

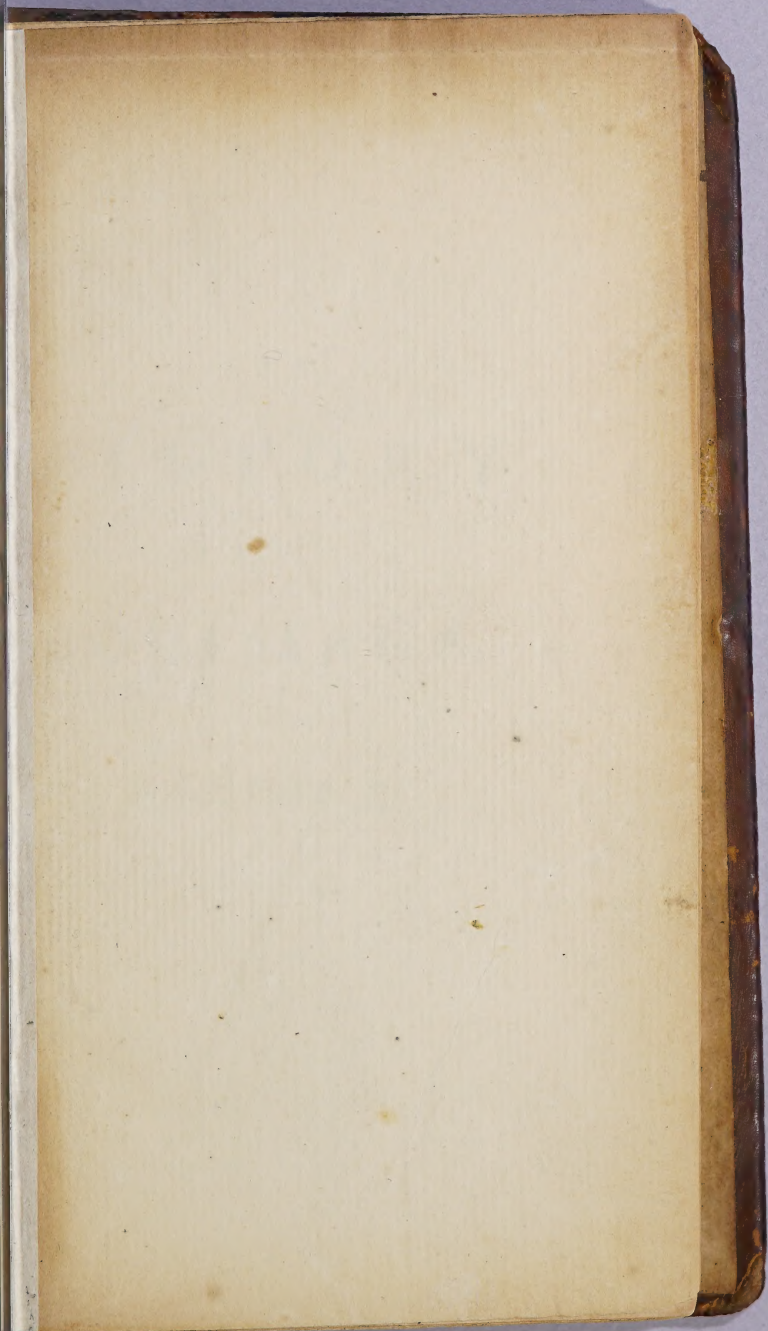
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John Carter Brown.





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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
LOUISIANA.

VOLUME II.

HISTORICAL  
THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
LOUISIANA  
VOLUME III



JOHN CARTER BROWN

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
LOUISIANA,

OR OF  
The WESTERN PARTS  
OF  
VIRGINIA and CAROLINA:

CONTAINING  
A Description of the Countries that lye  
on both Sides of the River *Missisipi*:

WITH  
An Account of the Settlements, Inhabitants,  
Soil, Climate, and Products.

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Translated from the FRENCH,  
(lately published,)

By M. LE PAGE DU PRATZ;

WITH  
Some NOTES and OBSERVATIONS  
relating to our COLONIES.

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In TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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LONDON,

Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT  
in the Strand. MDCCLXIII.

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T H E



T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F  
L O U I S I A N A.

---

B O O K III.

*The Natural History of* LOUISIANA.

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C H A P. I.

*Of Corn and Pulse.*

**H**AVING, in the former part of this work, given an account of the nature of the soil in *Louisiana*, and observed that some places were proper for one kind of plants, and some for another; and that almost the whole country was capable of producing;

ducing, and bringing to the utmost maturity, all kinds of grain, I shall now present the industrious planter with an account of the trees and plants which may be cultivated to advantage in those lands with which he is now made acquainted.

During my abode in that country, where I myself have a grant of lands, and where I lived sixteen years, I have had leisure to study this subject, and have made such progress in it, that I have sent to the *West-India Company in France* no less than three hundred medicinal plants, found in their possessions, and worthy of the attention of the public. The reader may depend upon my being faithful and exact; he must not however here expect a description of every thing that *Louisiana* produces of the vegetable kind. Its prodigious fertility makes it impracticable for me to undertake so extensive a work. I shall chiefly describe those plants and fruits that are most useful to the inhabitants, either in regard to their own subsistence or preservation, or in regard to their foreign commerce; and I shall add the manner of cultivating and managing the plants that are of greatest advantage to the colony.

*Louisiana*

*Louisiana* produces several kinds of *maiz*, namely *flour-maiz*, which is white, with a flat, and shrivelled surface, and is the softest of all the kinds; homony corn, which is round, hard, and shining; of this there are four sorts, the white, the yellow, the red, and the blue; the *maiz* of these two last colours is more common in the high lands than in the *Lower Louisiana*. We have besides small corn or small *maiz*, so called because it is smaller than the other kinds. New settlers sow this corn upon their first arrival, in order to have whereon to subsist as soon as possible; for it rises very fast, and ripens in so short a time, that from the same field they may have two crops of it in one year. Besides this, it has the advantage of being more agreeable to the taste than the large kind.

*Maiz*, which in *France* is called *Turkey Corn*, (and in *England* *Indian Corn*) is the natural product of this country; for upon our arrival we found it cultivated by the natives. It grows upon a stalk six, seven, and eight feet high; the ear is large, and about two inches diameter, containing sometimes seven hundred grains and upwards; and each stalk bears sometimes six or seven ears, according to the goodness of the ground. The black and light soil is that which

B 2

agrees



agrees best with it; but strong ground is not so favourable to it.

This corn, it is well known, is very wholesome, both for man and other animals, especially for poultry. The natives, that they may have change of dishes, dress it in various ways. The best is to make it into what is called *parched meal*, (*farine froide*). As there is nobody who does not eat of this with pleasure, even tho' not very hungry, I will give the manner of preparing it, that our provinces of *France*, which reap this grain, may draw the same advantage from it.

The corn is first parboiled in water; then drained and well dried. When it is perfectly dry, it is then roasted in a plate made for that purpose, ashes being mixed with it to hinder it from burning; and they keep continually stirring it, that it may take only the red colour which they want. When it has taken that colour, they remove the ashes, rub it well, and then put it in a mortar with the ashes of dried stalks of kidney beans, and a little water; they then beat it gently, which quickly breaks the husk, and turns the whole into meal. This meal, after being pounded, is dried in the sun, and after  
this

this last operation it may be carried any where, and will keep six months, if care be taken from time to time to expose it to the sun. When they want to eat of it, they mix in a vessel two thirds water with one third meal, and in a few minutes the mixture swells greatly in bulk, and is fit to eat. It is a very nourishing food, and is an excellent provision for travellers, and those who go to any distance to trade.

This parched meal mixed with milk and a little sugar may be served up at the best tables. When mixed with milk-chocolate it makes a very lasting nourishment. From *maiz* they make a strong and agreeable beer; and they likewise distil brandy from it.

Wheat, rye, barley, and oats grow extremely well in *Louisiana*; but I must add one precaution in regard to wheat; when it is sown by itself, as in *France*, it grows at first wonderfully; but when it is in flower, a great number of drops of red water may be observed at the bottom of the stalk within six inches of the ground, which are collected there during the night, and disappear at sun-rising. This water is of such an-acrid nature that in a short time it consumes the stalk, and the ear falls before the grain is  
 B 3                      formed.



6 THE HISTORY

formed. To prevent this misfortune, which is owing to the too great richness of the soil, the method I have taken, and which has succeeded extremely well, is to mix with the wheat you intend to sow, some rye and dry mould, in such a proportion that the mould shall be equal to the rye and wheat together. This method I remember to have seen practised in *France*; and when I asked the reason of it, the farmer told me that as the land was new, and had lately been a wood, it contained an acid that was prejudicial to the wheat; and that as the rye absorbed that acid without being hurt, it thereby preserved the other grain. I have seen barley and oats in that country three feet high.

The rice which is cultivated in that country was brought from *Carolina*. It succeeds surprizingly well, and experience has there proved, contrary to the common notion, that it does not want to have its foot always in the water. It has been sown in the flat country without being flooded, and the grain that was reaped was full grown, and of a very delicate taste. The fine relish need not surprize us; for it is so with all plants and fruits that grow without being watered, and at a distance from watry places. Two crops may be reaped from the  
the

the same plant; but the second is poor if it be not flooded. I know not whether they have attempted, since I left *Louisiana*, to sow it upon the sides of hills.

The first settlers found in the country *French* beans of various colours, particularly red and black, and they have been called beans of forty days, because they require no longer time to grow and to be fit to eat green. The *Apalachean* beans are so called because we received them from a nation of the natives of that name. They probably had them from the *English* of *Carolina*, whither they had been brought from *Guiney*. Their stalks spread upon the ground to the length of four or five feet. They are like the other beans, but much smaller, and of a brown colour, having a black ring round the eye, by which they are joined to the shell. These beans boil tender, and have a tolerable relish, but they are sweetish, and somewhat insipid.

The potatoes are roots more commonly long than thick; their form is various, and their fine skin is like that of the *Topinambous* (*Irisb potatoes*). In their substance and taste they very much resemble sweet chestnuts. They are cultivated in the following manner; the earth is

B 4. raised



3 THE HISTORY

raised in little hills or high furrows about a foot and a half broad, that by draining the moisture, the roots may have a better relish. The small potatoes being cut in little pieces with an eye in each, four or five of those pieces are planted on the head of the hills. In a short time they push out shoots, and these shoots being cut off about the middle of *August* within seven or eight inches of the ground, are planted double, cross-ways, in the crown of other hills. The roots of these last are the most esteemed, not only on account of their fine relish, but because they are easier kept during the winter. In order to preserve them during that season, they dry them in the sun as soon as they are dug up, and then lay them up in a close and dry place, covering them first with ashes, over which they lay dry mould. They boil them, or bake them, or roast them on hot coals like chestnuts; but they have the finest relish when baked or roasted. They are eat dry, or cut into small slices in milk without sugar, for they are sweet of themselves. Good sweetmeats are also made of them, and some *Frenchmen* have drawn brandy from them.

