that accursed kanja.

These boats likewise have, as the gerges of Alexandria, immense triangular sails, attached to sail-yards of a very extraordinary length. (See plate VIII.) These yards too, like the others, are not made to lower ; and when the vessel is under sail, it is impossible to make them change their side of the mast, aloft, to go on the other tack ; so that in the frequent necessity of putting about, occasioned by the sinuosities of the Nile, the sails are for some time backed close to the masts and shrouds, without a possibility of reefing or lowering them. The wind being unsteady, the squalls frequent and furious, and the boatmen ignorant in the extreme, it is by no means uncommon to see some of those boats, in such a position, go to the bottom. The one on which we were embarked, was freighted for my sole use ; there was no one on board but ourselves and our baggage. I had leisure and opportunity to converse with the master. I endeavoured to make him comprehend that, by means of certain slight arrangements, it would

be easy for him to avoid the danger, but too real, of oversetting. He admitted all I said; but still had recourse to the ordinary argument of jog-trot ignorance : *it is the common practice.*

We encountered, during these two days of navigation on the Nile, a very thick fog, which did not disperse before ten o'clock in the morning, when it fell in a very fine shower of small rain. These fogs were the forerunners of winter. But, by the word winter, is not to be understood that sharp and cold temperature which, for several months of the year, checks the progress of vegetation, and pinches the human species so severely, over the greatest part of our Europe. Hoar-frosts are unknown in the climate of Lower Egypt. The water is never congealed, and Nature never clothes herself with that mantle of old age, under which we would think her expiring, were we not habituated to behold her regularly resuming her spring attire. There, the winds from the sea, and the rains, only cool the air, during the three winter months\*, without freezing the fluids, without rendering artificial heat necessary to man, without interrupting the progress of vegetation, without the verdure's ceasing to embellish the plains and to delight the eye.

\* The months of November, December, and January.

It is under this happy temperature, and on a soil wonderfully fresh and verdant, that the city of Rossetta is situated, where we arrived on the 22d of the month, at four o'clock in the afternoon, not having been retarded a single instant on the voyage.

I went on shore at the house of the vice-consul of France, M. de Trouïi, whose taste for the belles-lettres provided him with a charm for his solitude; I accepted the lodging under his roof, which he tendered me in the most gracious manner; and I found again in the interpreter, Fornéti, the same attentions, the same complaisance, for which I stood indebted to Messrs. Adanson and Augustus, while at Alexandria. Some French merchants lived in the same building; it was a vast *hockal*, of a similar form, but much more lofty than that of the French factory at Alexandria. It is close upon the Nile, and, like all the other houses of Rossetta, is built of brick.

The city is named by the natives, *Raschid*, the Arabic appellation which it bore as far back as the time of the geographer Edrissi, in 1153, and which the Europeans have transformed into Rossetta\*.

Some

\* And not *Rosetta*, as it is now commonly written. *Rosett* is, I grant, softer in the pronunciation: this word suggests an idea more pleasant and more analogous to the delicious fragrance and



Some others have thought that it was the site of Canopus : but this is a mistake. The Canopic branch is the salt-marsh of *Maadié*, and the ruins of Canopus are at *Aboukir*. Rossetta presents no one trace of antiquity ; it is, nevertheless, certain that it cannot be far distant from the spot where the ancient *Metelis*, or *Metilis*, stood, of which Strabo and Ptolemy make mention, and which was on the western shore, and near the discharge of the Bolbitic branch of the Nile \*.

It is, beyond contradiction, the most agreeable city in Egypt, and would be so any where else. Its houses much better built, in general, than those of Cairo, its position on the bank of the river, the

and fertility of the gardens with which the city is surrounded ; but, where proper names are concerned, it is custom which must give the law, and custom pronounces the first syllable hard, *Rossetta*, derived from the still harsher Arabic name, *Raschid*. This is assuredly a very frivolous observation, and I would not forgive myself for having made it, unless, on my publishing, in the *Journal de Physique*, some observations on the hippopotamus, a certain *Traveller*, in a *note* which he annexed to them, had given me a grave rebuke, for having written the Arabic word *baar* with only a single *r*. Oh ! when a man has undergone criticism for an *r* too little, he is equally exposed to it for an *s* too much. What is singularly pleasant, this *Traveller*, instead of an *r* put in his correction a *z* ; so that it became necessary, the month following, by a second *erratum* to correct the first.

\* The Romans named the mouth of this branch of the Nile, *Bolbitinum ostium*.

prospect

prospect which it commands of the Delta, presenting the smiling image of the richest cultivation, the perfumed groves which surround it, the pure and wholesome air you there respire, have procured for it the well-merited name of the *Garden of Egypt*. Every article of necessary or luxurious consumption is there to be found in profusion; there you behold long streets formed by a double row of shops, in which every species of merchandise is exposed to sale; the necessaries of life are in the greatest abundance, and at a very moderate price. But Rossetta possessed allurements sufficient, without ascribing to it others which have no existence, and dependance on which might have betrayed travellers into error, and involved them in distress. Cornelius Le Bruyn, for example, who saw inns wherever he went \*, or his translator for him, says, that *Rossetta is the most agreeable of cities, from the great number of inns for the comfortable accommodation of travellers †*. Who would not have imagined from this, that no precaution on the part of the traveller was requisite in order to be at his ease on arriving at Rossetta, and that he had only to alight at the first house of entertainment that caught his eye? But he would have been sadly disappointed, for there is absolutely no such thing in the city. The cara-

\* Look back to page 204.

† Travels of Cornelius Le Bruyn, vol. ii. p. 110, note a.

vanseras, which by no means supply their place, present nothing, usually, here as well as in the other countries under the Turkish government, but a mere place of retreat, destitute of every manner of accommodation except four bare walls, where nothing is furnished but water, and where the stranger is laid under the necessity of providing himself with every thing he wants. Travellers from Europe were usually received by the merchants of their several nations, who were settled in hired houses of their own.

Rossetta is the commercial depository between Cairo and Alexandria; it there diffuses life, motion, and abundance. It likewise possesses some branches of commerce peculiar to itself, such as spun cotton dyed red, which comes to market from the adjacent cantons; dressed flax, linen and cotton stuffs, drugs for silk-dying, the materials of oriental clothing, &c. &c. Another object which, without being so considerable as at Damietta, is not for that of less importance, is the exportation of rice, in Arabic, *rouss* \*. At the time of my arrival, toward the end of October, they were busily employed in the drying of this valuable grain, a wholesome and pleasant aliment to many of the nations of the earth; they were spreading it out on the terraces of the houses, and in the public squares.

\* *Oryza sativa*. Lin.

It is alleged that to this operation is to be ascribed the multitude of gnats \* with which the city and the interior of the houses were at that season filled. In truth, there are not such swarms of them at other times. After the rice is reaped, they issue in crowds innumerable from the inundated fields in which the preceding generation had deposited their eggs. They come to torment men; and to suck their blood, to dart stings more pungent than those of the musquitos, so well known, of South America †.

Rice is sown, in Lower Egypt, from the month of March till May. During the inundation of the Nile, the fields are covered by its waters; and, in order to retain them as long as possible, they raise around each field little dikes, a kind of mound to prevent their running off. Aqueducts serve to supply them with additional moisture; for it is necessary to the plant's thriving, that the root be constantly soaked in water. The earth is so completely drenched with this process, that in some places you sink into it up to the middle. Rice is about six months in the ground before it attains full maturity; and is generally cut down about the middle of November. The use of the flail is not

\* *Culex antennis pilis verticillatis; rostro cinereo, apice nigro, crassiusculo; dorso fusco, fasciis sex pallidis.* Forskal, Descrip. Animal. Oriental.

† *Culex hæmorrhoidalis.* Lin.

known in Egypt. In order to separate the grain from the straw, they prepare, with a mixture of earth and doves-dung, spacious areas, well compacted and made perfectly clean. On these the rice is deposited in deep layers. They next employ a species of cart, formed of two pieces of wood fastened together by two cross bars, nearly of the form of those sledges which are used to drag heavy loads along the pavement of the streets of our cities. Between the lengthwise sides of this sledge are fixed transversely three rows of little wheels of solid iron, and brought to an edge at the circumference. On the fore part, a seat very high and very broad is rudely constructed. On this a man is placed, who guides two oxen which are yoked to the machine, and the whole is moved slowly, and in a circular direction, over all the parts of a pile of rice, till no more grain remains attached to the straw. Having undergone this operation, it is spread out in the air to dry. The manner of turning it over is very amusing. A great many men walk alongside of each other, and each of them furrows, with one foot, the layer of grain, so that in a few moments the whole mass is stirred about, and what was before undermost is again exposed to the air.

The rice, when dried, is carried to the mill, where it is stripped of its husk or envelope. This mill consists of a single wheel turned round by oxen, and



and which puts in motion many levers, at the extremity of which is a cylinder of iron near a foot long, and hollowed below. They beat into the troughs which contain the grain. By the side of each trough a man is stationed, whose assiduous employment it is to bring forward the rice to the action of the cylinders. His attention to this business must be undistracted: for he would run the risk of having his hand crushed off, if he failed to draw it back at the instant. This part of the process being executed, the rice is withdrawn from the mill, and sifted in the open air, which is performed in a very simple manner, by filling a small sieve with as much grain as a man can easily carry; he raises this sieve-full above his head, and gently pours the rice out of it, with his face from the wind, which carries off the chaff and dust. The rice thus cleaned is put a second time to the mill to be whitened. They mix salt with it in the troughs, which contributes greatly towards giving it a fair colour, and, above all, towards its preservation. It has now passed through the whole preparatory process, and is ready to go to market.

It is only on the low lands of Lower Egypt that rice is cultivated. Farther to the south, the soil, too elevated, could not admit of being soaked by the sheet of water which, in order to the success of this branch of agriculture, must be diffused over

the whole surface. The Delta, that inexhaustible deposit of the riches of nature, furnishes a prodigious quantity of it. That which is reaped in the vicinity of Rossetta is in higher estimation than that of the plains which surround Damietta. This superior quality is probably to be ascribed to the mode of preparation, which is more carefully attended to in the former of these two cities; for the nature of the climate and soil is the same. In the neighbourhood of both, the culture of rice succeeds equally well, and its produce is equally astonishing. The profits of the proprietors of rice-grounds are valued, in good years, those in which the elevation of the Nile produces the greatest expansion of its waters, at fifty per cent. after deducting all expense.

It has frequently been proposed in France, to appropriate to herself the culture of rice; it would prove, assuredly, a valuable acquisition to our domestic agriculture. But, if we reflect that in Egypt it requires six months to come to maturity, and that, during these six months, it stands in need of constant heat and humidity, few parts of the republic will be found, which promise, for this branch of culture, certain and abundant crops.

It has been a subject of much discussion, to ascertain whether or not the ancient Egyptians cultivated

tivated the rice-plant; and, as is the case in almost all inquiries of a similar nature, the mind is still left in a state of uncertainty. According to Messrs. Shaw\* and Goguet†, the people of Egypt, in ancient times, lived on rice. But M. Pauw asserts, that this plant was a greater stranger to those very Egyptians, than the cassavi of Brasil is, at this day, to the inhabitants of Germany. He adds, that it was not till the time of the caliphs that the first grain of rice was imported from India into Lower Egypt, where the cultivation of it first began in the environs of Damietta, and he quotes Frederic Hasselquitz as his authority ‡. In truth, the Swedish traveller has affirmed that, conformably to appearances, the Egyptians learned the method of cultivating rice, under the domination of the caliphs: for, says he, it was during their reign, that a great many useful plants were imported thither, by the way of the Red Sea §. We have then nothing for it but a conjecture of Hasselquitz, supported by no authority whatever.

On the other hand, the opposite sentiment, that which reckons the cultivation of rice among the

\* Shaw's Travels, p. 391.

† Origin of Laws, vol. ii. p. 344.

‡ Philosophical Researches respecting the Egyptians and Chinese, vol. i. p. 138.

§ Voyage to the Levant, by Fred. Hasselquitz, translated from the German, part i. p. 163.

other branches of agriculture with the ancient Egyptians, rests on a fact not easily to be destroyed. M. de Caylus, whom his taste for antiquities has raised to celebrity, describes an idol of Osiris, in bronze, which had been enclosed in a case of plaster. In order to render the joinings of this case more firm and solid, over a substance so smooth as bronze, and without a hold in several places, they had made use of the straw of rice, *very easily distinguishable* \*. M. Pauw, it is true, calls in question the botanical knowledge of M. de Caylus †, as if it required profound skill in the science of plants, to be able to distinguish the straw of rice from that of other farinaceous vegetables. Besides, the examination of this idol was not made by M. de Caylus only; M. de Bose delivered a dissertation, before the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, in December 1739, on the same figure of Osiris, gilded in a very singular manner, and which he had seen a short time before, in the possession of the Count de Caylus. They had both of them accurately examined the gilding which covered it, and had ob-

\* Collection of Antiquities, vol. i. p. 13, 14. See likewise the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of Paris, vol. xiv. p. 13.

† Philosophical Researches respecting the Egyptians and Chinese, vol. i. This pretended rice-straw, if M. Pauw is to be credited, is nothing else but the stalks of millet cut down.  
*Note at bottom of p. 138.*

served,

served, that in order to make the layer of white, to which the gold was applied, adhere to the bronze, the artist had first overlaid the figure with a good layer of glue, besprinkled all over with chips of rice-straw\*.

On the report of Herodotus, one of the alimentary plants of the ancient Egyptians, was the *olyra* †. There cannot be a greater conformity, unless being absolutely the same, between this word and *ozyra* ‡, the name which the Greeks gave to rice, and this conformity so striking would be an incontestable proof of the antiquity of the culture of rice in Egypt, if Citizen Larcher, whose opinion is preponderating on such a subject, had not assured us, that after a close and accurate examination of a great number of passages of the ancients, the *olyra* is not the rice-plant, but spelt §. M. Pauw had asserted that it was the rye ||, the name of which is totally unknown at this day in

\* Mem. of the Acad. of Insér. and Belles-Lettres, the passage above quoted.

† Book ii. § 77.

‡ This cannot be a typographical error, but a mistake of the Author. The Greek word is  $\delta\rho\upsilon\zeta\alpha$ , *oryza*, and not *ozyra*; the fanciful etymological resemblance of course disappears, and all the learned reasoning upon it falls to the ground.—H. H.

§ *Triticum spelta*. Lin. See Larcher's Translation of Herodotus, book ii. § 77, note 258.

|| Philosophical Researches, p. 138.



Egypt, and which, in all probability, never constituted a part of the ancient agriculture of that country. But these are nothing more than the very luminous conjectures of science: a contradictory fact still maintains its ground, that of the straw which covered the antique statue of Osiris, so *accurately* examined by Messrs. de Caylus and de Bose.

M. Pauw, in the same work, wherein paradoxes are no rarities, goes still farther: he insists, that supposing the ancient Egyptians to have been acquainted with rice, they would have been on their guard against the cultivation of it, because, according to him, this species of culture is sufficient to generate endemical diseases in a country where it never thunders, at least very rarely, and where the atmosphere, impregnated with saline substances which the fire of heaven does not consume, is very much subject to corruption\*; nay, he insinuates that this is one of the causes of the pestilence, which he erroneously supposes to be an epidemical disease in Egypt. What has betrayed M. Pauw into this mistake, for he never saw the rice-grounds of Egypt but in his closet, is his considering them as marshes, the idea of rice-ground being generally associated with that of a

\* Philosophical Researches, p. 89, 90.

marsh which it is dangerous to stir, on account of the exhalations which issue from it. But in the vast plains of Lower Egypt, besides that the strong and regular winds would purge the atmosphere of the noxious vapours with which it might be loaded, it is not on marshy grounds that the rice is raised; a stagnant and infected water by no means covers the plains in which it is produced; they moisten it, they bathe it with the water of the river, which all the resources of art are employed in conveying to it: this water runs off, and they give over supplying their conduits with more, as soon as the plants stand no longer in need of moisture. Another species of crop, which does not require such copious refreshment, and which absorbs the remains of an excessive humidity, succeeds to that of rice, and beautiful carpets of verdure assume the place of the yellow robe, with which, a little before, the self same plains were clothed.

As soon as the rice is reaped, the Egyptians sow a beautiful variety of trefoil, which they call *barsim* \*. The seed of it is scattered over the surface of the ground without the labour of ploughing or digging, and it sinks to a sufficient depth in a soil which, at that period, is still abundantly

\* *Trifolium Alexandrinum*. Forskal, Flora Egyptiaco-Arabica, p. 139, *Nota*. Some travellers have confounded the *barsim* with the sainfoin: it is a species, or rather variety, of our trefoil.

humid. Fortunate country, where the earth needs not to be painfully torn to open her bosom to fecundity, where it is sufficient, if I may use the expression, for the husbandman to indicate the kind of riches which he wishes to have, in order to their being lavished upon him; where, in a word, Nature seems to remit to man, who is incessantly offering violence to her, all labour and even all acknowledgment! This trefoil yields three successive crops, before it again resigns its place to the rice: the second of these is always more beautiful than the other two, because then the plant has room to spread out its roots, and the stalk is no longer cramped by the stubble. It is easily conceivable how beautiful and brilliant such an alternation of produce must be, and which no other country on the globe can display. The *barsim*, green or dried, is the most common, and the most succulent food of the brute creation, whether in pasture, or in the fold. One essential quality of this excellent fodder, and which it is more natural to ascribe to the climate than to difference of species, is this, that I never saw it occasion to the animal that sudden and sometimes mortal inflammation, which our trefoil scarcely ever fails to produce, when the animals pasture on it, or eat it newly cut, in too great a quantity, and without mixture.

In

In speaking of the best species of fodder, an opportunity offers of speaking a few words on the kind of animals most valuable to agriculture. The ox is, without controversy, of all domestic animals, the one which renders the most important services to man. Among a warlike and conquering people, the horse will be placed in the first rank; but that nation will be neither rich nor happy. With a sage nation, which considers agriculture as the real source of public prosperity, the ox will have the preference. Behold that horse so stately; with what rapidity he scours the plain! what agility, what majesty in all his movements! His eyes sparkle, his mouth whitens with foam; extended nostrils scarcely leave the passage free for a burning and interrupted snorting; he seems to partake of the ardour of the warrior who had subjected him to the bridle. Both the one and the other present, no doubt, a very imposing spectacle; but neither the one nor the other is capable of extracting his subsistence out of the bowels of the earth; it is the fruit of the painful efforts of that poor drudge, whom you perceive in the back-ground, bending oppressedly over a ploughshare dragged forward by oxen, which modestly animate the courage and the constancy of labour; he it is who forces the earth, by tearing it asunder, to yield productions always

new;

new; he alone knows how to employ iron in achieving the only conquest which Nature avows.

It is well known in what estimation oxen were held in ancient Egypt; they furnished deities to that superstitious people; their worship was universally diffused; many cities had their peculiar divinities of this species whose persons were sacred. The celebrity of the ox *Apis* is known all the world over, which became the first of this herd of gods: he had his altars; maintained his priests; he delivered oracles. No heifer was ever put to death, and the law declared it sacrilege to dare to eat their flesh\*. They performed funeral obsequies in honour of ordinary oxen when they happened to die; for excepting those which were offered in sacrifice to the gods, scarcely any were killed; it was unlawful to put to death any which had ever worn the yoke; this was a reward for their services, a kind of grateful acknowledgment, far remote from the harshness, from the ferocious ingratitude of most of our farmers, toward the laborious animals to which they are indebted for the means of subsistence; and this harshness and insensibility have a much greater influence than is commonly imagined on the public morals. The Egyptian go-

\* To this very day, the murder of a man or of a calf, is the only crime which the Hindoos punish with death. Mackintosh's Travels, vol. i. p. 312.



vernment, in concert with the priests, supported this religious enthusiasm in favour of animals the most useful to a nation, with whom almost all the laws had a reference to agriculture. What attention, what respect must not have been paid toward the perfecting of a species every individual of which might pretend to the honours of apotheosis? For if attentions are bestowed on what we love, superstition is lavish of them on what it adores.

To no purpose should we look in the very considerable number of oxen actually existing in Egypt, for the vestiges of that perfection of beauty which they must have had in ancient times. Though the race of them be still abundantly handsome, it is easy to conceive that, having been long neglected, it must have greatly degenerated; they have, in general, small horns, and the hair dun-coloured, more or less deep, a colour which does not require, in my apprehension, a very great effort of the pencil; though Maillet tells us that “those animals are of such exquisite beauty, that the pencil is incapable of representing it\*.” I can bear witness, that in making the complete tour of Egypt, I never met any one ox which struck me either from its form or colours. In depicting them as the most beautiful in the world,

\* Description of Egypt, by M. Maillet, in 4to. part ii. p. 27.

the same author would have the oxen of Egypt pass likewise for the best of all. "Their flesh," says he, "is admirable; it does not yield in quality to that of the oxen of Hungary, nor to any other whatever; nay, it has this farther excellence, that of being extremely nutritious\*." This meat, nevertheless, is far from having the flavour of the beef which we eat in France. The assertion of Maillet, false in the fact, is likewise so in the principle. In truth, it contradicts a general observation which every traveller has it in his power to ascertain, namely, that the flesh of the animals of very hot regions has neither the succulence nor the savour of that of animals of the same species, fed in cold or temperate climates. Veal which, with us, furnishes an aliment delicate and wholesome, has, in Egypt, flesh flabby, insipid, and consequently not very salubrious. I have made the same remark in the countries of South America adjacent to the line, and in which the calves, killed at the age when ours are sent to the butcher, would not be eatable, from the flabbiness and insipidity of their flesh; so that till it has had time to acquire sufficient consistence, they are obliged to let the young animal grow, until, ceasing to be a calf, it would pass every where else for a bullock. Veal is not eaten in Egypt: the laws of the Mahometans prohibit the use of that

\* Id. *ibid.*

food; and the Cophts, who have adopted almost all the customs of their tyrants, likewise abstain from it.