The *Cushaws* are a kind of pompion. There are two sorts of them, the one round, and the other  
other

other in the shape of a hunting horn. These last are the best, being of a more firm substance, which makes them keep much better than the others; their sweetness is not so insipid, and they have fewer seeds. They make sweetmeats of these last, and use both kinds in soup; they make fritters of them, fry them, bake them, and roast them on the coals, and in all ways of cooking they are good and palatable.

All kinds of melons grow admirably well in *Louisiana*. Those of *Spain*, of *France*, of *England*, which last are called white melons, are there infinitely finer than in the countries from whence they have their name; but the best of all are the water melons. As they are hardly known in *France*, except in *Provence*, where a few of the small kind grow, I fancy a description of them will not be disagreeable to the reader.

The stalk of this melon spreads like ours upon the ground, and extends to the length of ten feet. It is so tender, that when it is any way bruised by treading upon it the fruit dies; and if it is rubbed in the least it grows warm. The leaves are very much indented, as broad as the hand when they are spread out, and are some-



what of a sea-green colour. The fruit is either round like a pompion, or long. There are some good melons of this last kind, but the first sort are the most esteemed, and deservedly so. The weight of the largest rarely exceeds thirty pounds, but that of the smallest is always above ten pounds. Their rind is of a pale green colour, interspersed with large white spots. The substance that adheres to the rind is white, crude, and of a disagreeable tartness, and is therefore never eaten. The space within that is filled with a light and sparkling substance, that may be called for its properties a rose-coloured snow. It melts in the mouth as if it were actually snow, and leaves a relish like that of the water prepared for sick people from gooseberry jelly. This fruit cannot fail therefore of being very refreshing, and is so wholesome, that persons in all kinds of distempers may satisfy their appetite with it, without any apprehension of being the worse for it. The water-melons of *Africa* are not near so relishing as those of *Louisiana*.

The seeds of water-melons are placed like those of the *French* melons. Their shape is oval and flat, being as thick at the ends as towards the middle; their length is about six lines, and their breadth four. Some are black  
and

and others red ; but the black are the best, and it is those you ought to chuse for sowing, if you would wish to have good fruit ; which you cannot fail of, if they are not planted in strong ground where they would degenerate and become red.

All kinds of greens and roots which have been brought from *Europe* into that colony succeed better there than in *France*, provided they be planted in a soil suited to them ; for it is certainly absurd to think that onions and other bulbous plants should thrive there in a soft and watry soil, when every where else they require a dry and light earth.

## CHAP. II.

*Of the Fruit Trees of Louisiana.*

I SHALL now proceed to give an account of the fruit trees of this colony, and shall begin with the *Vine*, which is so common in *Louisiana*, that whatever way you walk, from the sea coast, for 500 leagues northwards, you cannot proceed an hundred steps without meeting with one; but unless the vine-shoots should happen to grow in an exposed place, it cannot be expected that their fruit should ever come to perfect maturity. The trees to which they twine are so high, and so thick of leaves, and the intervals of underwood are so filled with reeds, that the sun cannot warm the earth or ripen the fruit of this shrub. I will not undertake to describe all the kinds of grapes which this country produces; it is even impossible to know them all; I shall only speak of three or four.

The first fort that I shall mention does not perhaps deserve the name of a grape, altho' its wood and its leaf greatly resemble the vine. This shrub bears no bunches, and you hardly ever see upon it above two grapes together.



The grape in substance and colour is very like a violet damask plum, and its stone, which is always single, greatly resembles a nut. Tho' not very relishing, it has not however that disagreeable sharpness of the grape that grows in the neighbourhood of *New Orleans*.

On the edge of the savannahs or meadows we meet with a grape, the shoots of which resemble those of the *Burgundy* grape. They make from this a tolerable good wine, if they take care to expose it to the sun in summer, and to the cold in winter. I have made this experiment myself, and must say that I never could turn it into vinegar.

There is another kind of grape which I make no difficulty of classing with the grapes of *Corinth*, commonly called currants. It resembles them in the wood, the leaf, the tree, the size, and the sweetness. Its tartness is owing to its being prevented from ripening by the thick shade of the large trees to which it twines. If it were planted and cultivated in an open field, I make not the least doubt but it would equal the grape of *Corinth*, with which I class it.

Muscadine

Muscadine grapes, of an amber colour, of a very good kind, and very sweet, have been found upon declivities of a good exposure, even so far north as the latitude of 31 degrees. There is the greatest probability that they might make excellent wine of these, as it cannot be doubted; but the grapes might be brought to great perfection in this country, since in the moist soil of *New Orleans*, the cuttings of the grape which some of the inhabitants of that city brought from *France*, have succeeded extremely well and afforded good wine.

As a proof of the fertility of *Louisiana*, I cannot forbear mentioning the following fact; an inhabitant of *New Orleans* having planted in his garden a few twigs of this Muscadine vine, with the view of making an arbour of them, one of his sons with another negro boy entered the garden in the month of *June*, when the grapes are ripe, and broke off all the bunches they could find. The father, after severely chiding the two boys, pruned the twigs that had been broken and bruised; and as several months of summer still remained, the vine pushed out new shoots, and new bunches, which ripened and were as good as the former.

The

The *Persemmon*, which the *French* of the colony call *Placminier*, very much resembles our medlar tree in its leaf and wood: Its flower, which is about an inch and a half broad, is white, and is composed of five petals; its fruit is about the size of a large hen's egg; it is shaped like our medlar, but its substance is sweeter, and more delicate. This fruit is astringent; when it is quite ripe the natives make bread of it, which they keep from year to year; and the bread has this remarkable property that it will stop the most violent looseness or dysentery; therefore it ought to be used with caution, and only after physic. The natives, in order to make this bread, squeeze the fruit over fine sieves to separate the pulp from the skin and the kernels. Of this pulp, which is like paste or thick pap, they make cakes about a foot and a half long, a foot broad, and a finger's breadth in thickness: These they dry in an oven; upon gridirons, or else in the sun; which last method of drying gives a greater relish to the bread. This is one of their articles of traffic with the *French*.

Their plum-trees are of two sorts: The best is that which bears violet-coloured plums, quite like ours, which are not disagreeable, and  
which



which certainly would be good if they did not grow in the middle of the woods. The other kind bears plums of the colour of an unripe cherry, and these are so tart that no body can eat them; but I am of opinion they might be preserved like gooseberries, especially if pains were taken to cultivate them in open grounds. The small cherries, called the *Indian* cherry, are frequent in this country. Their wood is very beautiful, and their leaves differ in nothing from those of the cherry tree.

The *Papaws* are only to be found far up in *Higher Louisiana*. These trees, it would seem, do not love heat; they do not grow so tall as the plum trees; their wood is very hard and flexible; for the lower branches are sometimes so loaded with fruit that they hang perpendicularly downwards; and if you unload them of their fruit in the evening, you will find them next morning in their natural erect position. The fruit resembles a middle sized cucumber; the pulp is very agreeable and very wholesome; but the rind, which is easily stripped off, leaves on the fingers so sharp an acid, that if you touch your eye with them before you wash them, it will be immediately inflamed, and itch most insupportably for twenty-four hours after.

The

The natives had doubtless got the peach trees and fig trees from the *English* colony of *Carolina*, before the *French* established themselves in *Louisiana*. The peaches are of the kind which we call *alberges*; are of the size of the fist, adhere to the stone, and contain so much water that they make a kind of wine of it. The figs are either blue or white; are large and well enough tasted. Our colonists plant the peach stones about the end of *February*, and suffer the trees to grow exposed to all weathers. In the third year they will gather from one tree at least two hundred peaches, and double that number for six or seven years more, when the tree dies irrecoverably. As new trees are so easily produced, the loss of the old ones is not in the least regretted.

The orange trees and citron trees that were brought from *Cape François* have succeeded extremely well; however I have seen so severe a winter that those kinds of trees were entirely frozen to the very trunk. In that case they cut the trees down to the ground, and the following summer they produced shoots that were better than the former. If these trees have succeeded in the flat and moist soil of *New Orleans*, what may we not expect when they are planted  
in

in better soil, and upon declivities of a good exposure. The oranges and citrons are as good as those of other countries; but the rind of the orange in particular is very thick, which makes it the better for a sweet-meat.

There is plenty of wild apples in *Louisiana*, like those in *Europe*; and the inhabitants have got many kind of fruit trees from *France*, such as apples, pears, plums, cherries, &c. which in the low grounds run more into wood than fruit; the few I had at the *Natches*, proved that high ground is much more suited to them than the low.

The blue *whortle berry* is a shrub somewhat taller than our largest gooseberry bushes, which are left to grow as they please. Its berries are of the shape of a gooseberry, grow single, and are of a blue colour: they taste like a sweetish gooseberry, and when infused in brandy it makes a good dram. They attribute several virtues to it, which, as I never experienced, I cannot answer for. It loves a poor gravelly soil.

*Louisiana* produces no black mulberries: but from the sea to the *Arkansas*, which is an extent



tent of navigation upon the river of 200 leagues, we meet very frequently with three kinds of mulberries; one a bright red, another perfectly white, and a third white and sweetish. The first of these kinds is very common, but the two last are more rare. Of the red mulberries they make excellent vinegar, which keeps a long time, provided they take care in the making of it to keep it in the shade in a vessel well stopped, contrary to the practice in *France*. They make vinegar also of bramble berries, but this is not so good as the former. I do not doubt but the colonists at present apply themselves seriously to the cultivation of mulberries, to feed silk-worms, especially as the countries adjoining to *France*, and which supplied us with silk, have now made the exportation of it difficult.

The olive-trees in this colony are surpris-  
ingly beautiful. The trunk is sometimes a foot  
and an half diameter, and thirty feet high be-  
fore it spreads out into branches. The *Pro-  
vençals* settled in the colony affirm, that its  
olives would afford as good an oil as those of  
their country. Some of the olives that were  
prepared to be eat green were as good as those  
of *Provence*. I have reason to think, that if  
they

they were planted on the coasts, the olives would have a finer relish.

They have great numbers and a variety of kinds of walnut-trees in this country. There is a very large kind, the wood of which is almost as black as ebony, but very porous. The fruit, with the outer shell, is of the size of a large hen's egg: the shell has no cleft, is very rough, and so hard as to require a hammer to break it. Tho' the fruit be very relishing, yet it is covered with such a thick film, that few can bestow the pains of separating the one from the other. The natives make bread of it, by throwing the fruit into water, and rubbing it till the film and oil be separated from it. If those trees were engrafted with the French walnut, their fruit would probably be improved.

Other walnut-trees have a very white and flexible wood. Of this wood the natives make their crooked spades for houghing their fields. The nut is smaller than ours, and the shell more tender; but the fruit is so bitter that none but perroquets can put up with it.

The *Hicori* bears a very small kind of nut, which at first sight one would take for filberts, as they have the same shape and colour, and their shell is as tender, but within they are formed like walnuts. They have such an excellent relish, that the French make fried cakes of them as good as those of almonds.

*Louisiana* produces but a few filberts, as the filbert requires a poor gravelly soil, which is not to be met with in this province, except in the neighbourhood of the sea, especially near the river *Mobile*.

The large chefnuts are not to be met with but at the distance of 100 leagues from the sea, and far from rivers in the heart of the woods, between the country of the *Chaetaws* and that of the *Chicasaws*. The common chefnuts succeed best upon high declivities, and their fruit is like the chefnuts that grow in our woods. There is another kind of chefnuts, which are called the *acorn* chefnuts, as they are shaped like an acorn, and grow in such a cup. But they have the colour and taste of a chefnut; and I have often thought, that those were the acorns which the first of men were said to have lived upon.

The



The *Sweet-Gum*, or *Liquid-Ambar* (*Copalm*) is not only extremely common, but it affords a balm, the virtues of which are infinite. Its bark is black and hard, and its wood so tender and supple, that when the tree is felled you may draw from the middle of it rods of five or six feet in length. It cannot be employed in building or furniture, as it warps continually; nor is it fit for burning on account of its strong smell; but a little of it in a fire yields an agreeable perfume. Its leaf is indented with five points like a star.

I shall not undertake to particularize all the virtues of this *Sweet-Gum* or *Liquid-Ambar*, not having learned all of them from the natives of the country, who would be no less surpris'd to find that we us'd it only as a varnish, than they were to see our surgeons bleed their patients. This balm, according to them, is an excellent febrifuge; they take ten or a dozen drops of it in gruel fasting, and before their meals; and if they should take a little more, they have no reason to apprehend any danger. The physicians among the natives purge their patients before they give it them. It cures wounds in two days without any bad consequences: it is equally soveraign for all kinds of

2      ulcers,

ulcers, after having applied to them for some days a plaster of bruised ground-ivy. It cures consumptions, opens obstructions; it affords relief in the cholic and all internal diseases; it comforts the heart; in short, it contains so many virtues, that they are every day discovering some new property that it has.

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C H A P. III.

*Of Forest Trees.*

**H**AVING described the most remarkable of their fruit trees, I shall now proceed to give an account of their forest trees. White and red cedars are very common upon the coast. The incorruptibility of the wood, and many other excellent properties which are well known, induced the first *French* settlers to build their houses of it; which were but very low.

Next to the cedar the cypress tree is the most valuable wood. Some reckon it incorruptible; and if it be not, it is at least a great many years in rotting. The tree that was found twenty feet deep in the earth near *New Orleans* was a cypress; and was uncorrupted.

rupted. Now if the lands of *Lower Louisiana* are augmented two leagues every century, this tree must have been buried at least twelve centuries. The cypress grows very straight and tall, with a proportionable thickness. They commonly make their *Pettyaugres* of a single trunk of this tree, which will carry three or four thousand weight, and sometimes more. Of one of those trees a carpenter offered to make two pettyaugres, one of which carried sixteen ton, and the other fourteen. There is a cypress at *Baton Rouge*, a *French* settlement twenty-six leagues above *New Orleans*, which measures twelve yards round, and is of a prodigious height. The cypress has few branches, and its leaf is long and narrow. The trunk close by the ground sometimes sends off two or three stems, which enter the earth obliquely, and serve for buttresses to the tree. Its wood is of a beautiful colour, somewhat reddish; it is soft, light, and smooth; its grain is straight, and its pores very close. It is easily split by wedges, and tho' used green it never warps. It renews itself in a very extraordinary manner: a short time after it is cut down, a shoot is observed to grow from one of its roots exactly in the form of a sugar-loaf, and this sometimes rises ten feet high before any leaf



leaf appears : the branches at length arise from the head of this conical shoot\*.

The *Cypresses* were formerly very common in *Louisiana* ; but they have wasted them so imprudently, that they are now somewhat rare. They felled them for the sake of their bark, with which they covered their houses, and they sawed the wood into planks which they exported to different places. The price of the wood now is three times as much as it was formerly.

The *Pine-tree*, which loves a barren soil, is to be found in great abundance on the sea-coasts, where it grows very high and very beautiful. The islands upon the coast, which are formed wholly of shining sand, bear no other trees, and I am persuaded that as fine masts might be made of them as of the firs of *Sweden*.

All the south parts of *Louisiana* abound with the *Wild Laurel*, which grows in the woods without any cultivation : the same may be said of the stone laurel ; but if a person is not upon his guard he may take for the laurel a tree na-

\* This is a mistake, according to *Charlevoix*.

tural to the country, which would communicate its bad smell to every thing it is applied to. Among the laurels the preference ought to be given to the *tulip-laurel* (*magnolia*) which is not known in *Europe*. This tree is of the height and bulk of one of our common walnut trees. Its head is naturally very round, and so thick of leaves that neither the sun nor rain can penetrate it. Its leaves are full four inches long, near three inches broad, and very thick, of a beautiful sea-green on the upper-side, and resembling white velvet on the under-side: its bark is smooth and of a grey colour; its wood is white, soft, and flexible, and the grain interwoven. It owes its name to the form of its great white flowers, which are at least two inches broad. These appearing in the spring amidst the glossy verdure of the leaves, have a most beautiful effect. As the top is naturally round, and the leaves are ever-green, avenues of this tree would doubtless be worthy of a royal garden. After it has shed its leaves, its fruit appears in the form of a pine apple, and upon the first approach of the cold its grain turns into a lively red. Its kernel is very bitter, and 'tis said to be a specific against fevers.

The

The *Sassafras*, the name of which is familiar to botanists on account of its medicinal qualities, is a large and tall tree. Its bark is thick, and cracked here and there; its wood is somewhat of the colour of cinamon, and has an agreeable smell. It will not burn in the fire without the mixture of other wood, and even in the fire, if it should be separated from the flaming wood, it is immediately extinguished, as if it were dipped in water.

The *Maple* grows upon declivities in cold climates, and is much more plentiful in the northern than southern parts of the colony. By boring it they draw from it a sweet syrup which I have drunk of, and which they alledge is an excellent stomachic.

The *Myrtle Wax-tree* is one of the greatest blessings with which nature has enriched *Louisiana*, as in this country the bees lodge their honey in the earth to save it from the ravages of the bears, who are very fond of it, and don't value their stings. One would be apt to take it, at first sight, both from its bark and its height, for that kind of laurel used in the kitchens. It rises in several stems from the root; its leaf is like that of the laurel, but not so



thick nor of such a lively green. It bears its fruit in bunches like a nosegay, rising from the same place in various stalks about two inches long: at the end of each of those stalks is a little pea, containing a kernel in a nut, which last is wholly covered with wax. The fruit, which is very plentiful, is easily gathered, as the shrub is very flexible. The tree thrives as well in the shade of other trees as in the open air, in watry places and cold countries, as well as in dry grounds and hot climates; for I have been told that some of them have been found in *Canada*, a country as cold as *Denmark*.

This tree yields two kinds of wax, one a whitish yellow, and the other green. It was a long time before they learned to separate them, and they prepared the wax at first in the following manner. They threw the grains and the stalks into a large kettle of boiling water, and when the wax was detached from them, they scummed off the grains. When the water cooled the wax floated in a cake at the top, and being cut small, bleached in a shorter time than bees wax. They now prepare it in this manner; they throw boiling water upon the stalks and grains till they are entirely floated, and when they have stood thus a few minutes, they pour  
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off the water, which carries the finest wax with it. This wax when cold is of a pale yellow colour, and may be bleached in six or seven days. Having separated the best wax, they pour the water again upon the stalks and grains, and boil all together till they think they have separated all the wax. Both kinds are exported to our sugar islands, where the first is sold for 100 sols the pound, and the second for 40.

This wax is so brittle and dry that if it falls it breaks into several pieces; on this account however it lasts longer than that of *France*, and is preferred to it in our sugar islands, where the latter is softened by the great heats, and consumes like tallow. I would advise those who prepare this wax to separate the grain from the short stalk before they boil it, as the stalk is greener than the grain, and seems to part easily with its colour. The water which serves to melt and separate the wax is far from being useless. The fruit communicates to it such an astringent virtue, as to harden the tallow that is melted in it to such a degree, that the candles made of that tallow are as firm as the wax candles of *France*. This astringent quality likewise renders it an admirable specific against a dysentery or looseness. From what I have

said of the myrtle wax tree, it may well be believed that the *French* of *Louisiana* cultivate it carefully, and make plantations of it.

The *Cotton-tree* (a *poplar*) is a large tree which no wise deserves the name it bears, unless for some beards that it throws out. Its fruit which contains the grain is about the size of a walnut, and of no use; its wood is yellow, smooth, somewhat hard, of a fine grain, and very proper for cabinet work. The bark of its root is a sovereign remedy for cuts, and so red that it may even serve to dye that colour.

The *Acacia* (*Locust*) is the same in *Louisiana* as in *France*, much more common, and less streight. The natives call it by a name that signifies *hard wood*, and they make their bows of it because it is very stiff. They look upon it as an incorruptible wood, which induced the *French* settlers to build their houses of it. The posts fixed in the earth must be entirely stripped of their bark, for notwithstanding their hardness, if the least bark be left upon them they will take root.

The *Helm-oak* grows to a surprising bulk and height in this country; I have seen of them



them a foot and a half diameter, and about 30 feet from the ground to the lowest branches.

The *Mangrove* is very common all over *America*. It grows in *Louisiana* near the sea, even to the bounds of low-water mark. It is more prejudicial than useful, inasmuch as it occupies a great deal of good land, prevents sailors from landing, and affords a shelter to the fish from the fishermen.

*Oak-trees* abound in *Louisiana*; there are some red, some white, and some ever-green. A ship-builder of *St. Maloes* assured me that the red is as good as the ever-green upon which we set so high a value in *France*. The ever-green oak is most common toward the sea-coasts, and near the banks of rivers, consequently may be transported with great ease, and become a great resource for the navy of *France* \*. I forgot to mention a fourth kind of oak, namely

\* Eleven leagues above the mouth of the Mississippi, on the west side, there is great plenty of *ever-green oaks*, the wood of which is very proper for the timbers of ships, as it does not rot in water. *Dumont*, I. & 50.

Accordingly the best ships built in *America* are well known to be those that have their timbers of ever-green oak, and their plank of cedar, of both which there are great plenty on all the coasts of *Louisiana*.

the black oak, so called from the colour of its bark. Its wood is very hard, and of a deep red. It grows upon the declivities of hills and in the *Savannahs*. Happening after a shower of rain to examine one of these which I cut down, I observed some water to come from it as red as blood, which made me think that it might be used for dying.

The *Asb* is very common in this country; but more and better upon the sea-coasts than in the inland parts. As it is easy to be had, and is harder than the elm, the wheel-wrights make use of it for wheels, which it is needless to ring with iron in a country where there are neither stones nor gravel.

The *Elm*, *Beech*, *Lime*, *Hornbeam*, are exactly the same in *Louisiana* as in *France*; the last of these trees is very common here. The bark of the *Lime tree* of this country is equally proper for the making of ropes, as the bark of the common *Lime*; but its leaf is twice as large, and shaped like an oblong Trefoil leaf with the point cut off.

The white woods are the *Aspen*, *Willow*, *Alder* and *Liart*. This last grows very large, its  
wood

wood is white and light, and its fibres are interwoven; it is very flexible and is easily cut, on which account they make their large *Pettyaugres* of it.

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#### CHAP. IV.