It has been affirmed that the cows of Egypt produce twins at a birth\*. This happens sometimes, no doubt; but though less rare perhaps than in Europe, this degree of fecundity by no means passes for an ordinary thing. It was natural that, after having endeavoured to establish the superiority of the Egyptian bull, Maillet should talk in the same tone of exaggeration of the cow; accordingly, he was not satisfied with allowing her two calves at a birth, and boldly asserts that cows have been known to produce four at once†. Such hasty observations, which disgrace a narrative of facts, would undoubtedly have had no place in that of Maillet, if death had allowed him time to digest, himself, the memoirs which he had collected, and of which the greatest part belonged to him only because he had been furnished with them. I have read a very long one, deposited in the chancery of France, at Rossetta, *composed for M. Maillet*, by a French merchant residing there, and I have found it again, printed at full length, in the work of the consul. It is very difficult,

\* Cornelius Le Bruyn's *Voyage*, vol. ii. p. 101, note *n.*—  
Paul Lucas's *Voyage*, &c. &c. &c.

† *Description of Egypt*, part ii. p. 5.

when

when a man does not observe for himself, when he throws together materials supplied by a variety of hands, and when he credulously admits the relations, almost always unfounded, of the people of the country, to avoid falling into a multiplicity of errors.

The oxen, in Egypt, are employed in a very easy husbandry. The industry of the inhabitants not having acquired the art of availing themselves of the assistance of water and wind to put in motion their mills and their numerous hydraulic machines, apply to them likewise the strength of the ox. Each of the rice-mills, which I lately mentioned, requires forty or fifty of those animals, and this kind of machinery being considerably multiplied at Rossetta and at Damietta, beasts of this sort could not but fetch a very high price: they usually sold for two hundred and fifty francs each (near ten guineas), an exorbitant valuation in a country where pasture is so abundant; dismal effect of a horrible despotism; but few calves are reared, little thought is exercised about to-morrow, where it is uncertain whether fortune, whether existence itself, shall exist another day.

Oxen in the yoke have their head at liberty: the yoke or the lever, fixed by a leathern strap, rests on the last vertebræ of the neck, so that the  
strain

strain is made by the exertion of the shoulders. This method is in general use all over Turkey, and it appears to me exceedingly commodious: the animal is more at its ease, has more force and speed, than when it is in the fatiguing and extremely awkward attitude of pulling by the head. It is to this method we must ascribe the thickness of the withers, which the oxen of Egypt have more elevated than those of our European countries. It is possible, at the same time, that this may be a natural swell, and that, on this account, they may be considered as approaching to the bison, or hump-backed ox\*.

\* *Bos ferus*. Lin.



## CHAP. XV.

*Inhabitants of Rossetta—Pipes—Coffee-houses — Arabian Tales—Manner of making the coffee— Shameful vices of the Egyptians—Wives of the rich—Conversation by signs with one of them— Particulars respecting those women—Jealousy of the men—Homage paid to women.*

AFTER the eye has wandered with delight over a portion of the brilliant agriculture of Egypt, it is reluctantly brought back to the interior of cities. There, it is the picture of fertile and generous nature ; here we are presented with the sacrilegious efforts, to contradict and violate her, of men incapable of relishing, of enjoying her beauties. There, sensations the gentlest and the most pure follow each other in rapid succession, and deliciously fill the feeling soul. Here, the mind is shocked at the hideous aspect of the vices which domineer in a society equally degenerate and corrupted. [ But I have engaged to present, without disguise, my observations of every kind, and those which have a reference to the manners of the existing Egyptians ought to find a place in a general description.

Rossetta

Rossetta not having, like Alexandria, an immediate communication with the sea, you do not find it swarming with those multitudes of foreigners, of adventurers, of dangerous men, whose agitation, tumult, and uproar are their element, and which render a residence at the city last named, so very disagreeable. Remote from the bustle of sea-ports, and from the frequent political convulsions of Cairo, its inhabitants were abundantly peaceable. Not that the European was there secured entirely from insult: he had, at times, disagreeable circumstances to encounter, but they were slight in comparison with those which persecuted him at Alexandria, and which absolutely oppressed him at Cairo. The silly and ridiculous pride which persuades the Mahometans that they alone of mankind are adopted by the Deity, that they are the only persons to whom he ought to open his bosom, a pride which the doctors of the law or the priests, the vainest and most intolerant of all men, took great care to foment, was the principal source of those unpleasant attacks. The Turk describes the European by no other epithet than that of *infidel*; the Egyptian Mussulman, still coarser, treats him merely as a *dog*. With him, *Christian* and *dog* were two terms so exactly synonymous, and in such frequent use, that no attention was paid to the difference, and that they were indiscriminately employed by persons who had no intention to offer an

insult. Europeans, in the usual dress of their own country, were likewise exposed, at Rossetta, to be hooted at, in the more populous quarters of the town, and to be pursued with repeated shouts of *Nouxrani, Nazarene*. The Jews likewise underwent there those petty persecutions, and, though stationary inhabitants of the country, were much worse treated in it than the Christians of Europe. But that nation is composed of degraded individuals, and deserves to be despised, inasmuch, as, insensible to contempt, to the disgrace accumulated on them by wave upon wave, they suffered themselves, if I may use the expression, to be deluged with it, provided you left them the facility of glutting their vile and insatiable thirst of gold. Habited in the oriental style, they were obliged, in Egypt, to wear a head-dress, and to be shod, in a peculiar and appropriate manner; but what principally distinguished them, was the tufts of hair, or of beard, which they were forced to let grow, and to keep up, close by the ear, on both sides of the face. Most of the merchants were Turks or Syrians; there were some likewise from Barbary. The Cophts, that degenerate race, descended from the ancient Egyptians, resided there in considerable numbers. Some Arabs too were domesticated in that city, and the plains adjacent were inhabited and cultivated by the *fellahs*; a term which, in Egypt, conveys an idea of contempt, as in ancient

cient times that of *peasant* did with us, to which it corresponds, when the intension is to express rude vulgarity and gross ignorance. The chief command was intrusted to an officer of the Mamelucs, to whom they gave the title of *Aga*.

The most ordinary pastime here, as well as all over Turkey, is to smoke and drink coffee. The pipe is never from the mouth from morning to night: at home, in the houses of others, in the streets, on horseback, the lighted pipe is still in hand, and the tobacco-pouch hangs always at the girdle. These constitute two great objects of luxury; the purses which serve to contain the provision, are of silken stuffs richly embroidered, and the tubes of the pipes, of an excessive length, are of the rarest, and, for the most part, of the sweetest scented wood. I brought home one made of the jasmine-tree, which is more than six feet long: it may convey an idea of the beauty of the jasmynes of those countries, seeing they push out branches of that length, straight, and sufficiently large to admit of being bored. The pipes of more common wood are covered with a robe of silk tied with threads of gold. The poor, with whom the smoke of tobacco is a necessary of first-rate importance, make use of simple tubes of reed. The top of the pipe is garnished with a species of mock alabaster, and white as milk: it is frequently enriched with

precious stones. Among persons less opulent, the place of this is supplied by faucets. What goes into the mouth is a morsel of yellow amber, the mild and sweet savour of which, when it is heated or lightly pressed, contributes toward correcting the pungent flavour of the tobacco. To the other extremity of those tubes are adapted very handsome cups of baked clay, and which are commonly denominated the *nuts of the pipes*. Some of them are marbled with various colours, and plated over with gold-leaf. You find them of various sizes : those in most general use through Egypt are more capacious ; they are, at the same time, of greater distention. Almost all of them are imported from Turkey, and the reddish clay of which they are formed is found in the environs of Constantinople. There was a Turk at Rossetta who excelled in this species of manufacture. I took great pleasure sometimes to look over him while at work : a great diversity of small sharp-pointed tools served him to impress, with exquisite delicacy, various designs on the clay in its state of softness ; but the process was long and tedious : his pipe-nuts accordingly sold very dear. I had some from him which cost me so high as six franks (five shillings) apiece. Some of them were covered with a capital pierced full of holes, in form of a perfuming-pan. This Turk, who had lived a good deal at Constantinople, was not destitute of address ; his shop was the resort



resort of the most considerable personages of Rossetta; he was a great friend to the French, and he employed his credit to procure for me the means of travelling comfortably through Lower Egypt.

It is difficult for Frenchmen, especially for those who are not in the habit of scorching their mouth with our short pipes and strong tobacco, to conceive the possibility of smoking all day long. First, the Turkish tobacco is the best and the mildest in the world; it has nothing of that sharpness which, in European countries, provokes a continual disposition to spit; next, the length of the tube into which the smoke ascends, the odoriferous quality of the wood of which it is made, the amber tip which goes into the mouth, the wood of aloës with which the tobacco is perfumed, contribute more towards its mildness, and to render the smoke of it totally inoffensive in their apartments. The beautiful women, accordingly, take pleasure in amusing their vacant time, by pressing the amber with their rosy lips, and in gently respiring the fumes of the tobacco of Syria, embalmed with those of aloës. It is not necessary, besides, to draw up the smoke with a strong suction; it ascends almost spontaneously. They put the pipe aside, they chat, they look about, from time to time they apply it to the lips, and gently inhale the smoke, which immediately makes its escape from the half-

opened mouth. Sometimes they amuse themselves by sending it through the nose: at other times they take a full mouthful, and artfully blow it out on the extended palm, where it forms a spiral column, which it takes a few instants to evaporate. The glands are not pricked, and the throat and breast are not parched by an incessant discharge of saliva, with which the floors of our smokers are inundated. They feel no inclination to spit, and that affection, so customary with us, is, in the East, considered as a piece of indecency in the presence of persons entitled to superior respect; it is, in like manner, looked upon as highly unpolite to wipe the nose while they are by.

The Orientalists, who are not under the necessity of labouring, remain almost always in a sitting posture, with their legs crossed under them; they never walk, unless they are obliged to do so; and do not stir from one place to another, without a particular object to put them in motion. If they have an inclination to enjoy the coolness of an orchard or the purling of a stream, the moment they reach their mark they sit down. They have no idea of taking the air, except on horseback, for they are very fond of this exercise. It is a great curiosity to observe their looks, as they contemplate an European walking backward and forward, in his chamber, or in the open air, retreading continually the self-

self-same steps which he had trodden before. It is impossible for them to comprehend the meaning of that going and coming, without any apparent object, and which they consider as an act of folly. The more sensible among them conceive it to be a prescription of our physicians which sets us awalking about in this manner, in order to take an exercise necessary to the cure of some disorder. The negroes, in Africa, have a similar idea of this practice, and I have seen the savages of South America laugh at it heartily among themselves. It is peculiar to thinking men; and this agitation of the body participates of that of the mind, as a kind of relief to its extreme tension. Hence it comes to pass that all those nations, whose head is empty, whose ideas are contracted, whose mind is neither employed, nor susceptible of meditation, have no need of such a relaxation, of such a diversion of thought: with them, immobility of body is a symptom of the inert state of the brain.

Those who are oppressed by want of employment, and this is the heritage of the rich, retire to the gardens, of which I have presented a sketch, and, evermore seated, delight themselves with breathing a cool and balsamic air, or in listening to wretched music. If they do not choose to go out of town, they repair to one of the coffee-

houses, of which we should form a very erroneous idea, in judging of them by our own. It is a mere tobacco-smoking rendezvous, totally destitute of decoration, and in which nothing absolutely is to be found, except coffee and a live coal to light the pipes. Mats are spread for the company, and these places of resort are frequented by the men of all nations who reside in Egypt. There is nothing that deserves the name of conversation: a few words only drop occasionally. The Turk is cold and taciturn; he looks down on every other nation with disdain. The African is less disposed to silence, but likes to follow the example of the Turk, and those who are not Mussulmans take no pains to shun the appearance of a servile subjection to the taste of their tyrants. With the pipe in one hand, a cup of coffee in the other, they slowly wash down every four or five whiffs of tobacco, with a gulp of coffee. Dancing girls, buffoons, extempore declaimers, come to tender their services, and to earn a bit of money. There is scarcely one of those haunts but what attracts to it some story-teller by profession, who is never tired with talking, nor his auditors of listening to him. The narrations of those indefatigable orators are, for the most part, very insipid and tiresome. The Arabian writers, however, from whom their stories are borrowed, sometimes furnish them with some that are  
excellent.

excellent. Such is the one that follows, which I committed to memory, because it is short and poignant.

“ A Turk had repeated to his wife a sermon  
“ delivered by the Iman of his mosque. The  
“ priest had been declaiming on the sacredness  
“ and the obligations of wedlock. ‘ All those,’  
“ said he, ‘ who acquit themselves of their duties  
“ early in the night, perform a work as merito-  
“ rious as if they sacrificed a sheep. Those who,  
“ in the middle of the night, render a second tri-  
“ bute, do as much in the eyes of the gods, as if  
“ they sacrificed a camel. Those, finally, who,  
“ at sun-rising, render a third homage to the  
“ sanctity of their union, merit as much as if they  
“ had ransomed a slave.’ The wife, deeply con-  
“ cerned about her husband’s salvation, says to  
“ him, as the evening approached: ‘ My friend,  
“ let us sacrifice a sheep;’ and the sheep was sa-  
“ crificed. At midnight the Turk was awaked;  
“ ‘ Come, my friend,’ said she, ‘ let us sacrifice a  
“ camel:’ this sacrifice too was offered up. Scarce-  
“ ly had the day begun to dawn, when the fervent  
“ Mussulman-lady admonished her spouse that  
“ the moment was come for ransoming a slave;  
“ when turning towards her, with outstretched  
“ arms: ‘ Alas! my dear soul,’ said he, ‘ it is I who  
“ am thy slave; I conjure thee set me at liberty.’ ”



If a person be ever so little known, he can scarcely pass through a street without being invited in, and requested to drink coffee. This expression of politeness is to such a degree a matter of habit, that those who do not possess a single grain of coffee, such as the gardeners of Rossetta, never fail to make an offer of it, though you would embarrass them exceedingly by accepting it. They do not make use of utensils of iron for roasting the beans of the coffee plant: it is in an earthen vessel that this operation is performed. They afterwards pound them in a mortar of earthen-ware or wood, which preserves their perfume much better, than by reducing them to powder in a mill. The vicinity of Arabia renders it perfectly easy to provide themselves with the excellent coffee which it produces. In the opinion of delicate palates, forty beans are little enough to make one cup fit for drinking; and no where do you meet with it so highly flavoured. They do not suffer it to stand still a moment. When it has boiled three times over the fire, and drawing off successively, and at each boiling, a coffee-pot full with a long handle, they pour it into cups, and though it be not quite clear, there is no reason to regret the want of sugar, which it is not the custom at this place to mix with it.

I shall

I shall not undertake to delineate all the other usages which the Egyptians have in common with other Mahometans. These details belong more properly to the history of Turkey, and would carry me too far. I shall satisfy myself with mentioning such as I have more particularly observed.

If the inhabitants of Rossetta are less barbarous than those of the other parts of Egypt, they are not for that less ignorant, less superstitious, nor less intolerant. We find among them, though with shades somewhat softened, the same harshness of character, the same implacable aversion to the nations of Europe, the same propensity to revenge; in a word, the same perfidy; and they abandon themselves to the same detestable vices. The passion contrary to nature which the Thracian dames avenged by the massacre of Orpheus, who had rendered himself odious by gratifying it\*, the inconceivable appetite which dishonoured the Greeks and Persians of antiquity, constitute the delight, or, to use a juster term, the infamy of the Egyptians. It is not for the women that their amorous ditties are composed: it is not on them that tender caresses are lavished; far different objects inflame them. Sensual pleasure with them has nothing amiable, and their transports are merely paroxysms

\* *Ille etiam Thracum populis fuit auctor, amorem  
In teneros transferre mares.*

OVID.

of brutality. This horrid depravation, which, to the disgrace of polished nations, is not altogether unknown to them, is generally diffused over Egypt: the rich and the poor are equally infected with it; contrary to the effect which it produces in colder countries, that of being exclusive, it is there associated with the love of women. After having glutted his favourite and criminal inclination, the man of those countries retires to his *harem*, and there burns a few grains of incense in honour of Nature, to whom he has just been offering a horrid outrage; and with what worship, spirit of love, does he honour her! Abominable sacrificer, he knows nothing of those gentle reciprocations of affection, of that delicious oblivion, of those ardent transports of two souls which understand each other, and cleave to each other: no delicacy in the accessories, no decency of arrangement, nothing graceful in the details; all is brutal, every thing wants animation, every thing is restricted to physical propensity the most disgusting.

The outrages which the Egyptians offer to nature do not stop there: other beings besides partake of their horrible favours, and their wives are frequently in competition with the beasts of the field, and postponed to them. The crime of bestiality is familiar to those monsters under a human form; they avow it with the most impudent

dent effrontery, and wretches have been seen abandoning themselves to it, at Rossetta, in open day, in the more retired streets.

But let an impenetrable curtain drop over scenes so shocking, and let us penetrate into the retreats where beauty languishes, where, like the flower which the caresses of the zephyr abandon, and resign to the blighting breath of the impetuous south wind, deprived of the homage of sensibility, it withers and wastes under the yoke of a jealous barbarian, who torments her with his suspicions, and pollutes her with his profaned touch.

The wives of the masters of Egypt, of the other Mamelucs, of the Turks settled in the country, of the rich inhabitants of the cities, were not Egyptian women: they were originally from other countries of the East, and particularly from the parts of Greece in which beauty is a valuable and constant property.

Perpetually secluded, and going abroad very rarely, and under a veil, or, to express myself more accurately, under a mask, with which the face is completely covered, the sun can impress no blemish on the freshness, on the colouring of their complexion; and an acrid and saline air can never affect the fairness and the delicacy of their skin.

And

And for whom are so many charms so carefully preserved? For one single man, for a tyrant who holds them in captivity. An insuperable line of separation is drawn, in those countries, between the two constituent halves of the human species: the one, the graces of which form a contrast so agreeable with the force, and the masculine beauties of the other, a prisoner here, becomes the exclusive possession of a few individuals. No man can enter the place where the women are, the proprietor himself excepted; no one must behold their face. No where is jealousy carried to such a horrid excess; no where is it more ferocious. An inevitable death awaits the stranger who shall have made an attempt to introduce himself into the apartments reserved for the females, or to address a few words to them, on meeting them out of doors. Not that those beautiful captives have no disposition to burst asunder some links of their chain, and certain adventures have come to my knowledge, of which they had been frankly at the whole of the expense. But such instances of good luck were extremely hazardous, and assignations of this sort were kept with much anxiety and trepidation.

During my first residence at Cairo, I one day surprised, without intending it, a young Frenchman, who, behind the half-drawn curtains of a lattice in the consul's house, was busily employed in making  
a variety



a variety of signs; I came up to him, and asked whether there might not be some indiscretion in witnessing a conversation which appeared to me extremely animated, though not a single word was articulated. He readily admitted the truth of my remark. He was on the point of leaving Cairo, and besides, he could attach no interest but that of singularity, to the knowledge of a female, of whom he had scarcely a half view, and with whom he could have no communication but at the distance of more than sixty feet. I distinguished, through a grating of wood, the figure of a woman who lodged on the opposite side of the *kalisch*, or canal of Cairo. She returned the Frenchman's signs, and these silent interviews were repeated several times a day, at hours agreed upon. I did not fail to make one of them, without being seen by the lady. I learnt the art of signals, which, in a country where it is impossible to speak to women, is a very expressive language, and I myself was soon in a condition to be a very tolerable telegraph. The young man, obliged to take his departure with the consul, had taken his last farewell of the lady. Left alone in the house, I presented myself to supply his place. I signified that, being a Frenchman like the other, I came to express the same sentiments, and to tender the same homage. Soon tired of peeping through the close bars of a contracted window-blind, and of addressing my vows only to  
a beauty

a beauty which might be altogether imaginary, I requested that it might be displayed in all the lustre of unclouded day. Difficulties were started; I persisted, and was promised that toward the evening the lady would ascend to the terrace of the house. I got up to my own, and perceived an elegantly dressed female appear, but still at the distance of threescore feet, and still wearing her veil. This was even worse than the panes of her cross-barred lattice, through which I saw at least an intersected figure. I entreated her, in the most importunate of attitudes, that this impertinent veil might disappear. A black slave who attended her mistress, joined her entreaties to my supplications: all was to no purpose. The last favour which such a woman can bestow, is to display her person; and, from an unaccountable notion of modesty, she would rather exhibit her whole figure than uncover her face. The next day I renewed my solicitations, and they were crowned with some success. After many difficulties, the officious negress, who was in her mistress's secrets, tore aside the veil, and I beheld a female young and beautiful. The carnation of shame diffused over her countenance a very vivid colouring, which gradually faded, till nothing remained but the roses of beauty. From that moment, the most perfect liberty directed our mute conversations. I had received the highest possible token of benevolence. My beautiful neighbour  
gave

gave me to understand, that her husband, who was an old Turkey merchant, intended to go a long journey in a short time, and she engaged me to cultivate a closer intimacy, by passing over to her house. She pointed out to me a little door that opened toward the canal, and which was never employed as an entrance but for the purpose of fetching water from it. The black slave was to wait for me when the night shut in, and introduce me in perfect safety. She informed me, that, in order to reach this door, I had only to cross the breadth of the canal, at that time perfectly dry; and she swore by her head (a French woman would have said by her heart), that I did not run the slightest risk. I became difficult in my turn. The fearful consequences with which such a step might be followed were, in my eyes, a barrier, which the most amiable and ingenuous advances, which assurances the most affectionate, could not determine me to surmount. Several evenings passed away in this species of conflict, between the eloquent, though not uttered, invitations of a tender desire, and the resistance of prudence frequently but feebly opposed. But we had been detected; our interviews by means of signals, had excited the indignation of certain Mahometans, and the discharge of a musket from one of the adjacent terraces, and the ball of which whizzed close by my ear, gave me notice that it was high

time to terminate those steril encounters, and made me sensible how well advised I had been in not having crossed the canal.