##### *Of Scrubs and Excrescences.*

**T**HE *Ayac* or *Stinking wood*, is usually a small tree, seldom exceeding the thickness of a man's leg; its leaf is of a yellowish green, glossy, and of an oval form, being about three inches in length. The wood is yellow, and yields a water of the same colour, when it is cut in the sap: but both the wood and the water that comes from it have a disagreeable smell. The natives use the wood for dying; they cut it into small bits, pound them, and then boil them in water. Having strained this water, they dip the feathers and hair into it, which it is their custom to dye first yellow and then red. When they intend to use it for the yellow dye, they take care to cut the wood in the winter, but if they want only a slight colour they never mind the season of cutting it.



The *Machonchi*, or *Vinegar tree*, is a shrub with leaves, somewhat resembling those of the ash; but the foot-stalk from which the leaves hang is much longer. When the leaves are dry the natives mix them with their tobacco to weaken it a little, for they don't love strong tobacco for smoking. The wood is of an astringent nature, and if put into vinegar makes it stronger.

The *Cassine*, or *Yapon*, is a shrub which never grows higher than 15 feet; its bark is very smooth, and the wood flexible. Its leaf is very much indented, and when used as tea is reckoned good for the stomach. The natives make an intoxicating liquor from it, by boiling it in water till great part of the liquor evaporate.

The *Toothach-tree* does not grow higher than 10 or 12 feet. The trunk, which is not very large, is wholly covered over with short thick prickles, which are easily rubbed off. The pith of this shrub is almost as large as that of the elder, and the form of the leaf is almost the same in both. It has two barks, the outer almost black, and the inner white, with somewhat of a pale reddish hue. This inner bark

bark has the property of curing the toothach. The patient rolls it up to the size of a bean, puts it upon the aching tooth, and chews it till the pain ceases. Sailors and other such people powder it, and use it as pepper.

The *Passion thorn* does not rise above the height of a shrub; but its trunk is rather thick for its height. This shrub is in great esteem among the *Natches*; but I never could learn for what reason. Its leaf resembles that of the black thorn; and its wood while it is green is not very hard. Its prickles are at least two inches long, and are very hard and piercing; within half an inch of their root two other small prickles grow out from them so as to form a cross. The whole trunk is covered with these prickles, so that you must be very wary how you approach it, or cut it.

The *Elder tree* is exactly like that of *France*, only that its leaf is a little more indented. The juice of its leaves mixed with hog's lard is a specific against the hæmorrhoids.

The *Palmetto* has its leaves in the form of an open fan, scolloped at the end of each of its folds. Its bark is more rough and knotty than

that of the palm tree. Altho' it is less than that of the *East Indies*, it may however serve to the same purposes. Its wood is not harder than that of a cabbage, and its trunk is so soft that the least wind overturns it, so that I never saw any but what were lying along on the ground. It is very common in *Lower Louisiana*, where there are no wild oxen; for those animals who love it dearly, and are greatly fattened by it, devour it wherever they can find it. The *Spanish* women make hats of its leaves that do not weigh an ounce, riding hoods, and other curious works.

The *Birch tree* is the same with that of <sup>f</sup>*France*. In the north they make canoes of its bark large enough to hold eight persons. When the sap rises they strip off the bark from the tree in one piece with wedges, after which they sew up the two ends of it to serve for stem and stern, and anoint the whole with gum.

Make not the least doubt but that there are great numbers of other trees in the forests of *Louisiana* that deserve to be particularly described; but I know of none, nor have I heard of any, but what I have already spoken of. For our travellers, from whom alone we can get any

any intelligence of those things, are more intent upon discovering game which they stand in need of for their subsistence, than in observing the productions of nature in the vegetable kingdom. To what I have said of trees, I shall only add, from my own knowledge, an account of two singular excrescences.

The first is a kind of *Agaric* or *Mushroom*, which grows from the root of the walnut-tree, especially when it is felled. The natives, who are very careful in the choice of their food, gather it with great attention, boil it in water, and eat it with their gruel. I had the curiosity to taste of it, and found it very delicate, but rather insipid, which might easily be corrected with a little seasoning.

The other excrescence is commonly found upon trees near the banks of rivers and lakes. It is called *Spanish beard*, which name was given it by the natives, who, when the *Spaniards* first appeared in their country about 240 years ago, were greatly surpris'd at their mustachios and beards. This excrescence appears like a bunch of hair hanging from the large branches of trees, and might at first be easily mistaken for an old perruque, especially when



it is dancing with the wind, As the first settlers of *Louisiana* used only mud walls for their houses, they commonly mixed it with the mud for strengthening the building. When gathered it is of a grey colour, but when it is dry its bark falls off, and discovers black filaments as long and as strong as the hairs of a horse's tail. I dressed some of it for stuffing a mattrafs, by first laying it up in a heap to make it part with the bark, and afterwards beating it to take off some small branches that resemble so many little hooks. It is affirmed by some to be incorruptible: I myself have seen of it under old rotten trees that was perfectly fresh and strong.

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C H A P. V.

*Of Creeping Plants.*

THE great fertility of *Louisiana* renders the creeping plants extremely common, which, exclusive of the Ivy, are all different from those which we have in *France*. I shall only mention the most remarkable.

The *Bearded-creeper* is so called from having its whole stalk covered with a beard about  
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an inch long, hooked at the end, and somewhat thicker than a horse's hair. There is no tree which it loves to cling to so much as to the *Sweet Gum*; and so great is its sympathy, if I may be allowed the expression, for that tree, that if it grow between it and any other tree, it turns solely towards the *Sweet Gum*, altho' it should be at the greatest distance from it. This is likewise the tree upon which it thrives best. It has the same virtue with its balm of being a febrifuge, and this I affirm after a great number of proofs. The physicians among the natives use this simple in the following manner. They take a piece of it, above the length of the finger, which they split into as many threads as possible; these they boil in a quart of water, till one third of the decoction evaporate, and the remainder is strained clear. They then purge the patient, and the next day, upon the approach of the fit, they give a third of the decoction to drink. If the patient be not cured with the first dose, he is again purged and drinks another third, which seldom fails of having the wished-for effect. This medicine is indeed very bitter, but it strengthens the stomach; a singular advantage it has over the *Jesuits bark*, which is accused of having a contrary effect.

There

There is another *Creeper* very like Salsaparilla, only that it bears its leaves by threes. It bears a fruit smooth on one side like a filbert, and on the other as rough as the little shells which serve for money on the *Guiney* coast. I shall not speak of its properties; they are but too well known by the women of *Louisiana*, especially the girls, who very often have recourse to it.

Another *Creeper* is called by the native physicians *the remedy against poisoned arrows*. It is large and very beautiful; its leaves are pretty long, and the pods it bears are narrow, about an inch broad, and eight inches long.

The Salsaparilla grows naturally in *Louisiana*, and it is not inferior in its qualities to that of *Mexico*. It is so well known that 'tis needless to enlarge upon it.

The *Esquine* partly resembles a creeper and partly a bramble. It is furnished with hard spikes like prickles, and its oblong leaves are like those of the common *Creeper* (*Liane*); its stalk is straight, long, shining, and hard, and it runs up along the reeds: its root is spongy, and sometimes as large as one's head, but more  
long

long than round. Besides the fudorific virtue which the *Esquine* possesses in common with the Salfaparilla, it has the property of making the hair grow, and the women among the natives use it succesfully with this view. They cut the root into small bits, boil them in water, and wash their heads with the decoction. I have seen several of them whose hair came down below their knees, and one particularly whose hair came lower than the ankle bones.

*Hops* grow naturally in the gullies in the high lands.

*Maiden-hair* grows in *Louisiana* more beautiful, at least as good as that of *Canada*, which is in so great repute. It grows in gullies upon the sides of hills, in places that are absolutely impenetrable to the most ardent rays of the sun. It seldom rises above a foot, and it bears a thick shaggy head. The native physicians know more of its virtues than we do in *France*.

The *Canes* or *Reeds* which I have mentioned so often may be divided into two kinds. One kind grows in moist places to the height of eighteen feet, and the thickness of the wrist. The natives make matts, sieves, small boxes, and other



other works of it. Those that grow in dry places are neither so high nor so thick, but are so hard, that before the arrival of the *French*, the natives used splits of those canes to cut their victuals with. After a certain number of years, the large canes bear a great abundance of grain, which is somewhat like oats, but about three times as large. The natives carefully gather these grains and make bread or gruel of them. This flour swells as much as that of wheat. When the reeds have yielded the grain they die, and none appear for a long time after in the same place, especially if fire has been set to the old ones.

The *Flat-Root* receives its name from the form of its root, which is thin, flat, pretty often indented, and sometimes even pierced thro': it is a line or sometimes two lines in thickness, and its breadth is commonly a foot and a half. From this large root hang several other small straight roots, which draw the nourishment from the earth. This plant, which grows in meadows that are not very rich, sends up from the same root several straight stalks about eighteen inches high, which are as hard as wood, and on the top of the stalks it bears small purplish flowers, in their figure greatly resembling those of heath;

heath; its seed is contained in a deep cup closed at the head, and in a manner crowned. Its leaves are about an inch broad, and about two long, without any indenting, of a dark green, inclining to a brown. It is so strong a sudorific, that the natives never use any other for promoting sweating, altho' they are perfectly acquainted with *sassafras*, *salsaparilla*, the *esquine* and others.

The *Rattle-snake-herb* has a bulbous root, like that of the tuberose, but twice as large. The leaves of both have the same shape and the same colour, and on the under side have some flame-coloured spots; but those of the rattle-snake plant are twice as large as the others, end in a very firm point, and are armed with very hard prickles on both sides. Its stalk grows to the height of about three feet, and from the head rise five or six sprigs in different directions, each of which bears a purple flower an inch broad, with five leaves in the form of a cup. After these leaves are shed there remains a head about the size of a small nut, but shaped like the head of a poppy. This head is separated into four divisions, each of which contains four black seeds, equally thick throughout, and about the size of large lentil. When the head

is

is ripe, it will, when shaken, give the same sound as the tail of a rattle-snake, which seems to indicate the property of the plant; for it is the specific remedy against the bite of that dangerous reptile. The person who has been bit ought immediately to take a root, bite off part of it, chew it for some time, and apply it to the wound. In five or six hours it will extract the whole poison, and no bad consequences need be apprehended.

*Ground-ivy* is said by the natives to possess many more virtues than are known to our botanists. It is said to ease women in labour when drank in a decoction; to cure ulcers, if bruised and laid upon the ulcered part; to be a sovereign remedy for the head-ach; a considerable quantity of its leaves bruised, and laid as a cataplasm upon the head, quickly removes the pain. As this is an inconvenient application to a person that wears his hair, I thought of taking the salts of the plant, and I gave some of them in vulnerary water to a friend of mine who was often attacked with the head-ach, advising him likewise to draw up some drops by the nose: he seldom practised this but he was relieved a few moments after.

The *Achechy* is only to be found in the shade of a wood, and never grows higher than six or seven inches. It has a small stalk, and its leaves are not above three lines long. Its root consists of a great many sprigs a line in diameter, full of red juice like chickens blood. Having transplanted this plant from an overshadowed place into my garden, I expected to see it greatly improved; but it was not above an inch taller, and its head was only a little bushier than usual. It is with the juice of this plant that the natives dye their red colour. Having first dyed their feathers or hair yellow or a beautiful citron colour with the *ayac wood*, they boil the roots of the *achechy* in water; then squeeze them with all their force, and the expressed liquor serves for the red dye. That which was naturally white before it was dyed yellow, takes a beautiful scarlet; that which was brown, such as buffalos hair, which is of a chefnut colour, becomes a reddish brown.