These same women frequently visit each other. Decency and reserve do not always defray the expense of their conversations. The absolute want of education and of principle; the idleness and abundance in which they softly pass their days; the constraint in which they are unremittingly kept, by men extremely unacquainted with delicacy either of sentiment or in conduct; the assurance which they have that the inclinations of these men are directed towards other objects; the vivacity of their affections; the climate, which communicates its fires to hearts so fruitlessly disposed to tenderness; nature, whose powerful voice, too frequently misunderstood by those whom she calls to partake of her laws as well as of her pleasures, rouses their sensations; every thing contributes to direct their vivid imagination, their desires, their discourse, toward an object which they are not at liberty to attain. They amuse themselves in their little parties with completely changing clothes, and in mutually assuming each other's dress. This species of metamorphosis only serves as a prelude and a pretext to sports less innocent, and of which Sappho passes for having taught and practised the details. Intelligent

telligent in the art of amusing, and not of extinguishing the ardour which consumes them, the same disorder pursues them still into solitude; sad resources, miserable indemnifications of a privation, which, under a temperature equally warm and dry, and to souls all on fire, appears no easy matter to support.

The men are well aware of these dispositions, and their jealousy is offended at it. Not only do they bar all access to the apartments of the women to every other man; for that name is not to be given to the mutilated beings, who have the figure only; but they do not permit the introduction of even inanimate objects which might favour illusion. They know not what it is to repose confidence in the discretion of a wife; they are not afraid to make sure that those who, under their roof, pass for the most reserved, may not let slip opportunities of becoming unfaithful, nor find the means of satisfying their temperament. The monsters! They have the presumption to talk of fidelity; their mouth dares to pollute, by pronouncing it, the name of honour! Unfaithful to Nature, whom they serve only by outraging her, they carry their impudence so far as to pretend to the most desirable favours of her fairest workmanship! They perceive not, wretches as they are, that the infidelities of which they complain, are  
the



the well-merited recompense of their own contemptuous behaviour, of their rigour, and of their criminal and disgusting caprices ! Let them open, if they can, their heart to a delicate love, their soul to the sanctity of friendship, to the confidence which it commands, to the kind attentions which it keeps alive, and they will see whether that sex, which they calumniate, because they know it only by the horrible and ponderous chains of iron with which they load it, knows how to correspond to sentiments of honour, and whether it is not itself the precious sanctuary of affections the most tender, and of the constancy which perpetuates them, in that sacred abode\*.

\* It will be asked, perhaps, how it was possible for me to procure information of what passes in the interior of *Harems*, seeing access to them is so severely guarded : the means which I employed are simple ; but I must be permitted to refrain from disclosing them : it is sufficient to be assured of the truth and exactness of the details ; and on this the reader may fully depend.

## CHAP. XVI.

*Wives of the commonalty—Black of the eyes—Al-  
quifoux—Red of the hands and of the feet—Henna  
—Depilatories—Plumpness of the women, their  
cleanliness, their cosmetics.*

WHEREVER an excessive luxury is concentrated in a privileged class in the cities, indigence, and all the horrors which follow in its train, are the heritage of the most numerous class, and the desolation of the plains. It would betray great ignorance of the state of women in Egypt, to imagine that they are all endowed with the same charms, that they enjoy the same delicate accommodations of life, as the beautiful foreign dames of whom I have been just speaking, and who, similar to exotic flowers, whose lustre is to be preserved only by attention and management, live solely in the employment of prolonging the duration of the gifts derived from nature, and of adorning them by the richness of art. The women of the lower order, instead of that whiteness, of that delicate colouring with which the complexion of the first is animated, have, like the men of the same country, a tawny skin, and as the males of the same order, they wear the impress and the tatters of frightful poverty. Almost all of them,

especially in the country, have no other clothing but a species of large tunic with sleeves, extremely wide, and which serves at once for gown and shift; it is open on both sides from the arm-pit down to the knee, so that the movements of the body are easily seen through the apertures; but women there are little concerned about that, provided the face is not exposed to view.

It is not sufficient for opulent and idle women to be adorned with so many natural charms; they must besides endeavour to increase and set off beauty by the assistance of the arts of the toilette, which is likewise with them an object of superior importance. But this art consists entirely in ancient and invariable usages: fashion never deranges the uniformity of their practices, never involves them in caprice upon caprice; and if ancient and unchanging modes be a proof of slight advancement toward perfection, may it not likewise be affirmed, that a restless versatility in fashion is a symptom of degeneracy in those whom it torments?

The most remarkable trait of beauty, in the East, is large black eyes, and it is well known that nature has made this a characteristic sign of the women of those countries. But, not content with these gifts of nature, those of Egypt employ every effort  
of

of art to make their eyes appear larger and blacker. For this purpose, females of every description, Mahometan, Jew, Christian, rich and poor, all tinge the eyebrows and the eyelashes with black lead\*, known, in the commerce of the Levant, by the name of *alquifoux* or *arquifoux*. They reduce it to a subtile powder, to which they give consistency by mixing it with the fuliginous vapour of a lamp. The more opulent employ the fumes of amber, or of some other fat and odoriferous substance, and have the drug always prepared, at hand, in small phials. With this composition they themselves paint the eyebrows and eyelids, and with a small morsel of wood, of reed, or of feather, they likewise blacken the lashes with it, by passing it with a light hand between the two eyelids; an operation which the Roman ladies practised of old, and which Juvenal has described with so much exactitude †. They besides mark with it the angles of the eye, which makes the fissure appear greater.

The ebony of those eyes so black contrasts agreeably with the dazzling white of the skin of the beautiful Circassian women, and imparts vivacity to their complexion: but this opposition of colour

\* Mine de plomb tessulaire. *Galena tessulata.*

† *Illæ supercilium, modicâ fuligine tactum  
Obliquâ producit acû, pingitque, trementes  
Attollens oculos.*

produces the most agreeable effect at a little distance; close up to it the layer of paint is too apparent, and it even impresses on the physiognomy a shade of gloominess which has something harsh in it.

The French merchants of Cairo had large consignments of alquifoux. Part was consumed in the country, by the beautiful eyes of the women; but by far the greatest quantity was exported to Arabia and the land of Yemen, where it was employed as a varnish for pottery. They pretended that what they had from England was of a superior quality to any other: but this branch of commerce produced only very moderate returns.

If large black eyes, which they are at pains to darken still more, be essential to Egyptian female beauty, it likewise requires as an accessory of first-rate importance, that the hands and nails should be dyed red. This last fashion is fully as general as the other, and not to conform to it would be reckoned indecent. The women could no more dispense with this daubing than with their clothes. Of whatever condition, of whatever religion they may be, all employ the same means to acquire this species of ornament, which the empire of fashion alone could perpetuate, for it assuredly spoils fine hands much more than it decorates them. The  
animated



animated whiteness of the palm of the hand, the tender rose colour of the nails, are effaced by a dingy layer of a reddish or orange-coloured drug. The sole of the foot, the epidermis of which is not hardened by long or frequent walking, and which daily friction makes still thinner, is likewise loaded with the same colour.

It is with the greenish powder of the dried leaves of the *henna*, that the women procure for themselves a decoration so whimsical. It is prepared chiefly in the Saïd, from whence it is distributed over all the cities of Egypt. The markets are constantly supplied with it, as a commodity of habitual and indispensable use. They dilute it in water, and rub the soft paste it makes on the parts which they mean to colour: they are wrapped up in linen, and at the end of two or three hours the orange hue is strongly impressed on them. Though the women wash both hands and feet several times a day, with lukewarm water and soap, this colour adheres for a long time, and it is sufficient to renew it about every fifteen days. That of the nails lasts much longer, nay it passes for ineffaceable. In Turkey, likewise, the women make use of *henna*, but apply it to the nails only, and leave to their hands and feet the colours of nature. It would appear that the custom of dying the nails was known to the ancient Egyptians, for those of mummies

mummies are, most commonly, of a reddish hue \*. But the Egyptian ladies refine still further on the general practice: they too paint their fingers, space by space only, and, in order that the colour may not lay hold of the whole, they wrap them round with thread at the proposed distances, before the application of the colour-giving paste, so that, when the operation is finished, they have the fingers marked circularly, from end to end, with small orange-coloured belts. Others, and this practice is more common among certain Syrian dames, have a mind that their hands should present the sufficiently disagreeable mixture of black and white. The belts which the *henna* had first reddened, become of a shining black, by rubbing them with a composition of sal-ammoniac, lime, and honey.

You sometimes meet with men likewise who apply tincture of *henna* to their beards, and anoint the head with it. They allege that it strengthens the organs, that it prevents the falling off of the hair † and beard, and banishes vermin.

The *henna* is a tall shrub, endlessly multiplied in Egypt. The leaves are of a lengthenned oval form,

\* See Memoir on Embalment by M. de Caylus, in the Mem. of the Acad. of Inscr. and Bel. Let. vol. xxiii. p. 133.

† The followers of Mahomet, it is well known, preserve, on the crown of the head, a long tuft of hair.

opposed to each other, and of a faint green colour. The flowers grow at the extremity of the branches in long and tufted bouquets; the smaller ramifications which support them are red, and likewise opposite: from their arm-pit cavity springs a small leaf almost round, but terminating in a point. The corolla is formed of four petals curling up, and of a light yellow. Between each petal are two white stamina with a yellow summit; there is only one white pistil. The pedicle, reddish at its issuing from the bough, dies away into a faint green. The calix is cut into four pieces, of a tender green up toward their extremity, which is reddish. The fruit or berry is a green capsule previous to its maturity; it assumes a red tint as it ripens, and becomes brown when it is dried: it is divided into four compartments, in which are enclosed the seeds triangular and brown-coloured. The bark of the stem and of the branches is of a deep gray, and the wood has, internally, a light cast of yellow.

This shrub had at first been considered as a species of privet\*, to which it has, in truth, many relations; but differences in the parts of fructification have determined botanists to make a distinct genus of it, to which Linnæus has given the name of *laevsonia*, and, to the species in question, that of

\* *Ligustrum vulgare*. Lin.

*Lawsonia inermis* \*. Its Arabic name is *henné*, or *hanna*; and with the article *elhenne*, or *elhanna*; in Turkey they call it *kanna*, or *alkanna*. Though its figure has been already published in several books on natural history †, it has not been faithfully represented in any one, or with such exactness of detail, as in the drawing which I had taken of it at Rossetta. See plate IV. in which the different parts of the shrub are accurately copied after nature.

Miller cultivated the *henna* in England, where it was necessary to keep it constantly in the hothouse. It does not yet make part of the rich and magnificent collection of living plants in the national garden of France. But the scientific exertions of the learned gentlemen who are partaking of the glory of the astonishing expedition to Egypt, will not delay, undoubtedly, to rank, among the number of the triumphs which a grateful country shall owe them, that of a charming and useful plant. More happily situated than England, the French Republic will be able, perhaps, to embellish one

\* *Lawsonia-inermis, foliis subsessilibus ovatis, utrinque acutis.* Lin. Octandr. monogyn.—*Lawsonia spinosa, albenna.* Hasselq. Voyage to the Levant. N. B. That the epithet of *spinosa* is by no means applicable to the *henna*, for it has no thorns.—*Lawsonia inermis.* Forsk. Flora Egyptiaco-Arabica.

† Walt. Hort. 3, t. 5.—Rhead. Malab. 4, t. 57.—Rauwolf, Itin. t. 60.—Bellon. edit. Clus. p. 135, &c. &c.



E



D



A

A. Flowers. B. Flowers, natural size.

D. Fruit, natural size.

C. Branch laden with berries.

*Stemm.*

*a. Markt.*



B





day the agriculture of her southern departments with it, and add this branch of commerce to all those with which she is already enriched.

In truth, this is one of the plants the most grateful to both the sight and the smell. The gently deepish colour of its bark, the light green of its foliage, the softened mixture of white and yellow, with which the flowers, collected into long clusters like the lilach, are coloured, the red tint of the ramifications which support them, form a combination of the most agreeable effect. These flowers, whose shades are so delicate, diffuse around the sweetest odours, and embalm the gardens and the apartments which they embellish. They accordingly form the usual nosegay of beauty. The women, ornament of the prisons of jealousy, whereas they might be that of a whole country, take pleasure to deck themselves with these beautiful clusters of fragrance, to adorn their apartments with them, to carry them to the bath, to hold them in their hand, in a word, to perfume their bosom with them. They attach to this possession, which the mildness of the climate, and the facility of culture, seldom refuse them, a value so high, that they would willingly appropriate it exclusively to themselves, and that they suffer with impatience Christian women and Jewesses to partake of it with them. The victim of tyranny, beauty, in those countries,

countries, has likewise then its despotism! But it has nothing in it harsh nor maleficent: its caprices are amiable; it bears only on flowers.

A remarkable singularity is, that the perfume which the flowers of the henna exhale, ceases to be agreeable when you smell to it very close: it is then almost entirely absorbed by a very decided spermatic odour. On crushing some of those flowers between the fingers, this last odour predominates: it is then indeed the only one perceptible. This particularity is a source of insipid pleasantries to the wits of the country, and the property ascribed to the *henna* of procuring abortion, renders them inexhaustible. They extract from those same flowers a perfumed water, which supplies their place during the short space which they themselves disappear. As to the numerous medicinal virtues which the different parts of the plant are said to possess, nothing certain has hitherto been established by experiment. Several authors have made the enumeration, and I satisfy myself with referring to them\*.

But the useful and admitted properties of the *henna* are not limited to objects of pleasure or

\* Vide Prosp. Alpin. de Plantis Eryp. cap. 13.—Ejusdem de Medicam. Eryp. lib. 4. cap. 1.—Boutii Notas in Garciam ab Horto, in cap. 3. lib. 2. &c. &c.

of fashion. The arts too derive manifold advantages from the powder of its leaves. It is easily conceivable that a substance which it furnishes with so much facility, a colour adherent, durable, and which may, according to the mixture with other ingredients, be extended from yellow to the most lively red, cannot fail to supply ample resources to the dyer. It will probably come in time, and perhaps soon, to increase those of France, where its use is not known, and where the skill of our artists will turn it to all the good account of which it is susceptible. It formed, in behalf of Egypt, a branch of commerce far from inconsiderable. Fourteen or fifteen ships were loaded annually, at Alexandria, with these leaves reduced to powder, and exported to Smyrna, to Constantinople, to Salonica, from whence they found their way over several countries of the north, and among the rest, I have been told, into Germany; they are employed there in the dying of furs, and in the preparation of leathers.

The *henna* grows in great quantities in the vicinity of Rossetta, and constitutes one of the principal ornaments of the beautiful gardens which surround that city. Its root, which penetrates to a great depth with the utmost ease, swells to a large size in a soil soft, rich, mixed with sand, and such as every husbandman would wish to have to  
work

work upon; the shrub of course acquires a more vigorous growth there than any where else; it is at the same time more extensively multiplied: it grows however in all the other cultivated districts of Egypt, and principally in the upper part.

There is much reason to presume that the *henna* of Egypt is the *kupros* of the ancient Greeks. The descriptions, incomplete it is admitted, which authors have given of it, and particularly the form and the sweet perfume of its flowers which they have celebrated, leave scarce any doubt respecting the identity of these two plants\*. Besides that, the clusters of *cyprus*, *botrus cypri*, of the Song of Songs †, can be nothing else but the very clusters of the flowers of the *henna*. This is at least the opinion of the best commentators. Consult Scheuchner's Sacred Physics, vol. i. p. 198; Junius, and a host of interpreters.

It is not at all astonishing that a flower so delicious should have furnished to oriental poësy agreeable allusions and amorous comparisons. This furnishes an answer to part of the 45th question of

\* The name of *kupros* is no longer in use among the modern Greeks; they give to the *henna* the corrupted denominations of *kéné*, *kna*, &c. The seamen of Provence, whose vessels were employed in the carriage of the powder of *henna*, called it *quéné*.

† Chap. i. v. 13, 14. *Botrus cypri dilectus meus mihi, in vineis Engaddi.*



Michaëlis \*, for the flower of *henna* is disposed in clusters, and the women of Egypt, who dearly love the smell of it, are fond of carrying it, as I have said, in the spot which the text indicates, in their bosom †. But it is not so easy to solve the difficulty which perplexed Michaëlis, when he afterwards calls for an explanation of the words which follow : in the vineyards of En-gedi ‡, and what relation have the bunches of cypress with vineyards ? For my part, I know of none, unless it be that its flowers have, from their disposition, a resemblance to those of the vine.

One of the things which the love of self, and the desire of pleasing others, make most in request with the women of Egypt, is to have the skin soft and smooth all the body over, without suffering the slightest appearance of roughness to remain. The parts veiled by nature lose with them their umbrage, and the whole is equally smooth and

\* “ What can be the meaning, in the amorous style, of the clusters of the cypress, Cant. i. 14 ? He cannot be speaking of the leaves, the powder of which serves as a drying-drug to the orientals, but of the flowers. Did the women of those countries carry them in form of nosegays in the place which the text indicates ?” (*Intelligent and Curious Travellers, &c. by Michaëlis, vol. i. quest. 45, p. 172.*)

† *Inter ubera*, v. 13.

‡ *In vineis Engaiddi*, *ibid.* and Michaëlis, the place formerly quoted.

polished. It is a known fact, that the disciples of Mahomet are in the habit of divesting themselves of every covering of hair: the very men, with whom mustachios are an ornament, and a long beard a distinctive sign, reject every excrescence of this kind on any other part of the body, and the inhabitants of Egypt, of whatever description, have adopted the same taste. In former times, the priest alone shaved the whole body every third day, in order, says Herodotus, that no vermin, nor filth of any kind, should be generated on men devoted to the service of the gods \*. In modern times, every Egyptian shaves himself in like manner, and they are not much the less for that preyed on by vermin. The generality only make use of the razor for this operation, which they frequently repeat. Others, as in Turkey, employ a depilatory which the Turks call *rusma*, and the Arabians *nouret*, a very ordinary drug, and which is sold for a trifle. It is not, as has been believed, a mineral substance, found in a state of complete preparation, as a depilatory, in the bowels of the earth. It stands in need of an artificial preparation, and of an alloy, in order to attain the requisite property. In truth, Bellonius, the first who has described (at Cuta, in Galatia) *the source of a mineral which they call rusma* †, adds, that the mineral

\* Herodotus, Larcher's translation, book ii. § 3.

† Observ. book iii. ch. 33.

alone cannot answer the purpose, *till, after they have reduced it to a very subtile powder, mixing half as much quicklime as rusma, they dilute it in some vessel with water* \*. Thus, the *rusma* of Bellonius does not furnish a depilatory by itself, and it contains some caustic substance, which, mixed with lime, communicates that property to it. And this presumption is confirmed by the experiment of Citizen Valmont de Bomare, who, having received from Constantinople some small morsels of mineral *rusma*, perceived that, when thrown on burning coals, a vapour immediately exhaled from it, which led him to suspect that it is a *calchitis* mineralized by sulphur and arsenic †. The same naturalist says farther, that this depilatory is very rare in France, and sold there for its weight in gold. But how is it possible to reconcile this scarcity, this high price, with the abundance of *rusma* in Turkey? How could a thing so common have remained unknown till now? It is presented in all the bathing-houses; and it would have been easy for Frenchmen, who, in the great ports of the Levant, take pleasure in frequenting them, to have procured some of it to send into France. But it was that, conformably to the observation of Bellonius, ill understood, and altered in many works on the *materia medica*, they would not see the

\* Observ. book iii. ch. 33.

† Dict. of Nat. Hist. *Rusma*.

*rusma* in a preparation, and that they were always looking for it in the mineral, *an ore extracted from the earth and slightly burnt*, of which Bellonius has made mention, without attending that a few lines below he subjoins, that it needs to be mixed with lime, in order to produce the effect expected.

This mixture is the real *rusma* of the Turks; and, as I have just said, the Arabs give it the name of *nouret*, a word which, according to the Turkish dictionary, is of Persic extraction. It is certain that the *rusma* and the *nouret* are the same substance, or rather the same composition; and if you consult the same Turkish dictionary, under the words *nuré* and *nuret*\*, you will see that they give this name to a depilatory, composed of chalk and arsenic.

It is, in truth, with arsenic or orpiment †, mixed with quick-lime ‡, that they prepare in the baths of Egypt, the drug which makes the hair fall off. The proportion is seven parts lime to three of orpiment. When they mean to apply it, they find it necessary to retire to a very warm place,

\* Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium, &c. Aut. Meninski. Vienna, 1680.

† In Arabic, *zernich*.

‡ In Arabic, *guir*.

such as the stove-baths of the East, in which a copious perspiration distils from all parts of the body. They dilute the mixture with water, and rub it gently on the part to be depilated. A few moments after, they try if the hair is detaching itself; they then take it off without feeling any pain, and wash in warm water. Care must be taken not to let the paste remain too long, otherwise it would burn the skin. This does not prevent the hair from growing again, and, after some time, it is found requisite to repeat the operation.

The women, and, at present, I am speaking only of such as are married, for young women keep themselves as nature made them, and it is not till the very day of marriage that they are pitilessly stripped of the veil of nature; the women, I say, jealous of diffusing over their whole person an exact and uniform polish, employ neither razor nor *nouret*, which leave after them vestiges offensive to the touch, which it is their great solicitude to prevent. Nothing can resist an extreme desire to appear perfectly beautiful. They submit to a painful operation, to a violent and total deracination, which is performed by an application of honey made into a paste with turpentine, or some sort of gum; and when this plaster is become dry, it is torn off with all that adheres to it. Fortunately there is no need to return often



to this rather severe process. If a reproduction appears, it is only a soft down, like the finest wool; and, after a few years, vegetation of this sort is absolutely destroyed. Should nature commit a mistake in giving, to any of those females, a beard on the face, they use the same recipe to make it disappear, beyond the possibility of returning.

Next to the desire of having the skin soft, and of the most beautiful polish, the great anxiety of those ladies is to acquire as great a degree of plumpness as possible. The taste of the men does not incline them to slim and taper shapes, to elegant and limber forms; they love women that are fat, and they accordingly employ every effort to become so. In order to attain this high degree, this perfection of beauty, they make use of various drugs, as the nuts of the cocoa-tree, the bulbs of the hermo-dactyl \*, rasped down and mingled with sugar. They never fail, after lying-in, to eat plentifully of this last species of paste or comfit, in the persuasion that it is the surest means of recruiting their strength, and of regaining the flesh they have lost.

\* In Arabic, *chamire*. The greatest part of it, consumed in Egypt, comes from Arabia. It grows likewise in sufficient abundance in the vicinity of Aboukir.