I shall not enlarge upon the strawberries, which are of an excellent flavour, and so plentiful, that from the beginning of *April* the *favannahs* or meadows appear quite red with them. I shall also only just mention the tobacco, which I reserve for the article of agriculture;

but



but I ought not to omit to take notice, that hemp grows naturally on the lands adjoining to the lakes on the west of the *Mississippi*. The stalks are as thick as one's finger, and about six feet long. They are quite like ours both in the wood, the leaf, and the rind. The flax which was sown in this country rose three feet high.

I cannot affirm from my own knowledge that the soil in this province produces either white mushrooms or truffles. But morels in their season are to be found in the greatest abundance, and round mushrooms in the autumn.

When I consider the mild temperature of this climate, I am persuaded that all our flowers would succeed extremely well in it. The country has flowers peculiar to itself, and in such abundance, that from the month of *May* till the end of summer, you can hardly see the grass in the meadows; and of such various hues that one is at a loss which to admire most and declare to be the most beautiful. The number and diversity of those flowers quite enchant the sight. I will not however attempt to give a particular account of them, as I am not qualified on this head to satisfy the desires of the curious, from my having neglected to consider the various

rious flowers themselves. I have seen single and small roses without any smell; and another kind of rose with four white petals, which in its smell, chives, and pointal, differed in nothing from our damask roses. But of all the flowers of this country that which struck me most, as it is both very common and lasts a long time, is the flower called *Lion's Mouth*. The flowers which decorate its stalk, its shady colours, its blowing for more than three months, justly entitle it to the preference before all other flowers. It forms of itself an agreeable nose-gay; and in my opinion it deserves to be ranked with the finest flowers, and to be cultivated with attention in the gardens of our kings.

As to cotton and indigo I defer speaking of them till I come to the chapter of agriculture.

## CHAP. VI.

*Of the Quadrupedes.*

**B**EFORE I speak of the animals which the first settlers found in *Louisiana*, it is proper to observe, that all those which were brought hither from *France*, or from *New Spain* and *Carolina*, such as horses, oxen, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, and others, have multiplied and thriven perfectly well. However it ought to be remarked, that in *Lower Louisiana*, where the ground is moist and much covered with wood, they can neither be so good nor so beautiful as in *Higher Louisiana*, where the soil is dry, where there are most extensive meadows, and where the sun warms the earth to a much greater degree.

The *Buffalo* is about the size of one of our largest oxen, but he appears rather bigger, on account of his long curled wool, which makes him appear to the eye much larger than he really is. This wool is very fine and very thick, and is of a dark chefnut colour, as are likewise his bristly hairs, which are also curled, and so long, that the bush between his horns often falls  
over

over his eyes and hinders him from seeing before him; but his sense of hearing and smelling is so exquisite as in some measure to supply the want of the other. A pretty large bunch rises on his shoulders in the place where they join to the neck. His horns are thick, short, and black; and his hoof is also black. The cows of this species have small udders like those of a mare.

This buffalo is the chief food of the natives, and of the *French* also for a long time past; the best piece is the bunch on the shoulders, the taste of which is extremely delicate. They hunt this animal in the winter; for which purpose they leave *Lower Louisiana*, and the river *Mississippi*, as he cannot penetrate thither on account of the thickness of the woods; and besides loves to feed on long grass, which is only to be found in the meadows of the high lands. In order to get near enough to fire upon him, they go against the wind, and they take aim at the hollow of the shoulder, that they may bring him to the ground at once, for if he is only slightly wounded, he runs against his enemy. The natives when hunting seldom chuse to kill any but the cows, having experienced that the flesh of the male smells rank; but this they

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might easily prevent, if they but cut off the testicles from the beast as soon as he is dead, as they do from stags and wild boars. By killing the males there is less hazard of diminishing the species than by killing the females; and besides, the males have much more tallow, and their skins are the largest and best,

These skins are an object of no small consideration. The natives dress them with their wool on, to such great perfection, as to render them more pliable than our buff. They dye them different colours, and cloath themselves therewith. To the *French* they supply the place of the best blankets, being at the same time very warm and very light.

The stag is entirely the same with that of *France*, only he is a little larger. They are only to be found in *Upper Louisiana*, where the woods are much thinner than in *Lower Louisiana*, and the chefnuts which the stag greatly loves are very common.

The deer is very frequent in this province, notwithstanding the great numbers of them that are killed by the natives. According to the hunters, he partly resembles the stag, the rain-deer,

deer, and the roe-buck. As to myself I can only say what I have seen, that he is about four feet high, has large horns bending forwards, and decorated with several antlers, the ends of which are formed somewhat like a rose; that his flesh is dry like that of ours, and when he is fat tastes like mutton. They feed in herds, and are not in the least of a fierce nature. They are excessively capricious, hardly remain a moment in one place, but are coming and going continually. The natives dress the skin extremely well, like buff, and afterwards paint it. Those skins that are brought to *France* are often called does skins.

The natives hunt the deer sometimes in companies, and sometimes alone. The hunter who goes out alone furnishes himself with the dried head of a deer, with part of the skin of the neck fastened to it, and this skin is stretched out with several hoops made of split cane, which are kept in their places by other splits placed along the inside of the skin, so that the hands and arms may be easily put within the neck. Being thus provided, he goes in quest of the deer, and takes all necessary precautions not to be discovered by that animal: When he sees one, he approaches it as gently

as possible, hiding himself behind a bush which he carries in his hand, till he be within shot of it. But if, before he can come near enough, the buck shakes its head, which is a sign that it is going to make some capers and run away, the hunter immediately counterfeits the cries of those animals when they call each other, in which case the buck frequently comes up towards him. He then shews the head which he holds in his hand, and by lowering and lifting his arm by turns, it makes the appearance of a buck feeding, and lifting his head from time to time to gaze. The hunter still keeps himself behind the bush, till the buck comes near enough to him, and the moment he turns his side he fires at the hollow of his shoulder, and lays him dead.

When the natives want to make the dance of the deer; or if they want to exercise themselves merrily; or if it should happen that the *Great Sun* inclines to such sport, they go about an hundred of them in a company to the hunting of this animal, which they must bring home alive. As it is a diverting exercise, many young men are generally of the party, who disperse themselves in the meadows among the thickets in order to discover the deer. They no sooner perceive

perceive one than they advance towards him in a wide crescent, one point of which may be about a quarter of a league from the other. Part of the crescent draws near to him, which frightens him away to another point; that part likewise advancing, he immediately flies back to the other side. He is kept thus running from one side to another a considerable time, on purpose to exercise the young men, and afford diversion to the *Great Sun*, or to another *Little Sun*, who is nominated to supply his place. The deer sometimes attempts to get out and escape by the openings of the crescent, in which case those who are at the points run forwards, and oblige him to go back. The crescent then gradually forms a circle; and when they perceive the deer beginning to be tired, part of them stoop almost to the ground, and remain in that posture till he approaches them, when they rise and shout: he instantly flies off to the other side, where they do the same; by which means he is at length so exhausted, that he is no longer able to stand on his legs, and suffers himself to be taken like a lamb. Sometimes however he defends himself on the ground with his antlers and fore-feet; they therefore use the precaution to seize upon him behind, and even in that case they are sometimes wounded.



The hunters having seized the deer present it to the *Great Sun*, or in his absence to the person whom he sent to represent him. If he says, *well*, the roe-buck is immediately opened, and its four quarters carried to the hut of the *Great Sun*, who gives portions of them to the chief men among the hunters.

The wolf is not above fifteen inches high, and of a proportionable length. He is not so brown as our wolves, nor so fierce and dangerous; he is therefore more like a dog than a wolf, especially the dog of the natives, who differs from him in nothing, but that he barks. The wolf is very common in the hunting countries; and when the hunter makes a hut for himself in the evening upon the bank of a river, if he sees the wolf, he may be confident that the buffaloes are not at a very great distance. It is said, that this animal, not daring to attack the buffalo when in a herd, will come and give notice to the hunter that he may kill him, in hopes of coming in for the offals. The wolves are actually so familiar, that they come and go on all sides when looking for something to eat, without minding in the least whether they be near or at a distance from the habitations of men.

In my time two very large black wolves were seen in *Louisiana*. The oldest inhabitants, and those who travel to the remotest parts of the colony, declared that they had never before seen any such; from whence it was concluded, that they were foreign wolves which had lost their way. Fortunately they killed them both; for one of them was a she-wolf big with young.

The bear appears in *Louisiana* in winter, as the snows, which then cover the northern climates, hinder him from procuring a subsistence there, and force him southwards. If some few are seen in the summer time, they are only the slow young bears, that have not been strong enough to follow the herd northwards. The bear lives upon roots and fruits, particularly acorns; but his most delicate food is honey and milk. When he meets with either of these last, he will rather suffer himself to be killed than quite his prize. Our colonists have sometimes diverted themselves by burying a small pail with some milk in it almost up to the edge in the ground, and setting two young bears to it. The contest then was which of the two should hinder the other from tasting the milk, and both of them so tore the earth with their paws, and pulled at the pail, that they gene-

rally overturned the milk, before either of them had tasted of it.

In opposition to the general opinion, which supposes the bear a carnivorous animal, I affirm, with all the inhabitants of this colony, and the neighbouring countries, that he never feeds upon flesh. It is indeed to be lamented that the first travellers had the impudence to publish to the world a thousand false stories, which were easily believed because they were new. People, so far from wishing to be undeceived, have even been offended with those who attempted to detect the general errors; but it is my duty to speak the truth, for the sake of those who are willing to hear it. What I maintain here is not a mere conjectural supposition, but a known fact over all *North America*, which may be attested by the evidence of a great number of people who have lived there, and by the traders who are going and coming continually. There is not one instance can be given of their having devoured men, notwithstanding their great multitudes, and the extreme hunger which they must sometimes have suffered; for even in that case they never so much as touch the butchers' meat which they meet with.

The bears seldom quit the banks of the *Mississippi*, as it is there that they can best procure a subsistence; but when I lived at the *Natches* there happened so severe a winter, that those animals came from the north in such numbers that they starved each other, and were very lean. Their great hunger obliged them to quit the woods which line the banks of the river; they were seen at night running among the settlements; and they sometimes even entered those court yards that were not well shut; they there found butchers meat exposed to the open air, but they never touched it, and eat only the corn or roots they could meet with. Certainly on such an occasion as this, and in such a pressing want, they would have proved carnivorous, if it had been in the least degree their natural disposition.

But perhaps one will say, "It is true they never touch dead flesh; it is only living flesh that they devour." That is being very delicate indeed, and what I can by no means allow them; for if they were flesh-eaters, I greatly suspect that, in the severe famine which I have spoken of, they would have made a hearty meal of the butchers meat which they found in the court yards; or at least would have devoured



several persons who fell in their way, which they never did. The following fact however will be a more compleat answer to this objection.

Two *Canadians*, who were on a journey, landed on a sand-bank, when they perceived a bear crossing the river. As he appeared fat, and consequently would yield a great deal of oil, one of the travellers ran forwards and fired at him. Unhappily however he only slightly wounded him; and as the bears in that case always turn upon their enemy, the hunter was immediately seized by the wounded bear, who in a few moments squeezed him to death, without wounding him in the least with his teeth, altho' his muzzle was against his face, and he must certainly have been exasperated. The other *Canadian*, who was not above three hundred paces distance, ran to save his comrade with the utmost speed, but he was dead before he came up to him; and the bear escaped into the wood. Upon examining the corpse he found the place, where the bear had squeezed it, pressed in two inches more than the rest of the breast.

Some perhaps may still add, that the mildness of the climate of *Louisiana* may have an effect upon

upon the disposition of the bears, and prevent them from being so voracious as those of our continent; but I affirm that carnivorous animals retain the same disposition in all countries. The wolves of *Louisiana* are carnivorous as well as those of *Europe*, altho' they differ in other particulars. The tigers of *Africa*, and those of *America*, are equally mischievous animals. The wild-cats of *America*, tho' very different from those of *Europe*, have however the same appetite for mice when they are tamed. It is the same with other species, naturally inclined to live upon other animals; and the bears of *America*, if flesh-eaters, would not quit the countries covered with snow, where they would find men and other animals in abundance, to come so far in search of fruits and roots; which kind of nourishment carnivorous animals refuse to taste\*.

Bears are seen very frequently in *Louisiana* in the winter time, and they are so little dreaded, that the people sometimes make it a diversion

\* Since I wrote the above account of the bears, I have been certainly informed, that in the mountains of *Switzerland* there are two sorts of bears. The one black like that of *Louisiana*, and not carnivorous; the other red, and no less carnivorous than the wolves. Both sorts turn upon their enemy when wounded.

to hunt them. When they are fat, that is about the end of *December*, they cannot run so fast as a man; therefore the hunters are in no danger if they should turn upon them. The she-bears are tolerably fat when they are big with young; but after they have littered they quickly become lean.

The bears usually arrive in *Louisiana* towards the end of autumn; and then they are very lean, as they do not leave the north till the earth be wholly covered with snow, and find often but a very scanty subsistence in their way southwards. I said above, that those animals seldom go to any great distance from the river; and on both banks travellers meet with such a beaten path in winter, that to those who are not acquainted with it, it appears like the track of men. I myself, the first time I observed it, was deceived by it. I was then near 200 miles from any human dwelling, yet the path at first appeared to me as if it had been made by thousands of men, who had walked that way bare-footed. Upon a narrower inspection however, I observed, that the prints of the feet were shorter than that of a man, and that there was the impression of a claw at the end of each toe. It is proper to observe that in those paths the bear

bear does not pique himself upon politeness, and will yield the way to nobody; therefore it is prudent in a traveller not to fall out with him for such a trifling affair.

The bears, after they have been a short time in the country, and found abundance of fruits, turn fat and lazy, and it is then the natives go out to hunt them. The bear, when he is fat, huts himself, that is, retires into the hollow trunk of some rotten tree that has died on end. The natives, when they meet with any of those trees, which they suspect contains a bear in it, give two or three strong blows against the trunk, and immediately run behind the next tree opposite to the lowest breach. If there be a bear within, he appears in a few minutes at the breach, to look out and spy the occasion of the disturbance; but upon observing nothing likely to annoy him, he goes down again to the bottom of his castle.

The natives having once seen their prey, gather a heap of dried canes, which they bruise with their feet, that they may burn the easier, and one of them mounting upon a tree adjoining to that in which the bear is, sets fire to the reeds, and darts them one after another into the  
breach;



breach, the other hunters having planted themselves in ambuscade upon other trees. The bear is quickly burned out of his habitation, and he no sooner appears on the outside than they let fly their arrows at him, and often kill him before he gets to the bottom of the tree.

He is no sooner dead than some of the hunters are dispatched to look for a deer, and they seldom fail of bringing in one or two. When a deer is brought they cut off the head, and then take off the skin whole, beginning at the neck, and rolling it down, as they cut it, like a stocking. The legs they cut off at the knee-joints, and having cleaned and washed the skin, they stop all the holes except the neck, with a kind of paste made of the fat of the deer mixed with ashes, over which they tie several bindings with the bark of the lime-tree. Having thus provided a kind of cask, they fill it with the oil of the bear, which they prepare by boiling the flesh and fat together. This *deer of oil*, as it is called, they sell to the *French* for a gun, a yard of cloth, or any other thing of that value. The *French*, before they use it, purify it, by putting it into a large kettle, with a handful of laurel leaves; and sprinkling it when it begins to be hot with some water, in which they have

have dissolved a large quantity of salt. The smoke that rises upon this sprinkling carries off with it any bad smell the fat may have; they next pour it off into a vessel, and eight days after there is found on the top of it a clear oil which serves all the purposes of olive-oil; what remains below is a fine kind of lard, proper for the kitchen, and a sovereign remedy for all kinds of pains. I myself was cured of the rheumatism in my shoulder by it.

The *Tiger* is not above a foot and a half high, and long in proportion: his hair is somewhat of a bright bay colour, and he is brisk as all tigers naturally are. His flesh when boiled tastes like veal, only it is not so insipid. There are very few of them to be seen; I never saw but two near my settlement; and I have great reason to think that it was the same beast I saw both times. The first time he laid hold of my dog who barked and howled; but upon my running towards him, the tiger left him. The next time he seized a pig; but this I likewise rescued, and his claws had gone no deeper than the fat. This animal is not more carnivorous than fearful; he flies at the sight of a man, and makes off with greater speed, if you shout and halloo as he runs.

The

The *Cat-a-mount* is a kind of wild cat, as high as the tiger, but not so thick, and his skin is extremely beautiful. He is a great destroyer of poultry, but fortunately his species is rare.

*Foxes* are so numerous, that upon the woody heights you frequently see nothing but their holes. As the woods afford them plenty of game, they do not molest the poultry, which are always allowed to run at large. The foxes are exactly shaped like ours, but their skin is much more beautiful. Their hair is fine and thick, of a deep brown colour, and over this rise several long silvered-coloured hairs, which have a fine effect.

The wild cat has been improperly so called by the first *French* settlers in *Louisiana*; for it has nothing of the cat but its nimble activity, and rather resembles a monkey. It is not above eight or ten inches high, and about fifteen long. Its head is like that of a fox; it has long toes, but very short claws, not made for seizing game; accordingly it lives upon fruit, bread, and other such things. This animal may be tamed, and then becomes very frolicksome and full of tricks. The hair of those that  
are

are tame is grey; but of the wild is reddish; neither of them is so beautiful as that of the fox; it grows very fat, and its flesh is good to eat. I shall not describe the real wild cat, as it is entirely like ours.

The *Rabbit* is extremely common over all *Louisiana*; it is particular in this, that its pile is like that of the hare, and it never burrows. Its flesh is white and delicate, and has the usual taste, without any rankness. There is no other kind of *Rabbit* or *Hare*, if you please to call it, in all the colony, than that above described.

The *Wood-Rat* has the head and tail of a common rat, but has the bulk and length of a cat. Its legs are short, its paws long, and its toes are armed with claws; its tail is almost without hair, and serves for hooking itself to any thing; for when you take hold of it by that part, it immediately twists itself round your finger. Its pile is grey, and tho' very fine, yet is never smooth. The women among the natives spin it and dye it red. It hunts by night, and makes war upon the poultry, only sucking their blood and leaving their flesh. It is very rare to see any creature walk so slow; and I have often caught them when walking my ordinary  
pace.



pace. When he sees himself upon the point of being caught, instinct prompts him to counterfeit being dead; and in this he perseveres with such constancy, that tho' laid on a hot gridiron he will not make the least sign of life. He never moves unless the person go to a distance or hide himself, in which case he endeavours as fast as possible to escape into some hole or bush.

When the she-one is about to litter, she chuses a place in the thick bushes at the foot of a tree, after which she and the male crop a great deal of fine dry grass, which is loaded upon her belly, and then the male drags her and her burden by the tail to the littering place. She never quits her young a moment; but when she is obliged to change her lodging carries them with her in a pouch or double skin that wraps round her belly, and there they may sleep or suck at their ease. The two sides of this pouch lap so close that the joining can hardly be observed; nor can they be separated without tearing the skin. If the she-one be caught carrying her young thus with her, she will suffer herself to be roasted alive, without the least sign of life, rather than open the pouch and expose her young ones. The flesh of this animal is very good, and tastes somewhat like

like that of a fucking pig, when it is first broiled, and afterwards roasted on the spit.

The *Pole-cat* or *Skunk* is about the size of a kitten eight months old. The male is of a beautiful black, but the female has rings of white intermixed with the black. Its ear and its paw are like that of a mouse, and it has a very lively eye. I suppose it lives upon fruits and feeds. It is most justly called the *stinking beast*, for its odour is so strong, that it may be pursued upon the track twenty-four hours after it has passed. It goes very slow, and when the hunter approaches it, it squirts out far and wide such a stinking urine, that neither man nor beast can hardly approach it. A drop of this creature's blood, and probably some of its urine, having one day fallen upon my coat when I was hunting, I was obliged as fast as possible to go home and change my cloaths; and before I could use my coat it was scoured and exposed for several days to the dew.

The Squirrels of *Louisiana* are like those of *France*, excepting one kind, which are called *Flying-Squirrels*, because they leap from one tree to another, tho' the distance between them be twenty-five or thirty feet. It is about the  
size

size of a rat, and of a deep ash-colour. Its two fore-legs are joined to its two hind-legs by two membranes, so that when it leaps it seems to fly, tho' it always leaps somewhat downwards. This animal may be very easily tamed; but even then it is best to chain it. There is another sort, not much bigger than a mouse, and of a bright bay-colour. These are so familiar that they will come out of the woods, will enter the houses, and sit within two yards of the people of the house, if they do not make any motion; and there they will feed on any maiz within their reach. I never was so well diverted in my life with the frolics of any animal, as I have been with the vivacity and attitudes of this little squirrel.

The *Porcupine* is large and fine of his kind; but as he lives only upon fruit, and loves cold, is most common about the river *Illinois*, where the climate is somewhat cold, and there is plenty of wild fruits. The skin, when stripped of the quills, is white and brown. The natives dye part of the white, yellow and red, and the brown they dye black. They have likewise the art of splitting the skin, and applying it to many curious works, particularly to trim the  
edges

edges of their deer-skins, and to line small bark-boxes, which are very neat.

The *Hedge-Hog* of *Louisiana* is in every respect the same with that of *Europe*.

I shall not enlarge upon the *Beavers*, which are universally known, from the many descriptions we have of them.

The *Otters* are the same with those of *France*, and there are but very few of them to be seen.

Some *Turtle* are seen in this country; but very rarely. In the many hundred leagues of country that I have passed over, I have hardly ever seen above a hundred.

*Frogs* are very common, especially in *Lower Louisiana*, notwithstanding the great number of snakes that destroy them. There are some that grow very large, sometimes above a foot and an half long, and astonish strangers at first by their croaking, especially if they are in a hollow tree.