The idea of a very fat woman is almost always associated in Europe with that of softness of flesh, of the flattening of forms, of defect of the elasticity of the contours. It would be a mistake to think this is a representation of the women of Turkey, in general, where they all endeavour to get into flesh. It is, in the first place, indubitably certain that the women of the East, more favoured of nature, preserve longer than others their firmness of flesh; and that attractive property, added to the softness, to the fairness of their skin, to the freshness of their carnation, renders them very agreeable, very desirable masses, when their embonpoint is not carried to excess.

Moreover, there is no country in the world where the women carry farther an attention to cleanliness, than in those countries of the East. The frequent bathings, the perfumes, the employment of every art that can soften and embellish the skin, to preserve all their charms, nothing is neglected, and the most minute details succeed each other with a scrupulous exactness. Such pains are not thrown away. Women are no where more constantly beautiful; no where is the talent of seconding nature better understood; no where, in a word, are women more skilled, nor more practised in the art of retarding and of repairing the ravages of time; an art which has its

principles and practices innumerable. I amused myself with making a collection of them, not only in Egypt, but likewise in Greece, where I resided a considerable time, and enjoyed very particular opportunities of completing my collection. Certain European ladies have sometimes courted me to open it in their favour: but I check myself; this is not the place for making such communications, and the book of a traveller ought not to degenerate into a course of cosmetics.

## CHAP. XVII.

*Egyptian dogs—Cats—Beautiful animal of this genus reared by the Author—Domestic animals—Mangouste, or ichneumon—Species of tortoise of the Nile, hostile to the crocodile.*

AMIDST the population of Rossetta there exists a horde of animals which, repelled by man, to whose personal use nature seems to have destined them, are nevertheless incapable of deserting him; and, as it were in defiance of his unkindness, persist in rendering him service. In all ages, and among all civilized nations, the dog has merited, if I may presume to say so, to enter into alliance with mankind. Savages themselves, who scarcely live in society with each other, rear the canine race, and share with them the labours and the fruits of the chase. From a ridiculous prejudice, the offspring of a religion still more ridiculous, the Mahometans alone hold this animal in abhorrence. With them he is an unclean beast, which they will not admit into their houses, which they carefully shun, and which they dare not touch, under pain of becoming themselves unclean. Hence a judgment may be formed of the full import of  
the

the term *dog* which they bestow on the nations of Europe: very different in this, as well as in every other respect, from the ancient Egyptians, who rendered a particular worship, and the highest honours, among other animals, to the most sagacious of all, to that one whose excellent qualities make him most worthy of human attentions\*.

From one of those inconceivable contradictions, prevalent particularly among Mussulmans, there are few cities in the world which contain so many dogs as those of Egypt, or, at least, there is no one which has the appearance of containing more, because they are there constantly assembled in the streets, their only habitation. There they have no other supplies of food but what they can pick up at the doors of houses, or scramble for by raking into filth and garbage. The females drop their young at the corner of some retired and unfrequented street; for a disciple of Mahomet would not permit them to approach his habitation. Continually exposed to the cruel treatment of the populace; massacred sometimes, without mercy, by an armed mob; subjected to all the inclemency of the elements; hardly finding the means of supporting a wretched existence; meagre, irritated to madness, frequently eaten up of a mange which degenerates

\* The worship of the dog was universally diffused over Egypt.



sometimes into a species of leprosy, hideous even from the forlornness of their condition, those miserable animals inspire as much compassion, as they excite contempt and indignation against the barbarians among whom they live.

It is undoubtedly astonishing, that amidst a life of misery and suffering, many of those dogs should not be subject to attacks of the hydrophobia. But this malady, rare in the northern parts of Turkey, is still more so in the southern provinces of that empire, and is totally unknown under the burning sky of Egypt. I never saw a single instance of it; and the natives whom I have consulted on the subject, had not so much as an idea of the disease. It would appear, nevertheless, that madness has not always been a stranger in this country, since, according to the hieroglyphics of Orus-Apollo \*, quoted by M. Pauw, the persons employed in embalming the sacred dogs, when those animals had died of the hydrophobia, contracted a particular malady †. The same author remarks, it is true, that accidents of this sort were not very common. It may likewise be possible, that the passage from Orus-Apollo might admit of another interpretation. Be this as it may, it is very certain that at

\* Book i. chap. 381.

† Philosophical Researches respecting the Egyptians and Chinese, vol. ii. p. 112.

present in Egypt \*, as well as in other parts of Africa, and in the hottest zone of America, dogs are never attacked with the canine madness. So that observation contradicts a plausible presumption, and apparently founded on natural principles, namely, that madness must prevail in proportion to the intensity of the heat ; a proposition contradicted by facts, and they will throw, perhaps, some light on the nature of this cruel malady, and on the method of curing it.

The dogs of Egypt are a race of tall greyhounds, which would be very beautiful, were they cared for, or if they were only less cruelly treated. In losing the elegance of their forms, they ought to have, one would think, no longer the same impress of the qualities which, every where else, render them so recommendable. Nevertheless their instinct, though perhaps impaired, is by no means extinguished. You see them going and coming through the most frequented streets, and shunning to touch the

\* “ M. Lecointre, who resided in Egypt, assures us that, in this country, the hydrophobia never appeared, and that at Aleppo, where there is a prodigious multitude of dogs of different species, roving about, abandoned to themselves, and without a master ; that there, where those animals perish in great numbers, for want of water and food, and by the heat of the climate, the hydrophobia never was seen.” (Mem. on the Means of curing the Hydrophobia, by M. de Mathéris, inserted in the Biblioth. Physico-Econom. A. D. 1784, p. 216.)

clothes of the passengers, with an attention truly curious, and much more interesting than the solicitude of the silly Mussulman to keep the skirt of his robe out of the animals' way. They even keep watch for the security of their executioners; they are the terror of thieves in the night-time; on the quays, in boats, in the woods, and in the interior of cities, all kinds of merchandise are confided to their vigilance. An admirable instinct, a native propensity to be useful to man, excites them to undertake an oversight which no one imposes on them, nor so much as indicates to them, and it would be impossible to approach a deposite surrounded by those spontaneous guardians. But what is no less singular is, that those dogs do not remove from the quarter in which they were born; they form themselves into separate tribes, which have limits that they never transgress; one that should pass from one quarter to another, would be presently assaulted by the whole cohort, in respect of which he would be an intruder, and could with difficulty escape.

The Bedouins, who, at all points, are less superstitious than the Turks, have a breed of very tall greyhounds, which likewise mount guard around their tents; but they take great care of these useful servants, and have such an affection for them, that to kill the dog of a Bedouin would be to endanger your own life.

With an aversion as decided as it is unjust for a species of animals which, in despair of imitating him, man has constituted the symbol of an unalterable fidelity and attachment, the Turks have a great partiality in favour of cats. Mahomet was fond of them. It is related of him, that being called away on pressing and important business, he chose rather to cut off the sleeve of his robe, than disturb a cat which lay asleep on it. Nothing more was necessary to render these animals an object of very high consideration, though their extreme cleanliness, the purity and lustre of their fur, their soft tranquillity, their calm and reserved caresses, had not otherwise rendered them amiable beings in the eyes of the Mussulmans. The cat accordingly is not excluded from their mosques; she is welcomed there as the favourite animal of the prophet, and as the enemy of other troublesome animals; whereas a dog that should presume to enter into their temples, would pollute them by his presence, and incur instant death. But obliged to flee from men, to whom he would desire to consecrate his domestic qualities, and the perfection of his instinct, no dog is tempted to resort to the places where men assemble; he would then have neither master to follow, nor friend to accompany.

In ancient Egypt cats were held in great veneration, but dogs were still more so. When a cat died

died in a house, a natural death (for if any one killed a cat, though involuntarily, he could not escape death), the owner of the house shaved his eyebrows only; but if a dog died, he shaved his head and the whole body\*. They carried into consecrated houses the cats which happened to die, and after having embalmed them, interred them at Bubastis†, a considerable city of Lower Egypt, now called *Basta*.

These honours, these prerogatives, were not a matter of taste merely; they had a grand political object in view, the interest, nay the very subsistence of a whole people. It was necessary to put under the immediate protection of the laws, a species of animals, whose protection was itself indispensable, against the prodigious multitudes of rats and mice, with which Egypt is infested. Apotheosis appeared, to the priests, the surest means for procuring respect from the people for objects which they had the greatest interest to preserve. What difference, in fact, does it make, in the case of idolatrous religions, whether you worship a man or a cat, a woman or an onion? Are they not all at an equal distance from the Deity? Since men will be superstitious, is it not best that they should be usefully so? Happy the nations whose superstition tends

\* Herodotus, book ii. § 6. Larcher's translation:

† Id. *ibid.* § 67.



toward the improvement of agriculture, and the furtherance of the general good!

With a nation, for which physical objects are all in all, and morals next to nothing, the seductive exterior of the cat appeared preferable to the docility, to the exquisite instinct, to the sagacious fidelity of the dog. A single trait of this kind frequently characterizes a nation much better than an aggregation of observations respecting customs and practices, which soon become things of course, which, in process of time, are considered as totally indifferent, and which at length we like as well to observe, as to take the trouble to change. Is not, in reality, a judgment soon formed of a people, when we know that they have the dog in abhorrence, and entertain an affection for the cat, because this last carefully conceals her excrement, and does not devour the offal of the laystalls, on which the dog's natural appetite sometimes leads him to find a meal?

There are cats in all the houses of Egypt. You see some of them, in the mansions of the rich, partaking of the cushions, the indulgence and the indolence of their masters, who take pleasure in stroking them with the hand, and in lavishing caresses on them, which those cold and haughty beings would not deign to bestow on creatures possessed  
of

of infinitely more sensibility. In a word, short of deification, as in the time of the ancients, it is impossible for them to be better treated.

The cats in this country, it is true, are very gentle and very familiar. They have no distrust of man, the ferocious character which, in some parts of France, renders them a race of animals rather wild than domestic. But these differences are as much the work of man as the effect of the influence of climate. In the department where I live, and in those adjacent, the cat, especially in the country, is the most miserable of beings, next to the horses set apart to husbandry. Masters and servants agree in hunting the cat, in beating her, in pelting her with stones, in worrying her to death by the dogs, after having almost starved her to death. If hunger, which her leanness clearly witnesses, incites her to spy the moment for stealing a little morsel, the pretended thief, because nature would not suffer her to let herself die of absolute inanition, pays, with her life, the address she had employed to support it. How is it possible that cats should not assume, under the discipline of such masters, whose cruelty to animals borders on barbarity, a wildness of physiognomy, an impress of ferociousness? And if you compare those wretched cats of my country, with such as are entertained at Paris, where, more kindly treated, and

sheltered from perpetual alarm, they are of an amiable familiarity, you will have a new proof of the influence which the character of man exercises over that of the brute creation.

I had in my possession, for a long time, a most beautiful Angora cat \*. Long and silky hairs covered it entirely; its thick tail formed a magnificent plume, which the animal elevated, at pleasure, above its body. Not one spot, not one shade tarnished the dazzling white of its coat. Its nose, and the turn of its lips, were of a tender rose colour. Two large eyes sparkled in its rounded head, the one of which was a light yellow, and the other blue. This beautiful cat had still more of amiability than of grace in its movements and in its attitudes. With the physiognomy of goodness, she possessed a gentleness truly interesting. You might treat her in what manner you pleased, never did her claws advance from their sheaths. Sensible to kindness, she licked the hand that ca-

\* The custom of speaking of cats of Angola for Angora, is not yet abolished. It is even to be found in some of the modern works of science. Open the Encyclopedia Methodica, at the article kakatoës, and you will see that one of these yellow-crested birds took delight in playing with an *Angola* cat. *Angola* is upon the western coast of Africa, and *Angora* is in Asia Minor, not far from Smyrna. It is there that are found those animals with long hair, from which are manufactured our beautiful camlets.

ressed her, even that which tormented her. On a journey, she reposed tranquilly on your knees ; there was no occasion to confine her ; no noise whatever gave her the least disturbance, provided she was near me, or to some other person whom she had been in the habit of seeing. In my solitary moments, she adhered to my side, interrupted me frequently in the midst of my labours or my meditations, by little caresses extremely affecting : she likewise followed me in my walks. During my absence, she sought and called for me incessantly with the utmost inquietude ; and if I was long in re-appearing, she quitted my apartment, and attached herself to the person of the house, for whom, next to me, she entertained the greatest affection. She recognised my voice, and seemed to find me again, each time, with increased satisfaction. Her advances were not oblique, her gait was frank, and her look as gentle as her character : she possessed, in a word, the nature of the most amiable dog, beneath the brilliant fur of a cat.

This animal was my principal amusement for several years. How was the expression of its attachment depicted upon its countenance ! How many times have her tender caresses made me forget my troubles, and consoled me in my misfortunes ! How frequently has a being, of a species accused of treachery, presented in my abode a

striking contrast with a crowd of real traitors, who, under the mask of friendship, besiege the house of the honest man, that they may the better deceive him; with those vipers whom my breast has so frequently warmed, to be as frequently stung by them! For the misfortune of humanity the life of the wicked man is long. These execrable wretches, whose names my pen should trace, were it not reserved for the justice of Heaven to signalize them out of the stroke for its thunder, are still in the vigour of life, in the commission of crimes with unrestrained audaciousness; and my beautiful and interesting companion perished. After several days of suffering, during which I never forsook her, her eyes, constantly fixed on me, were at length extinguished.....My tears flowed..... They flow at this moment.....Feeling hearts will pardon me this digression of sorrow and of gratitude. Those which are hardened with self-love and insensibility give me no uneasiness: it is not for them I write.

The warm climates of these ancient countries, which man has covered with his colonies and his flocks, from periods too deeply enveloped in the obscurity of a far distant era to be ascertained with any precision, nourish animals the most gentle and docile, of those kinds which he has appropriated to himself, whilst those which, in the depopulated  
parts



parts of these very countries, have continued wild, are extremely ferocious. Domestic animals are no where more familiarized, and, I may say, more completely domesticated than in the warm countries of the East. The horse, ardent as the air which he respire, is there, nevertheless, as gentle as a lamb. The buffalo, scarcely recovered from his state of savage liberty, displaying still the countenance of ferocity, is as tractable as the ox is in Europe. He quietly permits himself to be mounted and led along, and a child is sufficient to conduct numerous flocks of them. It is not in the nature of the soil and of the aliments, nor even in the temperature of the climate, that we must seek for the reason of that gentleness of character, which is not to be found elsewhere. It is not here, in fact, a want of energy, nor a natural indolence, such as has been observed in those animals which inhabit the very warm, but, at the same time, extremely humid regions of southern America. Each species is endowed with all the fire, with all the strength, with all the vigour of which it is susceptible.

But it is the man of these countries who, after having acquired the possession of those useful animals, has understood how to derive the greatest advantage from this conquest. That part of the East has been, at every period, the abode of wandering nations, who, possessing no other property but their

flocks, had no other care but that of preserving them. They do not banish them to places detached from their own habitations; they permit them to live in the midst of themselves; they do not depise nor abandon them, and they conduct them wherever their own erratic mode of life prompts. Without folds to enclose their charge, they have no occasion for shackles to confine them. The dromedary, pasturing at liberty through the day, at night comes to squat himself before his master's tent; and this same tent shelters the Bedouin and his family, as well as his mare, a few goats, and some sheep. Nothing separates them; they pass in this manner the nights together, without confusion, without accident, and in the most perfect tranquillity. It is not surprising that animals, which form with man a society so intimate, should be the tamest in the world; and as they are Bedouins, or people resembling Bedouins, who have supplied, and are daily supplying other nations, established in the same country, with them, it is no longer surprising that you observe there, in general, gentle and peaceable habits in all the domestic animals.

An animal that might augment the number of those which the Egyptians have accustomed to domesticity, is the mangouste, or ichneumon\*. Much

\* Mangouste. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Quadrupedes. *Viverra ichneumon*.—Lin.

has been written concerning it, and much of this writing has been fabulous. It was one of the animals held sacred in ancient Egypt. Honours were rendered to it on its death; it was maintained with the greatest solicitude during life; funds were set apart for its support, as well as to that of other species; they served up to him, as to cats, bread steeped in milk, or fish of the Nile cut down into morsels\*; and it was generally forbidden to kill any of the race. Object of the worship of a celebrated people, the pretended protector of the most singular country in the world, against a scourge the most grievous to an agricultural nation, a stranger and unknown in our climate: what a field for the production of the marvellous! Accordingly it has not been spared. The greater part of travellers have seen the mangouste without examining it; and with their minds prejudiced by the stories which the ancients and the moderns have spread respecting it, they have successively copied their relations. It was reserved for the torch of criticism, guided by the genius of Buffon, to dissipate a multitude of errors which obscured natural history in general, and that of the mangouste in particular †. I shall not repeat here what may

\* See the notes upon the translation of Herodotus, by Larcher, sect. 65 and 67.

† See the Natural Hist. of Quad. Animals. art. of the *Mangouste*.

be read with infinitely greater pleasure in the work of the sublime painter of nature. But as I had it in my power to observe the mangouste in its native country, and in its state of liberty, I will give the analysis of my remarks upon this quadruped, and I will endeavour to establish the opinion which ought to be formed of its utility, by reducing to their just estimate services which have been much boasted of, and still more exaggerated\*.

With very great dispositions to familiarity, the mangoustes are not altogether domestic in Egypt. Not only do they now rear none in their habitations, but the inhabitants have not even the recollection that their ancestors reared any. Most probably, then, those which Bellonius † and Prosper Alpinus ‡ assert that they had seen domesticated, were merely a few individuals preserved rather as objects of curiosity than for any useful purpose; for if they hunt away rats and mice, they likewise seize upon the poultry, and this appetite would more than overbalance the good which they could do, in purging the houses of noxious animals, which cats would destroy more certainly, and with less inconvenience.

\* These remarks on the *mangouste*, or *ichneumon* of *Egypt*, have been already printed in the *Journal de Physique*, for the month of May 1785.

† Observ. liv. ii. chap. 22.

‡ Descrip. d'Égypte, lib. iv.

Having some resemblance, in their habits, to weasels and pole cats, they feed upon rats, birds, and reptiles. They ramble about the habitations of men, they even steal into them, in order to surprise the poultry, and to devour their eggs. It is this natural fondness for eggs which prompts them frequently to scratch up the sand with the intention of discovering those which the crocodiles deposit there, and it is in this manner that they prevent, in reality, the excessive propagation of these detestable animals. But it is absolutely impossible to abstain from laughing, and not without reason, when we read of their leaping into the extended mouths of the crocodiles, of their sliding down into their belly, and not returning till they have eaten through their entrails \*. If some mangoustes have been seen springing with fury on little crocodiles presented to them †, it was the effect of their appetite for every species of reptiles, and not at all that of a particular hatred, or of a law of nature, in virtue of which they would have been specially commissioned to check the multiplication of those amphibious animals, as many people have imagined ‡. It had been at least equally reasonable to

\* See almost all the ancient authors, and, among the moderns, Maillet, Jauna, and others.

† Maillet, *Descrip. de l'Egypte*, partie ii. page 34.

‡ Maillet, in the part already quoted. See likewise the *History of Cyprus, of Jerusalem, and of Egypt*, by the Chevalier Dom,



say that Nature placed mangoustes on the earth merely to prevent the too great propagation of chickens, to which they are far more hostile, in reality, than to crocodiles.

And what proves more clearly that men have been mistaken in ascribing such intentions to Nature respecting mangoustes, is this : in more than half of the northern part of Egypt, that is to say, in that part comprised between the Mediterranean sea and the city of Siout, they are very common, although there are no crocodiles there ; whilst they are more rare in Upper Egypt, where the crocodiles are, in their turn, more numerous. The mangoustes are no where more multiplied than in Lower Egypt, which, better cultivated, more inhabited, more humid, and more shaded, presents also more abundantly the means of supplying them with prey and with food, and, I again repeat it, crocodiles never appear there.

I will do away on this subject an error which would not be of the slightest importance, in the

Dom. Jauna, vol. ii. Present State of Egypt, page 1230. And observe that this last gentleman, in almost every thing the faithful copyist of Maillet, has on this subject refined upon his model, by adding other fables, which Maillet rejected with disdain. It is in this manner that people frequently contrive to write immense quartos.

writings of a traveller of less reputation than Dr. Shaw : this will be a proof, in addition to many others, of the distrust and the discernment necessary when you visit foreign countries, on every occasion, when not having it in your power to make your own observations, you believe that you may give credit to information too frequently defective. "The Egyptians," says Mr. Shaw, "are so little acquainted with the real crocodile, which they call *timsah*, and which it is so unusual to find below the cataracts of the Nile, that the Egyptians are not less curious to see one than the Europeans\*." Dr. Shaw, who was no further than Cairo, has adopted too easily an assertion contrary to truth, as well as to the testimonies of the travellers who preceded him. If he had received more accurate information, he would have learnt that Upper Egypt, below the cataracts, is infested with crocodiles as real as they are multiplied.

The antipathy to the crocodile, improperly attributed to the mangouste, is really an innate instinct in an animal of a totally different species; in this has happened what may have frequently passed before our eyes, in more than one instance; whilst they were giving to the mangouste the credit of maintaining a continual and desperate war against the crocodiles, a species of tortoise of the Nile was

\* Translation of the Travels of Dr. Shaw, vol. ii. page 167.  
levelling

levelling at them more certain, though, at the same time, less skilful blows, and laboured with success for their destruction. When the little crocodiles are hatched, and repair to the river, this tortoise springs on them, and devours them. Maillet was not ignorant of this fact, but he did not think proper to give his report concerning it from the testimony of the people of the country, although preferable when it regards facts so generally known. "I know," writes this consul, "that some persons pretend that this animal (the ichneumon) is merely a species of whitish tortoise, which the Arabs call *cersé*" (it is *thirsé*, the generic name of tortoises in Arabic). "They tell you that, by a natural instinct, she narrowly watches the crocodile when she goes to lay her eggs, and to bury them in the sand; and that as soon as the crocodile withdraws, she goes to find them out, in order to break and eat them....But without mentioning the figure which Dapper has given us of the ichneumon, which in no one respect resembles the tortoise, the numerous representations in stone of this animal which still remain to us, and several of which are accompanied with hieroglyphical characters, leave no room to doubt that this can only be what is called *Pharaoh's rat*." (This is only saying that we must not doubt the existence of the ichneumon, or mangouste, which no one disputes.) "This," continues

tinues he, “ is a species of wild pig, very pretty, “ and easily tamed, the hair of which is bristled “ like a porcupine \*.” Thus is this rat transformed into a little pig, &c. &c. ; it must be admitted that such authorities as these have very little weight in natural history.

This species of tortoise is to be found only in the Upper Nile, to which crocodiles are confined. To convey an idea of the advantage with which this *thirsé* of the Egyptians and Nubians wages war with the crocodile, I shall relate an observation, certified to me by persons of Thebaïs, of undoubted veracity on other occasions. It is, that they have been in a situation to remark, that out of fifty young crocodiles, the produce of one hatching, seven only had escaped the *thirsé*. To this animal, therefore, Egypt is particularly indebted for a very sensible decrease of a species of reptiles, as hideous from their form, as dangerous from the ferocity of their disposition. On this account, it would have merited, by a juster claim than the mongouste, to be the god of the ancient Egyptians, and the wonder of travellers who publish.

But this valuable race of testaceous animals must likewise have its enemies ; for it is not multiplied to the degree that it ought to be, considering the fecundity of the genus. May not the mangouste

\* Descript. de l’Egypte, partie ii, page 33 et 34.

herself be blamed for this curtailed propagation, which, prompted by her appetite for eggs, may destroy those which the tortoises, as well as the crocodiles, hide in the sand? She would, in this case, be friendly to the crocodile, instead of his implacable enemy, as has been pretended.

The name of *mangouste*, and that of *ichneumon*, are, at present, unknown in Egypt; as little do we meet with the denomination of *Pharaoh's rat*, which Hasselquitz has very erroneously alleged to have been imagined by the French. With a little reflection, or rather, with less partiality, he might have seen that the Italian *Pietro della Valle* \*, that *Cornelius Le Bruyn*, a Dutchman †, had employed it; that Klein, who was not a Frenchman, had given it besides to the Indian-pig ‡, &c. &c. If this traveller had been less precipitate in forming his judgment, he would have comprehended, that a vulgar denomination ought not to be rigorously discussed, especially when it is not improper; and the one in question is not so whimsical as a thousand phrases of nomenclature which he had got by heart. But he had the mania of criticizing our nation, a mania for which Buffon has reproved him

\* Voyages, Paris, 1670, vol. i. p. 239.

† Voyages to the Levant, new edit. 1725, vol. ii. p. 72.

Note a by the Editor.

‡ Klein *de Quadrupedibus*.



smartly enough to work a cure, had he lived to see his work\*.

When a man has fallen into repeated mistakes, it excites a suspicion that he is frequently wrong. Buffon would not rely on the authority of Hasselquitz, when he says, that the Arabic name of the mangouste, in Egypt, is *nems*, and has given the preference to Dr. Shaw's testimony, who assures us that, in Barbary, *nems* is the appellation given to the weasel, and *tezer-dea* to the mangouste †. Nevertheless, it is indubitably certain, that the Egyptians of to-day, who, to mention it by the way, have no more consideration for the mangouste than we have for pole-cats, call it *nems*, and the weasel they denominate *hersé*. I have even had opportunity to ascertain that the two live animals which M. de Vergennes, ambassador of France at the Ottoman Porte, had given orders to have sent to him from Alexandria to Constantinople, to be forwarded to Buffon, and which actually reached him, were *nems*, the mangouste of Egypt. But this difference of names, in different countries, has nothing extraordinary in it. Though the Arabic language be equally diffused over Egypt and Barbary, the dialects have so little resemblance, that the Barbaresque and the Egyptian find it extremely difficult to understand each other.

\* Natural History of the Mangouste, in a note.

† Shaw's Travels, the place already quoted.

## CHAP. XVIII.

*Castle of Rossetta—Houhou—Lapwing — Turtle-doves—Chevéche—Lotus—Racket—Cassia—Sycamore — Schishmè — Dourra — Indian-pink — Wild-ducks—Thrushes—Woodcock.*

My excursions in the environs of Rossetta were frequent, and they were always new sources of pleasure and instruction. I did not fail to carry my fowling-piece with me ; it enabled me to procure the different species of birds which give animation to the plains, before so interesting, from the variety and the abundance of the plants cultivated there. I went, the 24th of October \*, to an old ruined castle which is at some distance, and to the north of Rossetta. It was designed, as well as another placed upon the opposite shore of the Nile, as a defence to the entrance of the river. At present, both the one and the other are a very little short of a league from the sea. The one I am speaking of, the construction of which is generally

\* I am well aware that the date of my excursions will appear very trifling to all but naturalists : they will feel that it is essential to determine, for example, the epochas at which I may have encountered such and such a bird, in order to ascertain that of their passage into Egypt.

attributed to Saint Louis, at the time of the crusades, is almost entirely demolished; it mounted still some pieces of cannon, but totally unfit for service. Monuments far more ancient had been employed in building it; several stones were to be still seen there, ornamented with hieroglyphics. I had drawings taken of some of these antique stones, and dispatched them to the minister Bertin, with several others of whose fate I am equally ignorant.

The date-trees are very greatly multiplied in all these countries. Several kinds of birds perch on their long foliage, whilst others hop, from branch to branch, in the thick hedges of the enclosures. I killed that day houhous, lapwings, turtle-doves, and a chevêche.

The first of these birds, although very common in the environs of Rossetta, and, as I have been informed, in those of Damietta, was not known to naturalists previous to my journey into Egypt. I sent descriptions of them, with notes, to Buffon; and his ingenious fellow-labourer, Guenau de Montbeillard, has published them in the Natural History of Birds, article of the *houhou of Egypt*. Although this little discovery in ornithology be my property, I will not repeat the details of it here, the work of Buffon being in the possession of every body. The little which I am going to

add, is the fruit of posterior observations, to those which are already consigned to the Natural History, general and particular.

The *houhous* have very short wings, and yet they are long in proportion to the body. They accordingly fly indifferently : they can neither soar, nor even cross, on the same flight, a space of ever so little extent : if they do not meet with some shrub on which they can perch, they are soon obliged to let themselves, so to speak, fall to the ground. Finally, they possess only the faculty of flying as swiftly as is necessary, in order to catch the grasshoppers, and the other insects of the same species, of which they compose the principal part of their subsistence. They are not at all wild, and you can approach them very nearly.

If any thing could determine us to abandon the methods of natural history, founded merely on some exterior forms of animals, and by which those are frequently classed together whose natures are entirely opposite, it would be, without doubt, the comparison of the *houhou* with the cuckow, of which two species have been made of the same genus. In reality, the common cuckow, the only one of all birds which displays neither attention to, nor affection for her progeny, the only one which carries her indifference so far as to  
abandon

abandon them to a strange mother, whose hopes she has had the barbarity to annihilate ; the only one, in fine, which nature has deprived of the happiness of rearing her brood, and of lavishing on them those tender cares which, in our woods, are observed in these little winged communities ; the cuckow, I say, is too dissimilar from its habits, which form an exception in the history of animals, to a bird whose manners possess nothing but what is highly interesting. The *houhou* is not a solitary bird : they go in pairs, and the attachment which unites them appears durable ; she sits on her eggs and rears her brood. It does not go to seek for the thick shades of the forests, it takes pleasure in places inhabited. It does not dread the neighbourhood of man ; and modest in its plumage, from the grave tone of its voice, and from the gentleness of its manners, it employs itself in rendering him services, by continually hunting those insects which devour the harvests ; a new proof that brilliancy and noise are not always the companions of utility. A difference in their manners equally characteristic, whatever may be, in other respects, the outward resemblance, separates very distinctly two species of birds, which have only some slight similarity in form, and even this similarity abundantly remote, as the *houhou* has the nail of the posterior claw bending inward, straight and lengthened, like that of the lark ; whereas



this remarkable conformation is not to be found on the foot of the cuckow.

One of the most common birds in Lower Egypt, principally at the commencement of winter, is the lapwing\*. To those which do not quit the country, flocks of birds of passage add themselves, which, from northern regions, come to seek, together with a warmer climate, a more plentiful supply of nourishment, and this they find in the great number of insects which the Nile, on withdrawing itself, leaves exposed. These are very fat, and their flesh is tender and well-tasted: on the contrary, the sedentary lapwing is reckoned very bad eating†. The inhabitants do not kill them: they are not at all wild; there is a considerable number of them in the tumultuous city of Cairo, where they build their nests in perfect security on the roofs of the houses.

I have frequently seen, in Egypt, lapwings collected in small bodies. When one of them is separated from the rest, she calls her companions by a shrill cry, repeated twice, *zi, zi*. When they

\* Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 52.—*Upupa epops*.  
Lin.

† Lapwings are eaten in several parts of Italy. I have seen them generally ornamenting the hooks of the cook-shops of Genoa.

are perched, their note, which it gave me pleasure to listen to with attention, may be very well expressed by the syllable *poun*, which they pronounce with a strong and grave voice, generally three times successively; at each time they bring back their long beak on their breast, and raise up their head in a lively manner. Sometimes, also, they utter a hoarse and disagreeable sound, and this only once. In a state of rest, their crest and beak, turned backward, are on the same horizontal plane.

There is, as well as in the lapwings, a great difference in the quality of the flesh, between the turtle-doves of passage, and those which do not quit Egypt. The first furnish very good eating, whereas the others are a mere dry and tasteless viand. The turtle-doves which arrive in Egypt in the autumn, and which extend themselves from the sea up to Cairo, are of the common species \*, and those which inhabit the country, form a very distinct race. The upper part of the head, and of the neck, is of a light lint gray; the back, and the superior coverings of the wings, of the same colour, but the red tint is more vivid. Upon the upper part of the neck is a half-collar, black and narrow; the throat and the inferior coverings of the tail are white; the under part of the neck is

\* Tourterelle commun. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 394.—*Columba turtur*. Lin.

of a delicate lint gray ; the stomach and the belly are of a dirty white. The first plumes of the wings are brown shaded with red, and the others ash-coloured, and bordered, without and within, of a light ash gray. The feathers of the tail are, in gradation, of a light ash colour, and terminated with white, excepting the one most exterior on each side, which is entirely white. All the plumes, those of the wings, as those of the tail, are, underneath, of a deep ash colour for nearly a third part of their length ; the remainder is white, but their colour is much lighter in the females. The iris of the eye is orange-coloured ; the beak, ashen ; the tarsus and the toes are of a rose colour.

I preserved, during two years, several pairs of these beautiful birds, and I never could perceive any alteration in the colours of their plumage ; from whence it follows, that the other turtles, which might be compared with them, are of different species, or, at least, of constant varieties in the same species ; such are, for example, the turtle-doves, with a ring round their necks, of Barbary, which would perfectly resemble these, if the ground of their plumage were not of a beautiful white ; it further follows from this, that the knowledge of the species of turtle-doves, foreign to our climate, is not yet acquired, and that in being too hasty in classing together several kinds, in reality  
separate,

separate, much confusion has been created in their history. The race of turtle-doves with a ring round the neck, of Egypt, less fat and more delicate than those of Europe \*, appear to be the same with that of the *turtle-dove with a ring, of Senegal*, described by Brisson †, as far as we can judge from the *ensemble* of the descriptions.

Furthermore, these turtle-doves, of whatever species they be, whether travellers or domesticated, are equally preserved by the inhabitants of Egypt: they do not kill, and never eat them. Wishing to know the motive of this abstinence among people who possess so little in the greater part of their actions, I learnt that it was for the honour of humanity. It is a consequence of the respect due to hospitality, which the Arabs hold in such high estimation, and of which they have communicated some shades to the people who dwell among them. They would regard it as a violation of this hospitality not to spare those birds which come with a perfect confidence to live amongst them, and there to become skilful but useless preceptors of love and tenderness. The very farmer who sees his harvests

\* Tourterelle à collier. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 244.—*Columba risoria*. Lin.

† Ornith. tome i. page 95, gen. i. Tourterelle à collier du Senegal. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. Etrangers qui ont rapport aux tourterelles, art. 2.—*Columba vinacea*. Lin.

a prey to the flights of turtle-doves which alight on his fields, neither destroys nor harasses them, but suffers them to multiply in tranquillity. This condescension was not imitated by Europeans; they did not make the least scruple of killing the turtle-doves in the fields. It was from them that I learnt the delicate distinction between the flesh of the one and of the others. But they durst not have put them openly to death at Cairo, where they are greatly multiplied, and perfectly familiar. On my first journey, I had the pleasure of seeing there, at the end of the month of August, a pair of ring-necked turtle-doves build their nest on the shelf of a window in the consul's house. Habituated to the protection of man, and having nothing besides to dread from the intemperature of the atmosphere, these gentle birds employed very little art in this work; it was nothing but a few straws negligently laid across. The female deposited there, on the night of the 28th, an egg, which would undoubtedly have been followed by another. I took the utmost precaution that she should not be disturbed, and I was not sparing of my orders, that her arrangements might be perfectly free from interruption; but all was in vain. The nest, the eggs, were carried off, and with them the fruits of the love of that species of bird which best knows the feelings of it, and the satisfaction which I should have enjoyed in watching their progress, and in  
observing



observing them during the period of incubation, and the attention which they bestow on their young. A Turk, an Egyptian would have had respect to these affecting operations of nature; an European annihilated them.

Whether these turtle-doves attach themselves to the heart of cities so hospitably disposed towards them, or whether they adorn retirements more natural, they are in both without distrust, and their familiarity is equally endearing. The orchards of Rossetta are filled with them; the presence of man does not intimidate them, but they are more frequently heard than seen; they take delight to hide among the thick and interlaced branches of the orange and lemon trees, and seldom do they rise to the summit of the palm-trees which overtop them. Their cooings declare that they have chosen the most beautiful of trees for the throne of their love, and that, under a balmy shade, they are concealing from every eye its most delicious mysteries.

In fine, the last bird which I fell in with on my expedition to the western castle of Rossetta was a chevêche, or screech-owl\*. It differed, indeed, somewhat in colour from those of Europe;

\* Chevêche ou petite chouellé. Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 439.—*Strix passerina*. Lin.

but

but these differences, so common among birds of this kind, did not appear to me sufficiently decisive to constitute a variety, much less a distinct species. It seems useless, therefore, to present the particular description I have taken of it. It is well known that screech-owls see much better during the day than other birds of night; and, indeed, I killed this one at noon-day, perched upon a tree. Its name in Egypt is *sahr*; it was a female.

On this day I travelled over a very delightful country. It was enriched by the cultivation of numerous plants; several sorts of trees shaded and formed in some places beautiful groves. The waters which refreshed the country vied with the land, and also lent their tribute to an useful fertility; the large leaves of the *lotus* covered the surface of the rivulets and ditches, and announced an abundant crop of roots.

This plant is the *noufar* of the Arabians, which we have called *nénufar*. It is a water-lily, with white and odoriferous flowers\*. Its roots form one of the most common aliments of the Egyptians, as they formerly did under the name of *lotus*. It appears singular that several authors, from Maillet † down

\* *Nymphaea lotus*. Lin.—Forskal, Flora Egyptiaco-Arabica, p. 100.

† Description of Egypt, part ii. p. 18.

to M. Pauw\*, should have overlooked this *lotus* in the *nymphaea*, and that the latter should have declared that this plant had disappeared out of Egypt, where it formerly grew in great abundance. Savary had already exposed this error of M. Pauw, but he goes too far when he says it is not wonderful that this learned gentleman should have been mistaken, *since most of the travellers who have journeyed over Egypt have never seen the lotus* †. On the contrary, it is impossible even to enter Egypt without seeing many of them; for in the neighbourhood of Rossetta, the numerous ditches of the fields where rice is cultivated, are filled with them.

But what has contributed to confuse the history of the *lotus nymphaea* is, that it has frequently been mistaken for a totally different plant, which the ancients also called *lotus*, and which composed the principal nourishment of certain nations of Africa, who on that account were called *lotophagi*. This latter bears no relation to the *lotus* which grows in Egypt; it is a shrub, a species of wild jujube-tree, as Citizen Desfontaines has ascertained ‡, and which grows in several parts of Bar-

\* Philosophical Researches respecting the Egyptians and Chinese, vol. i. p. 157.

† Letters on Egypt, vol. i. p. 8, notes.

‡ Journal de Physique, October 1788.

bary \*. However this may be, the *nymphaea* of Lower Egypt yields a kind of tubercle, which is gathered when the waters are withdrawn. Those which are left are sufficient to reproduce the plant. They are dried and preserved to be eaten, boiled like our potatoes, which they nearly resemble in taste; but they have less consistency, and are not so spongy, so that they are swallowed with difficulty, and it would not be easy to eat more than one of them without being obliged to drink. They are sold ready dressed, and at a very reduced price, in the streets of Rossetta, where the lower classes eat them in great quantities.

Among useful plants, I observed the racket †, the fruit of which the inhabitants also eat, and among the trees the *seissaban*, or the yellow-flowered and sweet-smelling acacia ‡, and the sycamore §. The foliage of the latter is of a very beautiful green; its branches expand, and cover with their shade a vast extent of ground. Its wood is very hard, and almost incorruptible. The ancients em-

\* *Rhamnus lotus*. Lin.

† *Cactus opuntia*. Lin.

‡ *Ficus sycamorus*. Lin.—*Ficus sycamorus vera*. Forskal, *Flora Egyptiaco-Arabica*, p. 180.

§ The cassia of gardeners. *Mimosa farnesiana*. Lin. N.B. This *seissaban* must not be confounded with the *sesban* (*æschymene sesban*. Lin.), a shrub with yellow flowers about the size of the myrtle, and with which the Egyptians make their hedges.

ployed it, for the most part, in making cases for mummies: its fruit does not hang, like that of other trees, along the boughs and branches, and at their extremity; it is fastened to the trunk itself and to the larger stems. It is a species of fig very like the common one, but more insipid. The natives eat it with pleasure; it is considered as refreshing, and calculated to quench thirst.

The *schishmé* is a scarcer shrub, and one which is only cultivated as a curiosity in some of the gardens of Rossetta. It bears leguminous flowers of a deep yellow, and oblong leaves terminating in a point. Long pods, bent in the form of a scythe, succeed the flowers; these contain flattened seeds, shaped like a heart, the middle of which is gray, and surrounded with a large border, jutting out and of a brown colour. The Egyptians consider these seeds as a specific against ophthalmia, a disease so prevalent in their country. They pound them, and reduce them to a yellow powder, which is blown into the eyes either pure or mixed with pulverised sugar. Although the *schishmé* thrives very well in the cool and shaded places of the fields of Rossetta, the seed which it produces there is not esteemed; that is preferred which is brought from Nubia, where probably this shrub is indigenous.



I saw besides several fields covered with a species of large millet, which in Egypt is called *dourra* \*. It is an object of great cultivation, which yields an abundant harvest. Its produce is estimated at nearly fifty-fold. The Egyptians make bread, or rather indifferent muffins, of the seed of the *dourra*; they likewise ascribe to it great efficacy in healing fractures of the limbs, applying it when reduced to a powder.

The great Indian pink, or African †, displayed its beautiful yellow flowers amidst other plants, in different gardens.

We had reached the period in which wild ducks of various sorts arrive from every quarter in Lower Egypt. The smaller kind, as the teal, come thither at the beginning of October, and the larger ones appear later. They all assemble on the lakes of the Delta, which are not far from Rossetta and Damietta, and form innumerable flocks which do not take their departure till after winter. They are caught with nets; and this game, which was very productive, had not escaped the fiscal tyranny of the Mamelucs or of their overseers; it was farmed out, and was conse-

\* *Holcus durra*. Lin.—Forskal, Flora Eryp.-Arab. p. 174.

† *Tagetes erecta*. Lin.—Forskal, ibidem, page 120.

quently exclusive. Great quantities of these birds were brought to the markets of Rossetta, and were sold to very good account. As the Mahometans ate no animal which had not been bled, the throats of the wild ducks were cut, in which state they were left living, after having their wings broken, which were fastened over the back, so that it was very difficult to get one of these birds which was not mangled, or whose plumage had not been damaged.

The thrush arrives in the same countries at the same season, to remain till the month of March. But whilst the wild ducks flock to enliven the collections of distant waters, the thrush remains near human habitations. It takes delight in the same orchards as the turtle-dove, and seeks, like it, the thick and balmy groves of the orange and lemon tree.

A peasant called me near a covert, and told me that he had just seen a woodcock enter. I found him there accordingly. These birds do not, for the most part, take their passage into Egypt till the month of November, but they are few in number. It is a singular thing to see the woodcock, which seems to be a bird peculiar to cold climates, seek a gentle winter even in countries so far to the southward.

## CHAP. XIX.

*Natron—Bleaching of cloth and thread—Other uses of natron—Senna—Birds—Description of a species of falcon—Wugtail—Dragon-flies—Wasp—Cricket—Rain—Delta—Hérons—Coot—Quails—Snipes—Armed plovers—Fenu-greek.*

THERE are in Rossetta magazines of natron, and manufactures in which it is employed. It is well known that this is an alkaline earthy salt, or mineral alkali, found more particularly in Egypt, in the middle of a desert, to which the ancients gave the name of the Desert of Nitria, because our saltpetre being entirely unknown to them, they had given the name of nitre to that substance, which the Arabs describe under the denomination of *natroum*, from which we have derived *natron*. It is from having neglected to examine the passages of Theophrastus, of Dioscorides, of Galen, and of Pliny, that several moderns have confounded nitre and natron, which are very different substances.

It is uncommon to meet with natron perfectly pure. Besides the earthy matter which is almost always mixed with it, it is not an entirely free alkali; it is usually united to marine salt, to Glauber's salt,

salt, and, finally, to a small degree of vitriolic tartar. In the magazines two sorts are to be distinguished; the common and the *sultanié*: this answers to the word *royal*, by which are designated in France several commodities of a superior quality. This *sultan*-natron is whiter, better crystallized, and more pure than the common; it is consequently more powerful, and, in the use of it, a smaller quantity is employed.