The *Crocodile* is very common in the river *Mississipi*. Altho' this amphibious animal be almost as well known as those I have just mentioned,



tioned, I cannot however omit taking some notice of it. Without troubling the reader with a description of it, which he will meet with every where, I shall observe that it shuns the banks of the river frequented by men. It lays its eggs in the month of *May*, when the sun is already hot in that country, and it deposits them in the most concealed place it can find among grafs exposed to the heats of the south. The eggs are about the size of those of a goose, but longer in proportion. Upon breaking them you will find hardly any thing but white, the yolk being about the size of that of a young hen. I never saw any that were new hatched. The smallest I ever met with, which I concluded to be about three months old, was as long as a middle-sized eel, and an inch and a half thick. I have killed one nineteen feet long, and three feet and a half in its greatest breadth. A friend of mine killed one twenty-two feet long; and the legs of both of these, which on land seemed to move with great difficulty, were not above a foot in length. But however sluggish they be on land, in the water they move with great agility.

This animal has his body always covered with slime, which is the case with all fishes that live

live in muddy waters. When he comes on shore his track is covered with that slime, as his belly trails on the ground, and this renders the earth very slippery in that part, especially as he returns by the same path to the water. He never hunts the fish upon which he subsists; but places himself in ambuscade, and catches them as they pass. For that purpose he digs a hole in the bank of the river, below the surface of the water; where the current is strong, having a small entrance, but large enough within to turn himself round in. The fish, which are fatigued with the strong current, are glad to get into the smooth water in that corner, and there they are immediately seized by the Crocodile.

I shall not contradict the accounts of venerable antiquity about the Crocodiles of the *Nile*, who fall upon men and devour them; who cross the roads, and make a slippery path upon them to trip passengers, and make them slide into the river; who counterfeit the voice of an infant, to draw children into their snares; neither shall I contradict the travellers who have confirmed those stories from mere hearsays. But as I profess to speak the truth, and to advance nothing but what I am certain of from my own knowledge, I may safely affirm that the Crocodiles of *Louis-*  
*ana*

*ana* are doubtless of another species than those of other countries. In fact, I never heard them imitate the cries of an infant, nor is it at all probable that they can counterfeit them. Their voice is as strong as that of a bull. It is true they attack men in the water, but never on land, where they are not at all formidable. Besides, there are nations that in great part subsist upon this animal, which is hunted out by the fathers and mothers, and killed by the children. What can we then believe of those stories that have been told us of the Crocodile? I myself killed all that ever I met of them; and they are so much the less to be dreaded, in that they can neither run nor rise up against a man. In the water indeed, which is their favourite element, they are dangerous; but in that case it is easy to guard against them.

The largest of all the reptiles of *Louisiana* is the *Rattle-Snake*: some of them have been seen fifteen inches thick, and long in proportion; but this species is naturally shorter in proportion to their thickness than the other kinds of serpents. This serpent gets its name from several hollow knots at its tail, very thin and dry, which make a rattling noise. These knots, tho' inserted into each other, are yet quite detached, and only  
the

the first of them is fastened to the skin. The number of the knots, it is said, marks the age of the serpent, and I am much inclined to believe it; for as I have killed a great number of them, I always observed, that the longer and thicker the serpent was, it had the more knots. Its skin is almost black; but the lower part of its belly is striped black and white.

As soon as it hears or sees a man it rouses itself by shaking its tail, which makes a rattling noise that may be heard at several paces distance, and gives warning to the traveller to be upon his guard. It is much to be dreaded when it coils itself up in a spiral line, for then it may easily dart upon a man. It shuns the habitations of men, and by a singular providence, wherever it retires to, there the herb which cures its bite, is likewise to be found.

There are several other kinds of serpents to be seen here, some of which resemble those of *France*, and attempt to slip into the hen-houses, to devour the eggs and new-hatched chickens. Others are green, about two feet long, and not thicker than a goose-quill; they frequent the meadows, and may be seen running over



the spires of grafs, fuch is their lightnefs and nimblenefs.

*Vipers* are very rare in *Lower Louifiana*, as that reptile loves ftony grounds. In the highlands they are now-and-then to be met with, and there they quite refemble ours.

*Lizards* are very common: there is a fmall kind of thefe that are called *Cameleons*, becaufe they change their colour according to that of the place they pafs over\*.

Among the fpiders of *Louifiana* there is one kind that will appear very extraordinary. It is as large, but rather longer than a pigeon's egg, black, with gold-coloured fpecks. Its claws are pierced thro' above the joints. It does not carry its eggs like the reft, but enclofes them in a kind of cup covered with its filk. It lodges itfelf in a kind of nut made of the fame filk, and hung to the branches of the trees. The web which this infect weaves is fo ftrong, that

\* When the *Cameleon* is angry a nerve rifes archwife from his mouth to the middle of his throat; and the fkin which covers it is fo fretched as to remain red whatever colour the reft of the body be. He never does any hurt, and always runs away when obferved.

it not only stops birds, but cannot even be broken by men without a considerable effort.

I never saw any *Moles* in *Louisiana*, nor heard of any being seen by others.

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CHAP. VII.

*Of Birds, and flying Insects.*

**B**IRDS are so very numerous in *Louisiana*, that if all the different kinds of them were known, which is far from being the case at present, the description of them alone would require an entire volume. I only undertake the description of all those, which have come within my knowledge, the number of which, I am persuaded, will be sufficient to satisfy the curious reader.

The *Eagle*, the king of birds, is smaller than the *Eagle* of the *Alps*; but he is much more beautiful, being entirely white, excepting only the tips of his wings which are black. As he is also very rare, this is another reason for heightening his value to the natives, who purchase at a great price the large feathers of

his wings, with which they ornament the *Calumet* or symbol of peace, as I have elsewhere described.

When speaking of the king of birds, I shall take notice of the *Wren*, called by the *French* *Roitelet* (petty King) which is the same in *Louisiana* as in *France*. The reason of its name in *French* will plainly enough appear from the following history. A magistrate, no less respectable for his probity than for the rank he holds in the law, assured me that, when he was at *Sables d'Olonne* in *Poitou*, on account of an estate which he had in the neighbourhood of that city, he had the curiosity to go and see a white *Eagle* which was then brought from *America*. After he had entered the house a *Wren* was brought, and let fly in the hall where the *Eagle* was feeding. The *Wren* perched upon a beam, and was no sooner perceived by the *Eagle* than he left off feeding, flew into a corner, and hung down his head. The little bird, on the other hand, began to chirp and appear angry, and a moment after flew upon the neck of the *Eagle*, and pecked him with the greatest fury, the *Eagle* all the while hanging his head in a cowardly manner, between his feet. The

*Wren,*

*Wren*, after satisfying its animosity, returned to the beam.

The *Falcon*, the *Hawk*, and the *Tassel* are the same as in *France*; but the *Falcons* are much more beautiful than ours.

The *Carrion-Crow*, or *Turky-Bustard*, is of the size and shape of a *Turky-cock*; his head is covered with red flesh, and his plumage is black: he has a hooked beak, but his toes are armed with very small talons, and are therefore very improper for seizing live game, which indeed he does not chuse to attack, as his want of agility prevents him from darting upon it with the rapidity of a bird of prey. Accordingly he lives only upon the dead beasts that he happens to meet with, and yet notwithstanding this kind of food he smells of musk. Several people maintain, that the *Carrion-Crow*, or *Carancro*, is the same with our *Vulture*. The *Spaniards* forbid the killing of it under pain of corporal punishment; for as they do not use the whole carcase of the bufaloes which they kill, those birds eat what they leave, which otherwise by rotting on the ground, would, according to them, infect the air.



The *Cormorant* is shaped very much like a duck, but its plumage is different and much more beautiful. This bird frequents the shores of the sea and of lakes, but rarely appears in rivers. Its usual food is fish; but as it is very voracious, it likewise eats dead flesh; and this it can tear to pieces by means of a notch in its bill, which is about the size of that of a duck.

The *Swans* of *Louisiana* are like those of *France*, only they are larger. However, notwithstanding their bulk and their weight, they often rise so high in the air, that they cannot be distinguished but by their shrill cry. Their flesh is very good to eat, and their fat is a specific against cold humours. The natives set a great value upon the feathers of the *Swan*. Of the large ones they make the diadems of their sovereigns, hats, and other ornaments; and they weave the small ones as the peruke-makers weave hair, and make coverings of them for their noble women. The young people of both sexes make tippets of the skin, without stripping it of its down.

The *Canada-Goose* is a water-fowl, of the shape of a Goose; but twice as large and heavy. Its plumage is ash-coloured; its eyes are covered

ed with a black spot; its cries are different from those of a goose and shriller; its flesh is excellent.

The *Pelican* is so called from its large head; its large bill, and above all for its large pouch, which hangs from its neck, and has neither feathers nor down. It fills this pouch with fish, which it afterwards disgorges for the nourishment of its young. It never removes from the shores of the sea, and is often killed by sailors for the sake of the pouch, which when dried serves them as a purse for their tobacco.

The *Geese* are the same with the *Wild Geese* of *France*. They abound upon the shores of the sea and of lakes, but are rarely seen in rivers.

In this country there are three kinds of *Ducks*; first, the *Indian Ducks*, so called because they came originally from that country. These are almost entirely white, having but a very few grey feathers. On each side of their head they have flesh of a more lively red than that of the *Turky-cock*, and they are larger than our tame *Ducks*. They are as tame as those of *Europe*, and their flesh when young is delicate, and of a fine flavour. The *Wild Ducks* are

fatter, more delicate, and of better taste than those of *France*; but in other respects they are entirely the same. For one you see in *France* you may here count a thousand. The *Perching-Ducks* or *Carolina Summer-Ducks*, are somewhat larger than our *Teals*. Their plumage is quite beautiful, and so changeable that no painting can imitate it. Upon their head they have a beautiful tuft of the most lively colours, and their red eyes appear like flames. The natives ornament their calumets or pipes with the skin of their neck. Their flesh is very good, but when it is too fat it tastes oily. These *Ducks* are to be met with the whole year round; they perch upon the branches of trees, which the others do not, and it is from this they have their name.

The *Teal* are found in every season; and they differ nothing from those of *France* but in having a finer relish.

The *Divers* of *Louisiana* are the same with those of *France*: they no sooner see the fire in the pan, than they dive so suddenly that the shot cannot touch them, and they are therefore called *Lead-Eaters*.

The *Saw-bill* has the inside of its beak indented like the edge of a saw: it is said to live wholly upon shrimps, the shells of which it can easily break.

The *Crane* is a very common water-fowl; it is larger than a *Turky*, very lean, and of an excellent taste. It eats somewhat like beef, and makes very good soup.

The *Flamingo* has only a little down upon its head; its plumage is grey, and its flesh good.

The *Spatula* has its name from the form of its bill, which is about seven or eight inches long, an inch broad towards the head, and two inches and a half towards the extremity; it is not quite so large as a *Wild Goose*; its thighs and legs are about the height of those of a *Turky*. Its plumage is rose-coloured, the wings being brighter than any other part. This is a water-fowl, and its flesh is very good.

The *Heron* of *Louisiana* is not in the last different from that of *Europe*.