This mineral alkali possesses the same properties with the vegetable alkali, or salt-wort; but it possesses them in a superior degree of virtue. Its principal use is for the bleaching of thread and cloth. The following is the method which I have seen pursued at Rossetta. The skeins of thread are laid in a large copper built in mason-work; a layer of natron is placed upon them: afterwards cold water is poured on it, in a sufficient quantity to soak the thread and the natron. They are thus left altogether for the space of three days, at the end of which the thread is drawn out, and suspended on sticks placed over the kettle. When it is drained, a fire is kindled under the copper, and the water in which the thread had been steeped with the natron is made to boil, after having some lime added to it. The thread is dipped in it, and washed several times, stirring it through this hot lye, without leaving it there. It is immediately

mediately carried to the Nile, where it is washed and beaten. It is afterwards spread out, in order to dry.

When the skeins are pretty dry, they are washed anew in the whey which flows from cheeses, in Arabic called *mesch*. This is a sort of dressing which gives quality to the cloth; and when the Egyptians handle a cloth not very stout, they say it has no *mesch*.

To bleach two hundred pounds of thread it commonly requires one hundred pounds of natron, and from sixty to eighty pounds of lime; observing, however, that the *sultan*-natron, that is to say, that which is the purest, being more powerful than the common, must be used in a smaller quantity. Without this precaution, the thread or the cloth would run the hazard of being burnt.

So expeditious a method of bleaching cloth and thread, would merit being attempted in France. It is said that it was formerly adopted at Rouen, but that it had been laid aside because it burnt the cloths\*. It is possible that they did not make the proper preparations, nor observe the same process as the Egyptians, for it is very certain that neither their threads nor cloths were burnt. The com-

\* Voyage de la Boullaye le Gouz, Paris, 1657, page 383.



merce in natron, a very brisk one for Turkey, and equally so in the state of Venice, where this alkali, mixed with gray-stone, forms those beautiful blown glasses of *Murano*, had entirely come to nothing, as far as it regarded France. However, it apparently made an effort to revive, towards the end of the year 1777. A French merchant, established at Rossetta, at that time consigned a pretty large quantity of natron to his correspondent at *Marseilles*. I was never in a situation to discover whether this dawning of commerce was productive of any fortunate consequences; but our manufactures, our trade, would reap very great advantages, if the natron, which nature produces abundantly in Egypt, were to become a branch of commerce as lively as it is practicable.

It is not only to the bleaching of cloths and thread that the use of the natron is restricted in countries where it is produced. It is likewise used in dying, in the preparation of leather, in glass-making, in whitening linen, in pastry instead of leaven, in preserving viands and making them tender, and, finally, in mixing with snuff, and giving it a higher degree of poignancy. With regard to this last mode of using it, I conjecture that we shall not be tempted to imitate it. It is not the less general in Egypt, the inhabitants of which do not care for our tobacco without a mixture, because

it makes no more impression on their organ, accustomed to the pungency and the sharpness of natron, than if it were so much dust.

I can make a reply, by the way, to the seventh part of question sixty-four of Michaëlis \* : *Does the natron, extracted from the lake which is in the desert of St. Macarius, serve Egypt for the purpose of salting, and sometimes instead of kitchen salt? Do the poor, at least, make this use of it? Is it likewise employed in the salting of bread?* Marine salt is in great abundance in Egypt, and at a very low rate, for this reason, the inhabitants have no occasion to supply any deficiency in this article with natron, which is not so cheap. In the eighth part of the same question M. Michaëlis farther demands, *Whether natron is to be found no where but in the lake of the desert of Saint Macarius?* It is to be found in a lake called *Terrana*, because from this village it is conveyed to be embarked upon the Nile, and this lake is, in reality, in the desert of Nitria, or of St. Macarius. There is likewise some in a less considerable lake, in the neighbourhood of *Damanhour*; but that of *Terrana* is the largest, and supplies much more of this material.

The duties on natron were farmed out, and the trade was very productive, both to the merchant

\* *Voyageurs savans et curieux*, on *Tablettes instructives*, &c.  
and

and the public treasury. This farming did not resemble the forced adjudication of the senna, which the government of Cairo had pretended to impose upon the European merchants who resided there. They were obliged to buy a large quantity of this drug, which is gathered in Upper Egypt. This was, with respect to them, a species of *avanie* (intolerant impost \*); for the culture of senna was so considerable, that they could not find sale for it. The Venetian merchants took the third of the annual produce, and the French the other two thirds; the price of which, to these last, amounted to more than 25,000 francs (1000 guineas). The loss was still augmented by the agreement which they had made with the druggists of Marseilles, not to sell the senna to any but them; and these, on their side, were authorized not to take a larger quantity than they had occasion for. The result of this agreement was, that the greatest part of the senna remained on the hands of the French merchants. They had still, in their house at Rossetta, magazines which had continued full for several years.

Whilst our merchants, bound by their contract with the Massilian druggists, were losing consider-

\* *Avanie*: it is thus that they name in the commerce of the Levant, those violent and vexatious means which the Turks employ to extract money from Europeans. These intolerances succeeded each other in Egypt in a dreadful manner.

ably on this commodity, the Venetians made large profits by it, by sending it into Holland, where it had an extensive sale. Some of the English bought it themselves at Cairo from the Venetians, and found means to receive good profits from it.

To conclude, it is an error to describe the senna of the Levant by the denomination of the senna of Alexandria. It is shipped there in reality, but it does not grow in the neighbourhood of that city; it thrives no where in Egypt but towards the cataracts of the Nile, near Assouan. Its Arabic name is *sena* \*.

On a little excursion which I took the 4th of November, I killed a king's-fisher †, a thrush of the large sort ‡, and a bird of prey, which has not been described, and which appeared to me a species of falcon. The upper part of the beak was hooked at the extremity, and covered underneath with a yellow skin; the second feather of the wing was longer than the others, and those of the tail were in slight gradations. Its entire length is one foot, that of the beak nine lines and a half, from the

\* *Cassia senna*. Lin.—*Cassia lanceolata*. Forskal, Flora Egyptiaco-Arabica, page 85.

† Martin pecheur ou alcyon. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 77.—*Alcedo ispida*. Lin.

‡ La draine. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 489.—*Turdus viscivorus*. Lin.

extremities of the wings at their full extension, two feet all but an inch, that of the wings nine inches; to conclude, that of the tail six inches; it measures more than fifteen lines with its wings folded, or in a state of repose.

The feathers on the top of the head are black in the middle, and reddish in the other parts; those of the sides of the head are variegated with gray, black, and red, excepting those below the eyes, which are black, with a gray spot at the posterior angle of each eye. All the upper part of the body is of a reddish brown, with transversal rays of black. The throat is covered with gray feathers, and almost entirely fringed. The upper part of the stomach is reddish, with black and longitudinal spots. The remainder of the under part of the body is gray tinged with red. The feathers of the legs are of the same colour, but their stem and their extremities are black, which form a sort of tears of this colour. The upper part of the wings is variegated with brown, gray, white, and a reddish hue. The tail is of the same colour with the back, but is striped transversely with black. The beak is gray towards its base, and black through all the remainder. The iris is the colour of a hazel-nut; the skin around the eyes, the tarsus, and the toes is yellow, like that of the basis of the beak; to conclude, the claws are black.



This was a female. The intestinal canal was one foot nine inches and a half. The membranous stomach was filled with animal substances, among which I distinguished some parts of large insects. The food of this bird must have been extremely plentiful, for I never in my life saw one so fat. Of three which I shot this same day, this alone remained to me, the two others, though fallen from the tree on which they were perched, having made their escape, and lost themselves in the gardens, at the moment when I was going to take them up.

This species of birds of prey commonly take their stations on the tops of date-trees, and utter a sharp cry. This might probably be the same with that described by Forskal, as a species of falcon \*. There is, in reality, a good deal of conformity in our descriptions. Forskal inquires afterwards whether this be a real falcon, or a kite, and whether it may not be the *fulco forficatus* of Linnæus. This I will assuredly not undertake to resolve, as Forskal, much better versed than myself in the art of

\* *Falco cera pedibusque flavis, supra cinereus, subtus ferrugineus, alis supra fuscis; caudâ forficatâ, fusco fasciata, longitudine corporis.* Arab. *Addaj*. Forskal, *Descrip. Animalium*, page 1. According to the description of the Danish professor, Gmelin has described the same bird in the third edition of the *Systema Naturæ* of Linnæus, under the denomination of *falco ægyptius*.

unravelling the phrases of nomenclature, has not been able to decide accurately on this point. But as far as I am able to judge, the bird which I am describing is of the falcon genus.

I likewise saw in the hedges the *troglydite* \*; chaffinches in every place; larks in the open country; and, near the waters, a great number of wagtails, or laundresses †. This species is extended all over Egypt, and they appear to dwell there constantly. The yellow wagtail, on the contrary, is only a bird of passage ‡, and this was the first time that it appeared there that year; it returns towards the spring. The two species have the same manner of living; they both frequent the neighbourhood of dwelling-houses and of the waters. However, the laundress approaches man more familiarly; she enters into the cities, hops about lightly and with confidence on those places over which the rice is spread, notwithstanding the number of labourers who are employed in drying this grain. The yellow wagtail gives more willingly the preference to the country.

\* See p. 17.

† Lavandiere. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 652.—*Motacilla alba*. Lin.

‡ Yellow wagtail. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 28, fig. 1.—*Motacilla baarula*. Lin.

It appears as if all the most charming productions of nature had assembled themselves in the gardens of Rossetta, and there presented to the man capable of appreciating their value, the riches which she does not always scatter around. These delicious spots were then enamelled with little animated and winged bodies, sparkling with the most brilliant purple, sometimes fluttering amidst the branches of the shrubs, and sometimes eclipsing the lustre of the flowers on coming close to them. You behold there a considerable number of a remarkable species of beautiful insects, the elegance of whose appearance, and their attire, have procured for them the name of damsels (dragon-flies\*). The entire body of this sort is of the finest purple; the wings, orange-coloured at the bottom, have a spot of the same colour towards the extremity: a black line, which separates the whole length of the body underneath, still contributes to heighten its purple hue. The length of this insect is eighteen lines; that of the corselet, which is covered with down, also purple-coloured, is four lines and a half, and its breadth two lines and a half; the wings measure one inch and two lines.

A beautiful species of another genus of insects, less innocent than the dragon-fly, also give lustre

\* Libellula.

to this spot by their colours. A wasp ten lines long, is very common there. She has two large black eyes, and upon the crown of the head three little black points, disposed in the form of a triangle, and resembling eyes; the front of the head is of a beautiful yellow; a triangular spot of the same colour between the antennæ, which also have a slight tinge of yellow at the bottom; the antennæ are purple the rest of the length. The remainder of the head, the corselet, and the thighs, are purple; the legs and the tarsus of a brown gray; the claws black: to conclude, the wings yellowish in the upper part, and gray in the under.

The first ring of the belly is of a shining black, bordered on the belly only, with a beautiful yellow; this border is itself terminated by a little line, which appears to be of the purest gold. The second ring is entirely black; the third is yellow above and below; it is divided above in its breadth by a black line, accompanied on each side with a spot likewise black, and, on the under part of the same ring, there is, on each side, another black spot smaller than those which are on the upper part. The fourth circle is black above, and brown below: finally, the other circles are of a blackish brown.

I found

I found several individuals of the same species, the colours of which were less brilliant, with some differences in the shades. These wasps, very common in the country, appear also in the cities. Several of them entered into my chamber at Rossetta.

At this season you frequently meet, besides, a species of hopping insects, known by the name of grillon, *grillus* (cricket). I believe it has not been described, or designed, and I am going to depict it. This cricket is fourteen lines long, and its greatest breadth is a little more than three lines; the antennæ are five lines, the sheaths thirteen; they extend beyond the body three lines.

The distribution of the colours is elegant: the antennæ are red, the crown of the head is marked, lengthwise, by a blackish line, bordered with yellow, and which extends upon the corselet enlarging itself. The large eyes are striped lengthwise with black and white; the little smooth eye in the middle of the head is of an orange colour: you might take the others for little beads of the most brilliant gold; the rest of the head is of a greenish gray; the rest of the corselet, and the under part of the belly, are of gray shaded with yellow; the upper part of the belly is greenish.

This



This insect has, besides, sheaths of a dull red, with a stripe of an apple green on a third of their length: the wings outstretched of gray tinged with yellow, and their fibres or nerves red; the thighs of the two first rows with yellow claws; the legs, the tarsus, and the palettes, red; the claws black; the thighs of the posterior legs, yellow on the outside, and reddish within; the legs and the tarsus of the most beautiful red, with tints of the liveliest blue on the upper part of the legs.

The 6th of November, at three in the morning, a considerable shower of rain fell, with a wind from the north-north-west. This epocha was not uninteresting; for this was the first rain of the year which descended to cool the atmosphere of Lower Egypt, and, as I have already said, this was the commencement of that season to which the name of winter was given, because the temperature became less scorching.

The next day I crossed the Nile, and took a long walk over the humid and verdant soil of the Delta. This part of Lower Egypt is an immense plain, but it has not that fatiguing monotony so general in level countries. The cities and the villages are built upon little eminences, which raise them above the height of the inundation.

Groves

Groves always smiling with verdure, detached trees, but at very small distances from each other, bound the view, and do not permit it to extend itself but by numerous openings, which conduct it to prospects more or less distant, more or less pleasing. Enclosures, where plants of every species flourish, where the golden apples of the orange-tree crown the sweetest of perfumed flowers, and the useful and modest pot-herbs; plains on which fertility has fixed her abode, even the huts of labouring men, the animals which live around them, every thing gives delight in a landscape so variegated; all rejoices the soul and gratifies the sight.

A multitude of birds collect themselves in a country so beautiful: they seem, by their numbers, by their movements, and by the diversity of their accents, to celebrate there that continual banquet of nature, these eternal blessings of fertility.

I saw, in this place, turtle-doves of two species, blackbirds, lapwings, and white *herons*, which the French who inhabit Egypt, name the *ox-keeper*, because, in reality, they seek the places frequented by these animals, follow them, and often perch on their backs \*. In Egypt two species of *herons* are

\* Aigrette. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 901. *Ardea garzetta*. Lin.

found;

found; the plumage of all of them is of a dazzling white, but they differ with respect to size. The small species is the most common; the individuals which compose them, likewise differ from each other in the colour of their feet; some of them are black, others greenish, and several are yellow. There is every reason to presume that this variety is the effect of age, or of sex, and not a distinction of race. The large and the small species carry on their backs long fringed and silky feathers, which serve to form plumes and tufts. All of them have not this natural attire; perhaps it is peculiar to the males only. However this may be, it was very easy to procure, in Egypt, the most beautiful feathers of these birds, for they were greatly multiplied in the lower parts of that country, and more particularly towards Damietta, where the waters, which they are fond of frequenting, occupy a greater space. The inhabitants do not hunt them, and no person thinks of them as food.

I smile, at this moment, when I recall to mind the little occurrence to which the herons gave birth, on my journey from Rossetta to Alexandria with M. Tott. He had in his train, a little surgeon quite puffed up with folly and self-sufficiency. Uniting together their knowledge in natural history, they were clearly of opinion, that the numerous herons, whose dazzling whiteness,

emblem so affecting of candour and of virginity \*, forms the most beautiful ornament of the shores of the Nile, were the ibis of the ancients, birds on which antiquity conferred the highest honours. Nothing that could be urged against it would induce them to alter their opinion. A contemptuous censure fell on those travellers who had preceded them, and who had not sufficient observation to see the ibis in Egypt, whilst they had encountered a multitude of them the first time they set foot there. They congratulated themselves on being in a situation to ascertain that the ibises were the most common birds in Egypt; they also determined to make an ample collection of them. Whenever they descried a heron, they bawled as loud as they could, to direct the Egyptian sailors to manœuvre so as to bring them within gun-shot of their mark. These latter grew impatient, and swore at so many delays and so much labour, of which they could not conceive the importance. Nearly two hundred shots were fired upon the herons, but, fortunately for them, the sportsmen were as bad marksmen, as they were ignorant of natural history; and two or three only of these

\* It is a beautiful idea of Hasselquitz (Travels to the Levant) to name the white heron, virgin heron, *ardea virgo*. If every denomination presented so much truth, and so many charms as this does, nomenclature would cease to be a science so arid.

birds fell the victims of the exalted opinion which had been formed of their species. The shooting-match would not have concluded so soon, and we, to all appearance, should have been eight days in reaching Cairo, from the numerous zig-zags which our heroes of the chase led us through, and the frequent pauses with which they interrupted our navigation, if the surgeon, in a transport of ornithological enthusiasm, had not allowed himself to fall into the hold of the boat, exactly into the middle of a kettle of lentils which was cooking for the boat's crew. This catastrophe was the signal of peace with the pretended ibis, and we were enabled to continue our voyage without any other inconvenience than the fatigue of hearing exclamations on the importance of a pretended discovery which had very nearly cost the surgeon rather more than it was worth.

I discovered in an aquatic spot, which was covered with reeds, a coot \*, or morella, in Egypt *hoor* : I have since then had an opportunity of procuring several of these birds, and on comparing them with the description which Buffon has given, I remarked some difference of tints in the plumage. The most striking of these differences is

\* *Foulque*. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 197.—*Fulica atra*. Lin.



on that naked portion of the leg above the knee; this is, according to Buffon, encircled with red, but in the coots which I have seen this circle was yellow. These birds are fat in general, and their flesh is tender and well tasted.

I likewise found a quail, which I killed. It was not usual to see them at this period; it was the only one in the canton through which I roved. It is in the month of September that the passage of the quails commences on the coasts of Egypt. They then assemble themselves, more peculiarly in the sandy island which divides the mouth of the Nile near Rossetta. But I shall have occasion to return to the subject of the truly wonderful passage of these birds.

The fields which had just been stripped of the crop of rice were filled with snipes\*. They were there singularly numerous. A huntsman of Rossetta brought us one day a basket-full of these birds, which he had killed with a gun in the course of a few hours. For my own part, I killed a dozen, and missed as many more, in the morning. This is pleasant sport, because you always have a shot, but it is likewise very fatiguing. The light

\* Becassine. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 883.—*Scolopax gallinago*. Lin.

earth of the rice-grounds is so deeply impregnated with water, that you sink at every step you take, and sometimes half way up your body. The snipes arrive at the beginning of November in search of the aquatic cantons of Lower Egypt, and they pass the whole of the winter there.

There are also, but fewer in number, armed and crested plovers \*. The Europeans resident in Egypt call them *dominicans*, on account of the resemblance which the distribution of black and white with which their plumage is variegated, gives them to the habit of this order of monks. These plovers, exactly the same with those which I had seen some years before, in the month of August in the country of the Iolofs, on the western coast of Africa, delight to frequent the borders of pools of water, on the brink of rivers, and in all humid places, although they never go into the water. These are noisy and wild birds; you approach them with difficulty; but if they have learnt to fly from man, that tyrant of the animal creation, they enjoy among themselves love and the pleasures of sociability, they are never alone, they are always to be seen in pairs or in little troops.

\* Pluvier à aigrettes. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. & pl. enlum. No. 801, under the name of the *armed plover of Senegal*. — *Charadrius spinosus*. Lin.

They sold in the streets of Rossetta the stalks of the fenu-greek\*. This plant is cultivated as fodder; and it would hold the first rank among all the sorts of food which Lower Egypt supplied to animals, if the *barsim*, a species of clover peculiar to this country, and of which I have already spoken, did not exist there. Its Arabic name is *helbé*.

Although this *helbé* of the Egyptians is a succulent fodder for the numerous cattle which cover the plains of the Delta; although horses, oxen, and buffaloes, eat it with equal pleasure; it did not appear to be particularly destined for the food of animals, because the *barsim* supplies them with a much better and more abundant aliment. But what will appear very extraordinary, in this country abounding in singularities, the Egyptians themselves eat fenu-greek; for this reason it may be called with propriety the *fodder of men*.

It is in the month of November that, in the streets of the cities, they call green *helbé* to sell. It is tied up in large bundles, which the inhabitants are eager to buy at a low price, and which they devour with incredible avidity, without any species of seasoning whatever. They pretend that this singular food is an excellent stomachic, a specific against worms and the dysentery; in a word,

\* *Trigonella fœnum-grecum*. Lin.

a preservative against a number of maladies. I also ate some bunches of this fenu-greek. I did not find it unpleasant, but I was far from experiencing, in this sort of repast, the same pleasure with the people of the country. With regard to its effects, I neither received benefit nor injury from it.

The Egyptians do not content themselves with devouring the stalks and the leaves of the fenu-greek, they likewise make the seeds to spring up, and eat the long shoots. It is a highly valued preparation in their eyes, which possesses in an eminent degree the virtues which they attribute to the plant. To obtain a quick germination of the seeds, they fill a basket with them, which they allow to soak in a running water during two or three days: they afterwards heat it up on a bed of straw or grass, in order that they may become warm; they cover a portion of the seeds thus soaked with little earthen vessels, in the form of mutilated cones, and open at top. It is from these openings that the shoots, which very soon grow large, spring forth, uniting themselves together, and they stop them there by bending them downwards. At length they lift the vessel filled with these young shoots, and eat them with the seeds which produced them. You may purchase twelve little pots thus stored for a medina, that is to say, nearly a halfpenny of our

z 3

money.

money. It is necessary to have a high degree of confidence in these germs, to eat such a quantity of them as the Egyptians do, for they are of a very strong bitter. They likewise burn the seeds, and prepare them in the same manner as coffee, adding to them the juice of lemons. This beverage is very pleasant. I will not say so much for a ragout greatly in vogue in the same country, and which is composed of the shoots of the *helbé* dressed with honey.

Furthermore, the Egyptians regard this plant as endowed with so many good qualities, that it is in their eyes a real panacea. Prospero Alpini has entered into long details upon its uses in medicine\*. After so many excellent properties, real or imaginary, it is not surprising that the Egyptians should hold *fenu-greek* in such high estimation, that, according to one of their proverbs, *Happy are the feet which press the ground on which the helbé grows.*

But independently of these properties, not yet fully demonstrated, the culture of the *fenu-greek* is worthy of being extended in France. It is an admirable fodder, which preserves the health of

\* See his books respecting the plants of Egypt and the medicine of the Egyptians.

horses,



horses, and even contributes to heal their diseases. I have cultivated it successfully for several years, in my solitary abode at Manoncourt, in the department of Meurthe. (*See the periodical paper called Le Cultivateur, the 27th Messidor of the 3d year; a journal which, under a modest title, is of the greatest utility.*)

## CHAP. XX.

*Journey to Aboukir—Ruins—Bedouins—Port and road for ships—Jew drogman—Red partridges—Ruins of Canopus—Colossal and fluted statue—Canopus—Governor, castle, and village of Aboukir—Little Pyramid—Return to Rossetta.*

BETWEEN Rossetta and Alexandria there remained for me still another place to examine, formerly celebrated under the name of *Canopus*, at the present day the *Aboukir* of the Arabs, and, by corruption, the *Bequié* of European navigators. I knew that it was well worth seeing, and I departed for the purpose of visiting it on the 12th of November. M. Forneti, drogman at Rossetta, had an extreme desire to accompany me, and we took with us a janisary, my draughtsman, and two servants.

Mounted upon mules we scaled the hills of sand; the arid and moving rampart which encircles the city of Rossetta to the westward. We entered into the plain of the Turrets or Pillars\*, we afterwards gained the shore of the sea, which we followed up to the lake of *Maadié*.

\* See page 206.

A flock of the vultures of Egypt, to which has been given, rather improperly, the name of *Pharaoh's chickens* \*, were feasting on the putrid carcass of a dead animal cast upon the sand.

We were detained a full hour on our passage over the lake *Maadié*, owing to the bad construction of the boat. With an ordinary ferry-boat we could not have taken a quarter of an hour. A little before our arrival at this remnant of the Canopic branch of the Nile, we had encountered a little camp of Bedouin Arabs, composed simply of four tents, under which men, women, and animals assembled together. The wandering life of these vagrant and thievish people will not allow them to continue long in one place. They presented us with some very bad water, which thirst prompted us to swallow, and for which we paid them pretty liberally.

After leaving *Maadié* we regained the sea-shore, along which a dike or causeway has been built, in order to repel the waters, the sandy earth being on a level with the sea. On this dike there are turrets placed from distance to distance. We quitted the road of Alexandria, and continuing to

\* Foreign birds, which have a resemblance to the vulture. Art. 2. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des. Ois.—*Vultur percnopterus*. Lin.

journey along the coast, we arrived at Aboukir at one o'clock in the afternoon.

This is now nothing more than a village, with a castle built upon the point of a cape, which advances pretty far into the sea. Some shelves, detached in front of the cape, contain, in the large bay which the coast forms in this place, a little port, where the vessels are in safety, even at the very foot of the castle, and in front of which there is a very good road. This was the usual anchoring-place for French frigates when they cruised in those latitudes. It was equally resorted to by merchant-ships, which were obliged by stormy weather to shun the new, the little frequented and dangerous port of Alexandria, as well as by the *germes* of the country, when they could not gain Alexandria, nor get clear of the *Boghass* of the Nile, at the mouth of the branch of Rossetta.

It was in this same sand, but at too great a distance from the coast, that the fleet of the republic, commanded by the brave and unfortunate Brueys, sustained a combat so disadvantageous, against the English fleet, under the command of Nelson; an engagement which it would have been easy and prudent to avoid, and the unsuccessful issue of which has spread a new brilliancy of glory over French valour.

We alighted at the house of a Jew, the agent by patent of the consul-general of France in Egypt. His ancestors had constantly exercised the same functions with honour and fidelity. He had a great degree of affection for the French; indeed he looked on himself as one of them. He was a man gentle, obliging, in a word, the most worthy man of a Jew that I ever was acquainted with. His salary was six parats, or medinas, or from three-pence halfpenny to a groat a day. It was impossible to give a more sorry payment for the services he had rendered to the French vessels which came to an anchor off Aboukir, and which could not dispense with his assistance in an isolated spot, where there was not a single European. Formerly only a salary of four medinas was given, as I saw in the regulation made in 1706, by M. de Gatines, comptroller of the navy, and joint commissary for the general inspection of the sea-ports of the Levant. The article which concerned the settlement of a drogman of Aboukir, and which I transcribe, because it has a relation to the port of Alexandria, and the navigation of the coast of Egypt, is couched in the following terms: “ As several  
“ French vessels have taken in their lading for  
“ some years at the roads of *Bequiers*, and because  
“ it is of advantage to keep up this custom, which  
“ extends the liberty of lading, and may, in the  
“ end, be of service to the nation, if it is under  
“ the necessity of quitting Alexandria, the port of  
“ which



“ which is filling up from day to day : We de-  
“ cree, in order to save the trouble and expense of  
“ several goings and comings express to and from  
“ Alexandria to Bequiers, which have cost the  
“ nation large sums ; and likewise that we may  
“ have a person properly qualified, who will pay  
“ attention to every thing embarked there ; that  
“ a Jew drogman shall be established in that  
“ place, at the rate of four medinas of wages a  
“ day, including every thing, which shall be  
“ passed in the accounts of Alexandria.”

Another inspector-general, M. Tott, wished, in 1777, to deprive the French nation of those services which had appeared to them of so much importance in 1706. He had announced that a drogman would no longer be maintained at Aboukir. These are what may be called ruinous economies, and they were not uncommon. Whilst the useful servant of the public was stripped of his subsistence, the pockets of the powerful man, to whom obligation was felt, provided he did not do mischief, were filled with gold. Giving himself very little trouble about the public interest, the object of the warmest wishes of the useful citizen, but almost always put to one side, his eyes were but too frequently open only to that which could flatter his ambition, and satisfy his love of money. However, the representations and the solicitations of the merchants of Alexandria triumphed over the whims of ignorance

of local circumstances, and the shabby place of drogman of *Aboukir* was kept up. The poor Jew informed us he had learnt that his little pension was to be torn from him. He added, with a noble simplicity : *I have been always perfectly tranquil. I would have displayed the honourable warrants with which my ancestors were furnished, the attestations of the important services which they have rendered to the French nation, the proofs of the active zeal for its interests, which has animated myself, and it is impossible that the justice of a government to which I am attached, should have permitted me to be deprived of the means of existence.* We were cautious not to disturb his affecting security ; but I said to my companion : The good man is simple, poor, and perhaps necessary ; he will not be listened to : he will be sacrificed, without the least attention being paid to his rights, to his services, any more than to his remonstrances. Such sacrifices as these are the usual pleasures of governments, and the most common acts of their justice.

The house of *Mallüm-Yousef*\* (this is the name of the Jew) is in a delightful situation : it is suffi-

\* The word *Mallüm* answers to that of *master* : *Mallüm Yousef, Master Joseph*. This is the appellation which the Turks give to those whom they do not choose to distinguish, but whom, however, they raise rather above the lowest classes of the people.

ciently spacious, and would have afforded very commodious apartments, if they had been cleaned. Travellers are obliged to provide themselves with bread; you can find none to purchase at Aboukir. This excepted, you could procure there, very easily, fish, sea-urchins, oysters, and other shellfish; and you might depend upon the attentions of the drogman and his son for the purchase of such provisions. They kept in their house a pair of red partridges\*. They told us that these birds frequently visited Aboukir, and that it was not difficult to take them, even alive. As soon as we had finished our frugal repast, prepared by the wife of our host, we remounted our mules to visit the ruins which are in the environs.

These vestiges of an ancient city occupy a vast extent of ground. All is overthrown, all is destroyed. The soil is strewed with ruins, which still present wonderful beauties, and what remains on the surface gives you an idea of what might be discovered, if you had the liberty of digging there; but researches of this nature are positively interdicted among an ignorant and superstitious people, who not knowing any other riches than gold, imagine that travellers journeyed over their countries only with the intention of carrying off

\* Bartavelle, ou perdrix grecque. Buffon, Hist. Nat des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 231.—*Tetrao rufus*. Lin.





*Part of the Ruins of Canopus.*



their buried treasures, and could not believe that the monuments of the arts were the motives of their excursions.

I saw several pillars overthrown : they were of the finest granite ; their shafts were fluted, and of one single piece, although of an astonishing size : the capitals were of the most beautiful workmanship. The Jew drogman told me, that he had seen a part of these pillars still standing upright, and a broad arch which formed the entrance of a subterraneous cave : but the country people had broken them all down to carry away the stones, which they employed in building, or in the repairs of the dikes which formed a barrier against the waters of the sea. There remained still, the openings of subterraneous galleries built of brick, and in very tolerable preservation : rubbish had choked up the entrance. In a word, all that was discoverable announced that formerly the most magnificent edifices had flourished on this site. The inhabitants of Aboukir call these superb ruins the city of Pharaoh.

Upon the brink of the sea you discern the foundations in pretty good preservation, of a spacious and regular building, in the middle of which there is a subterraneous cave giving way to the sea : in it you see at a distance ruins which prove, that in this place, as in many others, it has gained upon the  
the

the land. I had a drawing of these ruins taken. (See Plate V.) By the side of these vestiges, blocks of granite of different forms are broken down and laid in heaps. In the middle is a colossal statue of a woman, and, what is very singular, fluted all its length. This is also of granite, and it is overthrown and mutilated in some parts. The sea, though ever so little agitated, covers it with its waves; if you wish to examine it at leisure, you must take the advantage of calm weather. Chance was favourable to me, and I caused a drawing of it to be taken as it then existed. (See Plate VI. in which the statue is represented with the ruins that surround it.) Plate VII. fig. 2. displays it alone and detached.

The people of the country had been struck with this extraordinary statue, and as the ensemble of the ruins was in their sight the city of Pharaoh, this was also in their opinion the daughter of Pharaoh. The designer of a Frenchman, who was in Egypt at the same time with me, and who visited Aboukir, had represented it as perfect in its execution, and in its preservation; he had drawn it, not as it was, in reality, but as he believed it ought to be, that is to say, upright, and resting on a pedestal of his own imagination. Such drawings as these are rather calculated to mislead than to give information, and they should never be permitted to enter the portfolio

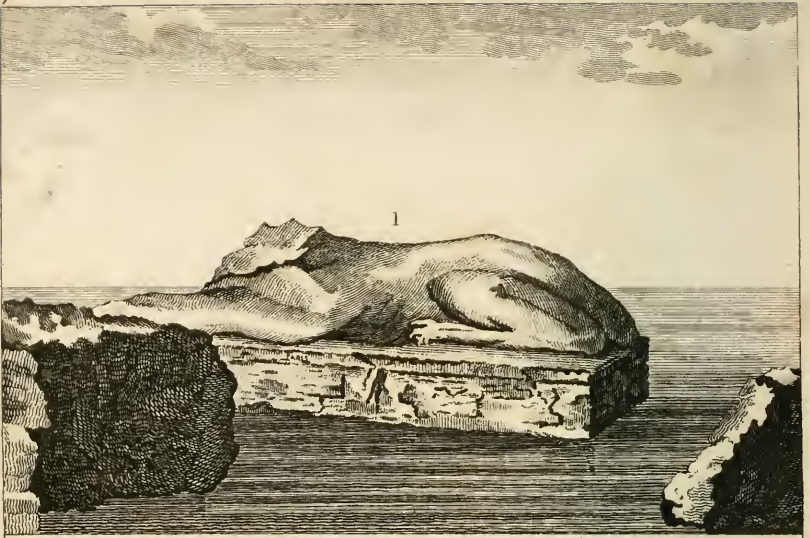


*Printed by Wm. G. Anderson.*

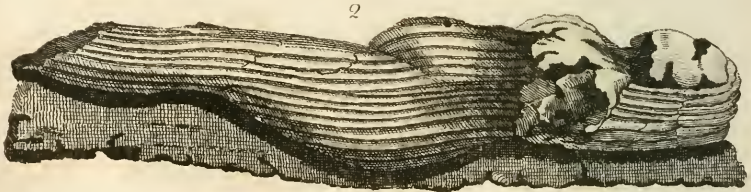








*Part of the Ruins of Canopus.*



*Colossal Statue, Fluted, of the Ruins of Canopus.*

folio of a traveller. I can answer for the fidelity of all my drawings; my draughtsman was accustomed to the most scrupulous exactness, and they were all taken under my own eye.

A-propos of this Frenchman: the Jew told us that when he came to Aboukir, he omitted to take with him, in the researches which he made in the environs, a man of the country appointed by the governor, and that this latter, piqued at it, exacted under form of *avanie* a chequin from the traveller. Of consequence, he took care that we should be accompanied by the governor's son himself, and engaged that I should give him as a recompense, a pataca or six francs (five shillings), and this was to avoid a demand of seven livres six sous (6s. 10d.), the value of a chequin in Egypt. This combination appeared extremely diverting to us.

By the side of this statue is a very large sphynx partly broken, the supporter of which has a fillet of hieroglyphics almost entirely effaced. (See Plate VII. fig. 1.) These are the remains of a celebrated city, founded by the Greeks, and embellished with all the most superb and most graceful inventions of art. A magnificent temple, of which these wonderful pillars of granite, at present broken down, formed to all appearance a part, was consecrated to Serapis. Strangers arrived there in

crowds, rather to enjoy the pleasures which they tasted in the city, than to sacrifice to the divinity. The surrounding country was decked in all the richness of nature, while that of luxury, scattered with profusion, shone in the city. The attractions of its situation, the beauty of the climate, the ease which reigned there, the delicacies of good cheer, the pleasures of every species which appeared to have adopted this as their most favourite abode, every thing united to render this spot enchanting, and to form of its population an assemblage of happy men \*. But dissoluteness of manners soon arrived there at its highest pitch; licentiousness raged without control; the pleasing illusions, the amiable condescension of women, which has no value but in as much as it is inspired by tenderness, degenerated into effrontery †; in a word, the sage durst no longer land on this shore ‡.

The excesses of luxury, and the general depravity of manners, are the certain forerunners of the approaching fall of states, and of the degradation of nations. Canopus has vanished: the de-

\* . . . . *Pelæi gens fortunata Canopi.* Virg. Georg. lib. 4.

† Every day and every night, according to Strabo, the canal was covered with vessels filled with men and women, who danced and sung with the utmost wantonness.

‡ When the sage wishes to retire, he will never choose Canopus for the place of his retreat. Seneca, epistle 51.

scendants of those who were its inhabitants are mere barbarians; the Nile has refused to moisten a depopulated soil; the plains are barren and desert; not a particle of the monuments has preserved its place or its position; all is fallen, all is overthrown, all is turned upside down, and the magnificent and delightful Canopus exists no longer but in the remembrance of a few individuals.

The day after our arrival at Aboukir, M. Forneti and I went to pay a visit to the governor, who was a barber. Apprized of our intention by the Jew, he had been in haste to array himself in his finest clothes, and to dress his head in a white *schall*. We found him seated in his shop, with a fan composed of feathers in his hand. He received us with all the solemnity of a vizier; however, he offered us his services in any way which might be agreeable to us. He would very willingly have presented us with coffee, but the coffee-house he told us was shut. When we withdrew, he gave himself as little disturbance as upon our arrival. Furthermore, he was on the best terms with our host; and not without reason, for he was not only his governor but likewise his barber.

We had demanded and obtained permission to enter the castle, which is of little importance. It

is surrounded, on the side next the land, with a ditch, filled by the water of the sea. There is a light-house, which is so poorly illuminated, that you cannot perceive it till you are pretty close to it. Some picces of cannon of a very small size defend the fort; but they did not deter the Russians from carrying off the *germes*, directly under the batteries. The governor had sent with us a guide through the castle, his lieutenant, a very dirty and lousy officer. He was so well pleased with our liberality, that, from pure gratitude, he endeavoured with all his might to carry us a-fishing, because he was a fisherman to his trade.

During the day, the village of Aboukir appeared to be without inhabitants; the doors of the houses were shut; not a person was to be seen in the streets. The reason of this was, that almost all those who lived there were either fishermen or sailors belonging to the *germes*.

When we left the castle, we passed by the shop of the governor, which was no longer that of a barber. He proposed to me to purchase a good engraved stone, to which he affixed a high price, because he had caused his name to be inscribed on the reverse of the antique engraving. In order that I might get into the good graces of  
a man



a man of such importance, I gave him payment for his seal a little above its value.

In the market-place there is a long black stone loaded with hieroglyphics. A man of Aboukir perceiving that I considered every fragment of antiquity with attention, and that I sought to discover them, came to offer me a statue which he said was very beautiful, but partly buried. I sent one of my attendants with this man, who could not find his statue again. However, that he might not altogether lose his time, and the profits he hoped to receive, he set himself to removing the earth, and in a moment he discovered a very fine marble monument loaded with hieroglyphics; he came immediately to inform us of it; we went to the place, and I saw a little pyramid in perfect preservation of the most beautiful black marble, and covered along each side of its base with a fillet of hieroglyphics equally well preserved. I bought it of a man to whom it belonged as little as it did to me, and I gave it in charge to the Jew drogman, to send it to me at Rossetta by the first germe which departed from Aboukir. We may form an estimate of the riches of this mine of antiquities, covered only by a slight bed of earth and rubbish, since a man, in less than half an hour, and without any implement but his hands, with

which he scratched up the ground at random, discovered a precious fragment.

This purchase made, we took leave of the good Jew; we got upon the road which leads to Rossetta, where we arrived at ten o'clock at night. We saw on the shore several laundresses, and on the palm-trees, blackbirds which arrive in the northern part of Egypt at the same time with the thrushes, at the commencement of winter. Their passage is more numerous after the rains have begun to fall. It is said, that at that time they are very fat and delicate. Five or six jackals passed close by us; the brightness of the moon permitted us to distinguish them, and they did not seem at all intimidated at meeting us.

During the whole of this day a very violent wind blew from the east-south-east; the weather was gloomy, and in the evening we had rain. The sea ran high, and its waves arose dashing against the sides of the dikes of Aboukir, and spread with fury along the coast. Their roarings diffused themselves over the solitude which we were traversing, and which they seemed resolute to invade.

## CHAP. XXI.

*Bedouins—Birds—Boghass—Tower of Canopus—  
Abou-Mandour—Grapes—Desert—Jackals—  
Lizards—Insects—Serpent—Difficulties respect-  
ing the pyramid of Aboukir—Opinion of the  
Egyptians with regard to travellers.*

ON my return from Aboukir, I had a wish to take a near view of the Mouth of the Nile, the *Boghass*, so celebrated on account of its dangers, and of the shipwrecks which happen there. The vice-consul, his drogman, and a French merchant had a desire to be of the party, and we took our departure, mounted on asses. We stopped in the gardens above the castle; some Bedouin Arabs were encamped there; their tents were not large, and still less comfortable; they announced the wretchedness of those to whom they served as a shelter. The women do not cover their faces, as is the custom of those people who are settled in Egypt. The freshness of youth rendered those who were the least aged among them sufficiently agreeable, notwithstanding the embrowned tint of their skin, and they seemed to be of a very complaisant disposition.

We were very soon surrounded by these women, who demanded some assistance from us; one or

two medinas \* was enough to satisfy them. The old ones perceiving that these trifling presents were bestowed more willingly on the young, took care to employ them as their solicitors, in order to awaken our interest and our benevolence. They laughed outright when they found that this attention had good success, and above all when they remarked that the young girls became the objects of some tender glances. Whilst my companions were holding a pretty lively conversation with the youthful Arabs, I was surrounded by a group of old women horribly ugly; they had, to appearance, judged me to be more generous than the others; they obliged me to remain in the midst of them, and would not permit me to proceed. I had a thousand difficulties to make my escape, and I congratulated myself sincerely on getting out of this circle of importunate old women, whose decrepit and blackish figures were rendered still more hideous by several black compartments which they had formed on the chin by pricking the skin of it.

There were in these gardens turtle-doves, thrushes, blackbirds, and upon the date-trees some large beaks †. I saw here also two birds of prey, of the species formerly described as a species

\* The medina in Turkey, *parat*, is a piece in which there is a small portion of silver, and is worth rather more than a halfpenny.

† Glos bec. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 99.—*Lexia coccothaustes*. Lin.

of falcon ; and I killed, near a little pool of water, two young woodcocks, vulgarly called *white-tails*, and by the Provençals *bechots* \*. The male and the female were together.

On continuing our route towards the sea, the grounds which the Nile had overspread, were slippery, miry, and intersected with ditches. Our beasts fell down, sinking into the sloughs, and frequently leaving us in the water or in the mud. No one of us was exempted from such accidents as these, nor from the mutual pleasantries which we passed upon each other. At length we arrived near that narrow and formidable pass of the bar which encloses the Nile. The sea, agitated from the main, broke against it with fury, and there lifted up its perturbed waves, mingled with foam and sand. We saw at this spot the tops of the masts of two *germes* which had been cast away some days before, and upon the coast, sailors employed in bearing away the dead bodies of some of their comrades which the sea had thrown upon the shore.

The coast is low, and entirely formed of sand ; it was covered with a number of water-birds, such as goëlands, sea-larks, herons †, &c. &c. These

\* Bécasseau. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 643.—*Tringa ochropus*. Lin.

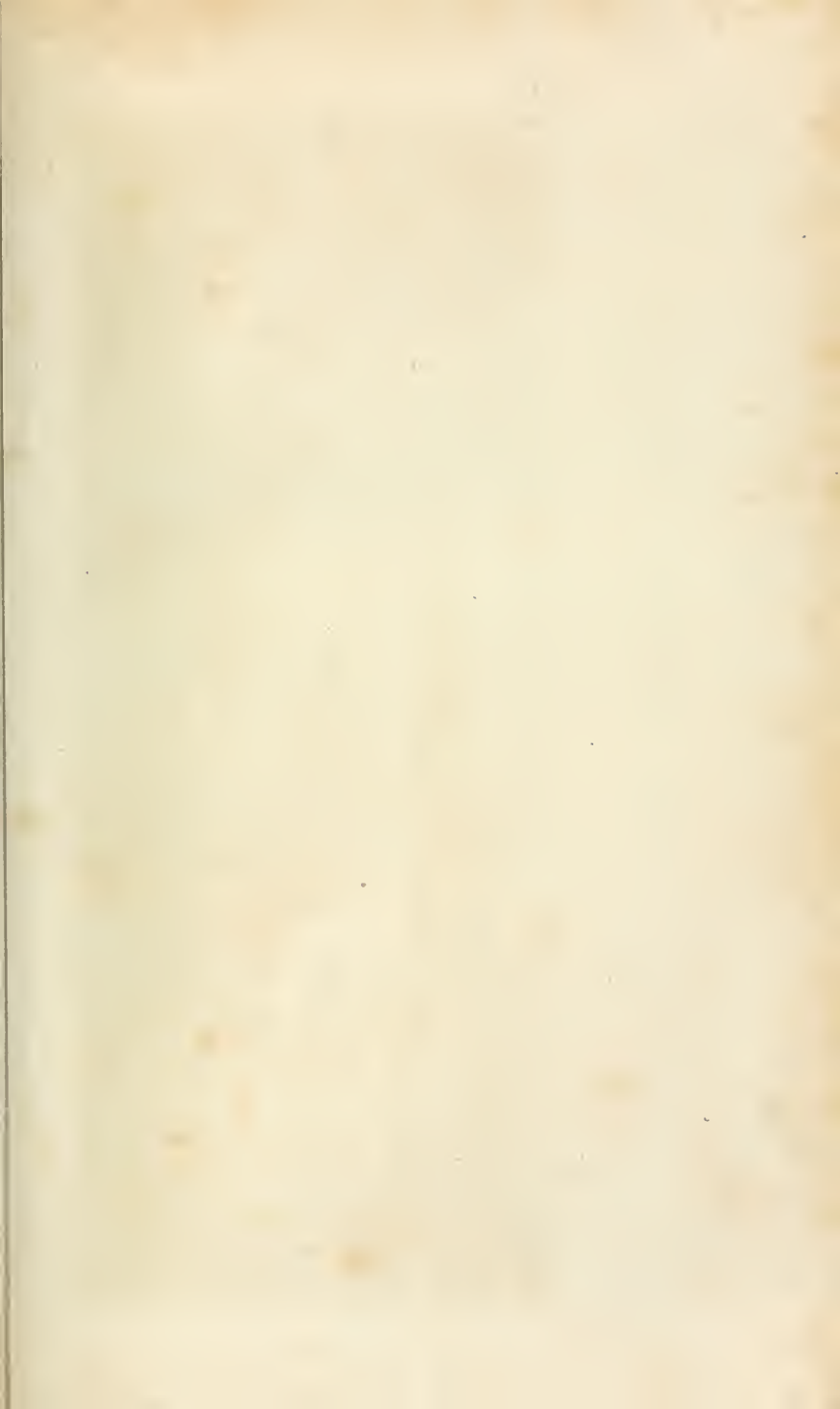
† Heron commun. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 787.—*Ardea cinerea*. Lin.



last were singularly wild ; it was impossible to get near them.

The next day I went about half a league to the south of Rossetta, to see a tower which has been called that of *Canopus*, from the mistaken supposition, that the city of Rossetta occupied the place of ancient Canopus. This tower has been built in modern times, on a little hill of sand, which, at this part, forms the western shore of the Nile. It is square ; it has been half demolished, and what remains announces an approaching ruin. In the under part, the inhabitants of this canton shewed an opening into a subterranean cave, which, according to them, led to Alexandria.

On the top of the tower, the view extends itself all around ; it has no other bounds but those which nature has set. Immense plains develop themselves to the sight ; but how diversified are the pictures which it is permitted to wander over ! how majestic are they ! and on what other spot could we behold an assemblage similar to this ! In these scenes so variegated, the most magnificent as well as the most terrible decorations of nature pass successively before the eyes. To the east, coolness and fertility display their treasures over the beautiful carpet of the Delta ; to the north, the sea, source of wealth and of misfortune, rolls its waves,  
the





View of Abou-Mandour.  
 A Mosque of Abou-Mandour. B Boats of the Nile. C Part of Delta. D Village. E Wood of Quatern.  
 Designed by J. Sawdick

the images of inconstancy; and towards the west, the barren covering of sterility has fixed its everlasting abode in the deserts of Libya.

Nearly at the foot of the tower, and upon the very brink of the Nile, is a mosque consecrated to a holy Mussulman. He is called *Abou-Mandour*, which signifies *father of light*. If he is the father of light, he is likewise the terror of sands, for, without him, they would long ago have overspread the city of Rossetta, and reunited it to their gloomy domain. The belief of Mahometans does not stop in so fine a road. *Abou-Mandour* is the enemy of every species of sterility, and the women who are visited with it come to implore his assistance, and to perform a nine days devotion under the scheick of the mosque: it is very rare, say they, that their wishes are not granted. The devotion to a protector so very powerful is general. Not a boat passes before this place consecrated to him, without the mariners and the passengers making an offering to the scheick, in order that they may engage the saint to be favourable to them.

Plate VIII. presents a view of this mosque. Before it is the Nile, which, a little higher, after you ascend it in a southward direction, forms a considerable elbow towards the east-quarter-east, and afterwards it takes the direction of the south. On the other side are the smiling plains of the

Delta. This landscape was taken at the foot of the tower of Canopus.

Ten or twelve years before my arrival at Rossetta, a Turk, who lived there, had dug the ground in the environs of this tower. He found here some beautiful pillars of granite, which he caused to be conveyed to Rossetta, in the view of employing them in the construction of a building. Ali Bey, advertised of this discovery, imagined, or pretended to believe, that the Turk had found gold there. He condemned him to pay a considerable sum, which totally deprived him of the means of building, and gave him ever afterwards a disgust for making researches. A part of these pillars were still on the shores of the Nile, opposite to the house of the French, and the others had been broken for different purposes; they belonged, according to appearance, to the ancient city of *Metelis*, of which the tower of Canopus marks the site,

Opposite to the mosque of *Abou-Mandour*, upon the eastern shore of the Nile, are two or three houses. They are called *Maadié*, because they are at the spot of the usual passage of the Delta. Above *Maadié* is *Boussourath*, a village formerly very much dreaded from the great number of thieves who inhabited it, and who pillaged the boats. A Bey, *Mehemet*, has exterminated them. A little above *Boussourath* is *Hashbet*, another village.

On



On the western shore at a little distance above *Abou Mandour*, is *Dgeddié*, a pretty considerable village, in the environs of which, a large number of vines grow in the sand. From thence is conveyed the provision of grapes for Rossetta and Alexandria.

Although they do not make any wine in Egypt, the roots of the vines are there very much cultivated. They are generally planted in the sand, where they have a rapid growth, and the grapes which they produce acquire a delicious perfume. The greater part of those which are eaten there, are of that species of which the fruits only contain a single stone. The Arabic name of the grape is *aneb*. The leaves of the vine are of great utility in the kitchens of Egypt; they serve to envelope large balls of hashed meat, one of the dishes most commonly presented at good tables. It is necessary that the leaves should be young, and they are frequently sold at a dearer rate than the grapes themselves.

The wines of the vicinity of Alexandria, and of some other cantons of Egypt, were anciently much celebrated. It would be easy for us to restore their lost reputation, by covering the sandy soil with the excellent plants of the vine which remain in it.

The sands, in the environs of the tower of *Canopus*, assume an appearance of life, from the assemblage

assemblage of several birds. I distinguished *per-coptner* vultures; several lapwings which hopped about seeking their food upon the sand, that is to say, different species of insects; laundresses; and, finally, crested larks or cochevis\*.

Whilst the draughtsman, with whom I left the janisary of the consul, was working at the landscape of *Abou-Mandour*, I buried myself in the desert. At a distance this sandy region appears to be a plain surface. However, it is furrowed with steep hills of sand, which form between them narrow and deep valleys, at the bottom of which you soon arrive without the trouble of walking thither. It is sufficient to let yourself go, and the moving sand, which crumbles under your feet, conveys you gently down. These deep intersections are, according to all appearance, the work of those waters which have flowed over a soil so ungrateful at the present, and which formerly they rendered fertile.

The traces of different animals were imprinted on the sand: I recognised those of numerous jackals, and their recent dung which they had carefully covered with sand, scratching like cats.

The dust which overspreads these beds of sand is so fine, that the lightest animal, the smallest insect,

\* Cochevis, ou la grosse alouette huppé. Buffon, Hist. Nat. des Ois. et pl. enlum. No. 503, fig. 1.—*Alauda cristata*. Lin.

leaves there, as on snow, the vestiges of its track. The varieties of these impressions produce a pleasing effect, in spots where the saddened soul expects to meet with nothing but symptoms of the proscriptions of nature. It is impossible to see any thing more beautiful than the traces of the passage of a species of very small lizards extremely common in these deserts. The extremity of their tail forms regular sinuosities, in the middle of two rows of delineations, also regularly imprinted by their four feet, with their five slender toes. These traces are multiplied and interwoven near the subterranean retreats of these little animals, and present a singular assemblage which is not void of beauty.

I am going to describe one of the principal characters of these lizards; they have, in reality, five toes on every foot; those of the two hinder feet are considerably longer than those of the fore, and they are all armed with nails. The eyes are very large relatively to the dimensions of the body; the tail is round, and terminates in a slender point. The scales of the upper part of the head are broad, and of an irregular form; those on the upper part of the body, the thighs, and the legs, are semicircular and very small: those underneath the body are oblong; those of the belly have the form of lozenges placed horizontally; the tail is covered circularly with fillets of scales, like a mutilated

mutilated cone; the tongue is broad, blackish, and forked at the tip.

The largest of those lizards which I measured was seven inches in length, and its tail was four inches four lines. Their medium size is from four to five inches. The upper part of the head is of a greenish yellow, speckled with blackish spots; all the upper part of the body is variegated with green and yellow, with brown and sinuous lines, which contrast very prettily with the ground tint; the toes and the nails yellow; the tail, above, of green shaded with yellow, and spotted with blackish points, the colour of which becomes fainter on approaching the tip of the tail; finally, all the under part of the body and of the legs of a greenish gray, as is the under part of the tail, with the exception of a slight tinge of red, which mingles itself about half of its length and at its extremity. This red tint is more or less strongly marked in different individuals. I have also observed that the spots of the head and on the back varied by the form, and by a very shining bright on some of these reptiles, and extremely black upon others; varieties which doubtless are only those proceeding from age or sex.

To a beautiful scaly robe these little reptiles add liveliness and agility in their motions. They disappear

appear very quickly into the numerous holes which they form at the foot of rare plants and shrubs of a rude aspect, and which appear to partake of the barrenness of the soil where they vegetate. They do not conceal themselves there a long time, and we could very easily surprise them by watching when they came out of their retreat, and presenting the butt end of our guns to them. I took a living one in my hand; he bit one of my fingers with all his might, but he did not do me any injury; his jaws and his teeth, which are very slender, were too weak to occasion any pain.

I found upon the sands that species of *carabus apterus*, or without wings under the sheaths, described by Citizen Olivier, under the denomination of the spotted carab\*, and another species with wings under its sheaths, the body of which is lengthened and flattened, is four lines and a half long, and it has a broad and bordered corselet, with two little hollows on the posterior border; the sheaths bordered and lightly marked with longitudinal lines each one of three points; the upper part of the head and of the corselet, as well as the

\* *Carabus apterus ater, thorace cordato, albo marginato, elytris maculis plurimis albis*—*Carabus multiguttatus*. Carabe moucheté. Olivier, Enc. Meth. *Nota*. These carabs are the same insects which Geoffroie has called *buprestes*. Hist. des Insectes des Env. de Paris.



sheaths, of a beautiful shining and golden green ; the sheaths bordered with a dazzling gold colour ; all the upper part of the body black ; the antennæ, the thighs and legs of a bright yellow ; to conclude, the tarsus of a deep yellow.

Four other insects also presented themselves to my view. One, which was four lines in length, was a tenebrion. The corselet was rounded, convex, and bordered, each sheath convex, so that the place of their junction was hollow ; the body terminated in an obtuse point ; the upper part of the head, of the corselet and of the sheaths dotted with very small points, more discernible upon the sheaths than upon the head and the corselet. The insect is entirely of a beautiful shining black \*.

The second species was a cricket, *acrydium*. Its length was two inches two lines. The shining eyes were striped with black and brown ; its beautiful wings were gray and covered with several spots, some yellow, and others orange-coloured. The rest of the insect was variegated with yellow and a yellowish green.

\* It is possible that the insects I now describe may have been already indicated by some authors : but the uncertainty which remains from indicative terms, has often arrested me, and I thought it was better to give a description, than to waste time in making researches, respecting the greater or less degrees of probability in their applications.

These

These large crickets are very common in the sands which I traversed; they fly better and to a greater distance than the other insects of the same species, and it is not easy to catch them.

The third insect which I found in the same desert, on the brink of a little bason of rain water, was an aquatic scorpion, *hepa* or *nepa*. Its antennæ, if, indeed, we ought to regard as antennæ, parts which have a greater resemblance to claws, are in the form of the nippers of crabs. It has but one joint on each tarsus. The eyes are very large and black. The abdomen, extremely flattened, is terminated by two appendages in form of a forked tail. The wings are blackish; the insect is yellow in every other part. Little lengthened eggs, pointed, and of a bright red, were attached by one of their extremities to the belly of this individual.

Finally, the fourth species was a scarabeus, eight lines in length. The antennæ were in a knot like leaves, and the head broad and flattened in front; it formed a projecting plate on its summit, by two small points, and by other little advancing points on its anterior border. The corselet was broad, bordered, and shining on the half of its length, and rough as shagreen through the remainder. A shield between the sheaths; these were striped with little points hardly discernible; the body was

convex above, and almost as thick as broad. The claws were short, the thighs broad and thick; those of the posterior pair of claws in particular, were uncommonly broad, and had the form of little balls in some degree flattened. This extraordinary size of the hinder legs gave this scarabeus a very singular carriage.

Its colours are easy to describe. It is of a beautiful shining black above: a golden line marks the separation of the head and the corselet; the antennæ, the claws, and the under part of the body, are entirely reddish.

I had observed upon the sand a trace, which formed a regular design, and which at first led me to imagine that this was the impression of the folds of a serpent. Curious to know to what animal this track belonged, I followed it for about a hundred paces, and I discovered the scarabeus, which was proceeding on his way heavily and incessantly. He must have taken a long time to traverse this space. His thick and round body, his short claws of an astonishing size, in comparison of the whole mass, indicated his strength, which he seemed to employ in making little journies through the desert.

We likewise saw a very little serpent shining with the most beautiful colours. We could not come up with it before it had creeped into a hole, concealed by the low branches of a shrub.

On returning to my lodging at Rossetta, M. Forneti shewed me a letter which he had just received from the Jew drogman at Aboukir. He informed us that, at the moment of the embarkation of the little pyramid, the garrison of the castle had opposed it. M. Forneti went immediately to the Aga of Rossetta, who had also the command of Aboukir; and he had obtained, not without a great many difficulties, an order that the pyramid should be allowed to depart. That officer had been already informed of the affair before M. Forneti mentioned it to him. He pretended that the people with whom we had bargained for the purchase of the marble had not a right to sell it; and that to him alone we ought to have made application. This gave me to understand that I must lay my account with paying for it twice over. The Aga added, that he had been assured that the little pyramid was quite full of gold. In consequence of this idea he gave orders, that immediately upon the arrival of the pyramid at Rossetta, it should be brought to him first, in order that he might examine it, and see himself the gold which it contained. If he should not discover any, he consented to sell it to us.

The ignorant Aga did not confine himself to these precautions; he secretly sent for the janisary who had accompanied us to Aboukir, to learn of him, if there was not concealed gold in the piece  
of

of marble. This janisary, who had for a long time been attached to the service of the French, and who was accustomed to accompany them, knew that gold was not the object of their researches in Egypt, and did all he could to undeceive the Aga, but it was in vain; the Mameluc would not believe that a stone could have value in our eyes; and the questions which he asked on this subject were extremely diverting.

At last the pyramid arrived from Aboukir. When it was disembarked at the port of Rossetta, it attracted a crowd of the curious. Exclamations on its beauty resounded on every side. This was in their estimation a precious stone, in the real sense of that expression, and this was because it shone in the sun. They could not refrain from uttering a sentiment of respect towards the *Franks*, who had possessed the sagacity to discover a stone so worthy of admiration.

There was every reason to believe that the absurd conversation of so many stupid admirers would reach the ears of the Aga, and that they would confirm him in his ideas of treasure. M. Forneti and I agreed to leave the marble on the quay, and to assume the appearance of thinking no longer about it. However, the Aga, who had had sufficient time to convince himself that he had taken so much trouble about what was, in reality, nothing but



but a stone, was astonished at the small degree of eagerness which we displayed to carry it off. He called the janisary, in order to discover the motives of an unconcern which was only apparent. This man, who had received his cue, replied to the Aga, that after the pretensions which he had made respecting the stone, we had thought no more of it; but that, notwithstanding, we would still take it, if he would consent not to put too high a price upon it. The janisary returned with an order to have it conveyed to my lodging, with an assurance that the Aga would abate considerably in his pretended rights, and that he would settle the matter with M. Forneti. I got clear, in reality, for a very trifling present.

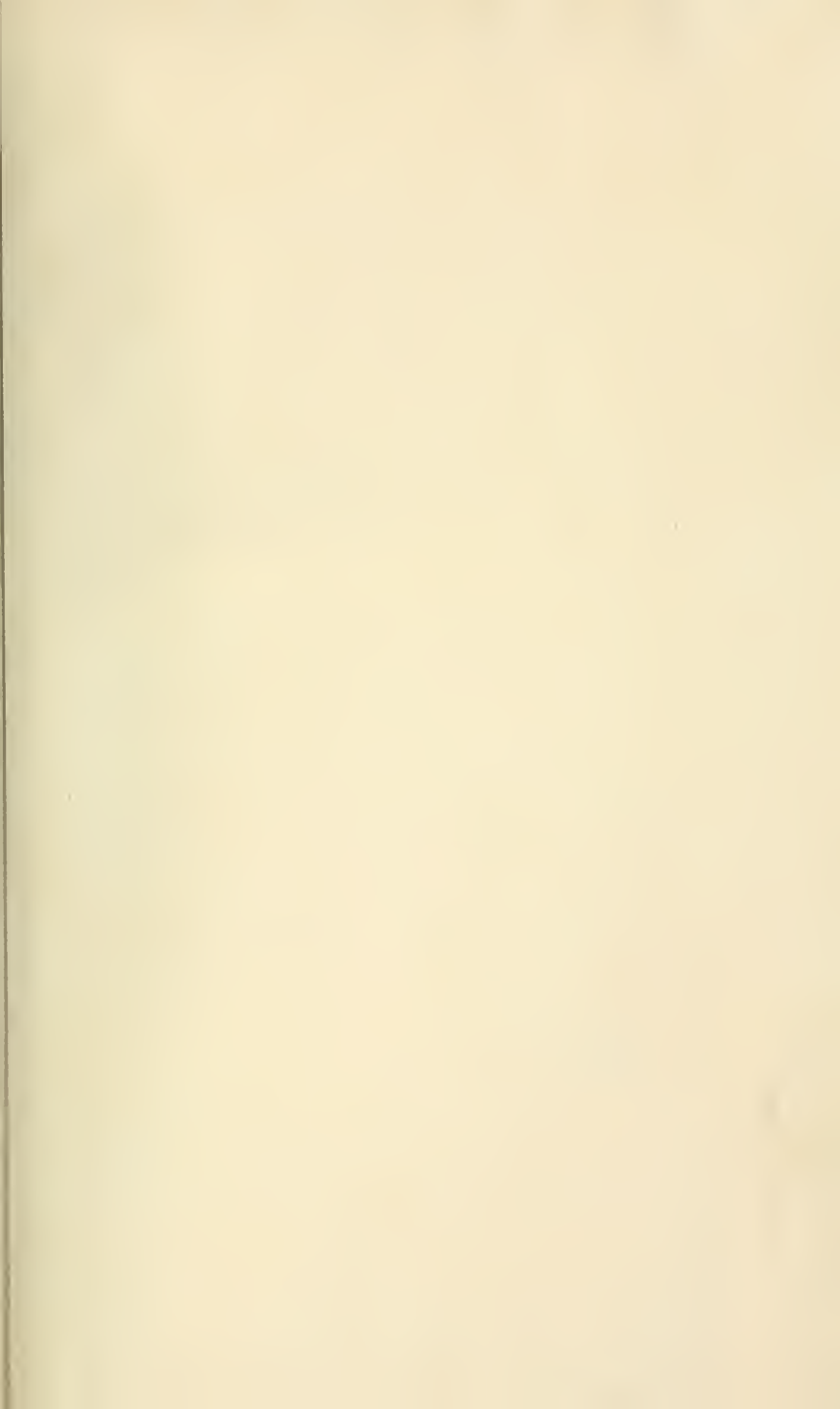
Circumstances prevented my taking the little pyramid when I departed from Egypt. I left it in a magazine of the French house at Rossetta, and committed it to the care of the consul. If any person thought that he was at liberty to carry it off, as a thing abandoned, I entreat him to recall to mind that his acquisition cost me a great many troubles, much management, and much uneasiness. I say nothing of the money. I must believe that I have the right of reclaiming it, and surely the motive of my reclamation will influence the possessor to restore this superb fragment of antiquity, as I have no other desire than to present it to the national museum,

seum, in which it is worthy of occupying a distinguished place.

Furthermore, the opinion that the researches of Europeans had no other object than the discovery of treasures buried or shut up in the monuments of antiquity, was that of all the inhabitants of Egypt; and it was become one of the greatest obstacles which the traveller had to overcome. A Turk of Rossetta had, at the door of his magazine, a very beautiful piece of granite, upon which hieroglyphic figures were engraved in perfect preservation. After having a drawing of it taken \*, I proposed to the owner that he should sell me the granite itself; I offered besides to have another stone set up in its place at my own expense. The Turk would never listen to any proposal: he alleged as the motive of his refusal, that this granite was full of gold. The man was poor, and when I demanded why he did not break his stone, in order to extract those riches for which he appeared to have so much occasion, he replied, that this would be a wicked and dangerous action, because his stone was a talisman.

\* This drawing is one of those which, at different epochas, I sent into France, and which have disappeared. I regret not having preserved them; several of them were interesting, and would have been suitable ornaments for this work.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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