The *Egret*, or *White Heron*, is so called from tufts of feathers upon the wings near the body which hinder it from flying high; it is a water-fowl with white plumage; but its flesh tastes very oily.

The *Bec-croche*, or *Crook-bill*, has indeed a crooked bill, with which it seizes the cray-fish upon which it subsists. Its flesh has that taste, and is red. Its plumage is a whitish grey; and it is about the size of a capon.

The *Indian Water-Hen*, and the *Green-Foot*, are the same as in *France*.

The *Hatchet-Bill* is so called on account of its bill, which is red, and formed like the edge of an ax. Its feet are also of a beautiful red, and it is therefore often called *Red-Foot*. As it lives upon shell-fish it never removes from the sea-coast, but upon the approach of a storm, which is always sure to follow its retiring into the inland parts.

The *King-Fisher* excels ours in nothing but in the beauty of its plumage, which is as various as the rain-bow. This bird, it is well known, goes always against the wind; but perhaps

haps few people know that it preserves the same property when it is dead. I myself hung a dead one by a silk thread directly over a sea-compass, and I can declare it as a fact that the bill was always turned towards the wind.

The *Sea-Lark* and *Sea-Snipe* never quit the sea; their flesh may be eat, as it has very little of the oily taste.

The *Frigate-Bird* is a large bird, which in the day-time keeps itself in the air above the shore of the sea. It often rises very high, probably for exercise; for it feeds upon fish, and every night retires to the coast. It appears larger than it really is, as it is covered with a great many feathers of a grey colour. Its wings are very long, its tail forked, and it cuts the air with great swiftness.

The *Draught-Bird* is a large bird, not much unlike the *Frigate-Bird*, as light, but not so swift. The under-part of its plumage is chequered brown and white, but the upper-part is of greyish brown.

The *Fool* is of a yellowish colour, and about the size of a hen; it is so called, because it

will suffer a man to approach it so near as to seize it with his hand : but even then it is too soon to cry victory ; -for if the person who seizes it does not take the greatest precaution, it will snap off his finger at one bite.

When those three last birds are observed to hover very low over the shore, we may most certainly expect an approaching storm. On the other hand, when the sailors see the *Halcyons* behind their vessel, they expect and generally meet with fine weather for some days.

Since I have mentioned the *Halcyon*, I shall here describe it. It is a small bird, about the size of a *Swallow*, but its beak is longer, and its plumage is violet-coloured. It has two streaks of a yellowish brown at the end of the feathers of its wings, which when it sits appear upon its back. When we left *Louisiana* near an hundred *Halcyons* followed our vessel for near three days : they kept at the distance of about a stone-cast, and seemed to swim, yet I could never discover that their feet were webbed, and was therefore greatly surpris'd. They probably live upon the small insects that drop from the out-side of the vessel when sailing ; for they now-and-then dived and came up in the  
same

fame place. I have some fufpicion that, by keeping in the wake of the fhip, they float after it without fwimming; for when they happened to be out of the wake of the fhip they were obliged to fly in order to come up with the fhip again. This bird is faid to build its neft of the glutinous froth of the fea clofe upon the fhore, and to launch it when a land breeze arifes, raifing one of its wings in the form of a fail, which receiving the wind helps to carry it out to fea.

I fhall now proceed to fpeak of the fowls which frequent the woods, and fhall begin with the *Wild-Turky*, which is very common all over the colony. It is finer, larger, and better than that in *France*. The feathers of the *Turky* are of a duftifh grey, edged with a ftreak of gold colour, near half an inch broad. In the fmall feathers the gold-coloured ftreak is not above one tenth of an inch broad. The natives make fans of the tail, and of four tails joined together the *French* make an umbrella. The women among the natives weave the feathers as our peruke-makers weave their hair, and faften them to an old covering of bark, which they likewife line with them, fo that it has down on both fides. Its flefh is more delicate, fatter, and more juicy than that of ours. They



go in flocks, and with a dog one may kill a great many of them. I never could procure any of the *Turky's* eggs, to try to hatch them, and discover whether they were as difficult to bring up in this country as in *France*; since the climate of both countries is almost the same. My slave told me that in his nation they brought up the young *Turkies* as easily as we do chickens.

The *Pheasant* is the most beautiful bird that can be painted, and in every respect entirely like that of *Europe*. Their rarity in my opinion makes them more esteemed than they deserve. I would at any time prefer a slice off the fillet of a *Bufalo* to any *Pheasant*.

The *Partridges* of *Louisiana* are not larger than a *Wood-pigeon*. Their plumage is exactly the same with that of our grey *Partridges*; they have also the horse-shoe upon the breast; they perch upon trees, and are seldom seen in flocks. Their cry consists only of two strong notes, somewhat resembling the name given them by the natives who call them *Ho-ouy*. Their flesh is white and delicate, but, like all the other game in this country, it has no *fumet*, and only excels in the fine taste.

The

The *Woodcock* is very rare, because it is only to be met with in inhabited countries. It is like that of *France*; its flesh is white, but rather plumper and more delicate than that of ours, which is owing to the plenty and goodness of its fruit.

The *Snipe* is much more common than the *Woodcock*, and in this country is far from being shy. Its flesh is white, and of a much better relish than that of ours.

I am of opinion that the *Quail* is very rare in *Louisiana*; I have sometimes heard it, but never saw it, nor know any *Frenchman* that ever did.

Some of our colonists have thought proper to give the name of *Ortolan* to a small bird which has the same plumage, but in every other respect does not in the least resemble it.

The *Corbiveau* is as large as the *Woodcock*, and very common. Its plumage is varied with several shady colours, and is different from that of the *Woodcock*; its feet and beak are also longer, which last is crooked and of a reddish yellow

colour; its flesh is likewise firmer and better tasted.

The *Parroquet of Louisiana* is not quite so large as those that are usually brought to *France*. Its plumage is usually of a fine sea-green, with a pale rose-coloured spot upon the crown, which brightens into red towards the beak, and fades off into green towards the body. It is with difficulty that it learns to speak, and even then it rarely practises it, resembling in this the natives themselves, who speak little. As a silent *Parrot* would never make its fortune among our *French ladies*, it is doubtless on this account that we see so few of these in *France*.

The *Turtle-Dove* is the same with that of *Europe*, but few of them are seen here.

The *Wood-Pigeons* are seen in such prodigious numbers, that I do not fear to exaggerate, when I affirm that they sometimes cloud the sun. One day on the banks of the *Mississippi* I met with a flock of them which was so large, that before they all passed I had leisure to fire with the same piece four times at them. But the rapidity of their flight was so great, that tho' I do

do not fire ill, with my four shots I brought down but two.

These birds come to *Louisiana* only in the winter, and remain in *Canada* during the summer, where they devour the corn, as they eat the acorns in *Louisiana*. The *Canadians* have used every art to hinder them from doing so much mischief, but without success. But if the inhabitants of these colonies were to go a fowling for these birds in the manner that I have done, they would insensibly destroy them. When they walk among the high forest trees, they ought to remark under what trees the largest quantity of dung is to be seen. Those trees being once discovered, the hunters ought to go out when it begins to grow dark, and carry with them a quantity of brimstone which they must set fire to in so many earthen plates placed at regular distances under the trees. In a very short time they will hear a shower of *Wood-Pigeons* falling to the ground, which, by the light of some dried canes, they may gather into sacks, as soon as the brimstone is extinguished.

I shall here give an instance that proves not only the prodigious number of those birds, but also their singular instinct. In one of my journeys



neys at land, when I happened to be upon the bank of the river, I heard a confused noise, which seemed to come along the river from a considerable distance below us. As the sound continued uniformly I embarked, as fast as I could, on board the pettiangre, with four other men, and steered down the river, keeping in the middle, that I might go to any side that best suited me. But how great was my surprise when I approached the place from whence the noise came, and observed it to proceed from a thick short pillar on the bank of the river. When I drew still nearer to it, I perceived that it was formed by a legion of wood-pigeons, who kept continually flying up and down successively among the branches of an ever-green oak, in order to beat down the acorns with their wings. Every now-and-then some alighted to eat the acorns which they themselves or the others had beat down; for they all acted in common, and eat in common; no avarice nor private interest appearing among them, but each labouring as much for the rest as for himself.

*Crows* are common in *Louisiana*, and as they eat no carrion their flesh is better tasted than that of the crows of *France*. Whatever their appetite

appetite may be, they dare not for the carrion crow approach any carcass.

I never saw any *Ravens* in this country, and if there be any they must be very rare.

The *Owls* are larger and whiter than in *France*, and their cry is much more frightful. The *Little Owl* is the same with ours, but much more rare. These two birds are more common in *Lower Louisiana* than in the higher.

The *Magpye* resembles those of *Europe* in nothing but its cry; it is more delicate, is quite black, has a different manner of flying, and chiefly frequents the coasts.

The *Blackbirds* are black all over, not excepting their bills nor their feet, and are almost as large again as ours. Their notes are different, and their flesh is hard.

There are two sorts of *Starlings* in this country; one grey and spotted, and the other black. In both the tip of the shoulder is of a bright red. They are only to be seen in winter; and then they are so numerous, that upwards of 300 of them have been taken at once in a net.

A beaten path is made near a wood, and after it is cleaned and smoothed, it is strewed with rice. On each side of this path is stretched a long narrow silken net, with very small meshes, and made to turn over at once by strings fastened to the stick that stretches the end of it. The starlings no sooner alight to pick up the grain, than the fowler, who lies concealed with the strings in his hand, pulls the net over them.

The *Wood-pecker* is much the same as in *France*; but here there are two kinds of them; one has grey feathers spotted with black; the other has the head and the neck of a bright red, and the rest of the body as the former. This bird lives upon the worms which it finds in rotten wood, and not upon ants, as a modern author would have us believe, for want of having considered the nature of the things which he relates. The bird, when looking for its food, examines the trunks of trees that have lost their bark; it clasps by its feet with its belly close to the tree, and hearkens if it can hear a worm eating the wood; in this manner it leaps from place to place upon the trunk till it hears a worm, then it pierces the wood in that part, pricks the worm with its hard and pointed tongue, and draws it out. The arms which  
nature

nature has furnished it with are very proper for this kind of hunting; its claws are hard and very sharp; its beak is formed like a little ax, and is very hard; its neck is long and flexible to give proper play to its beak; and its hard tongue, which it can extend three or four inches, has a most sharp point, with several beards that help to hold the prey.

The *Swallows* of this country have that part yellow which ours have white, and they, as well as the martins, live in the woods.

The *Nightingale* differs in nothing from ours in respect to its shape or plumage, unless that it has the bill a little longer. But in this it is particular that it is not shy, and sings thro' the whole year, tho' rarely. It is very easy to entice them to your roof, where it is impossible for the cats to reach them, by laying something for them to eat upon a lath, with a piece of the shell of a gourd which serves to hold their nest. You may in that case depend upon their not changing their habitation.

The *Pope* is a bird that has a red and black plumage. It has got that name perhaps because its colour makes it look somewhat old,  
and



and none but old men are promoted to that dignity; or because its notes are soft, feeble, and rare; or lastly, because they wanted a bird of that name in the colony, having two other kinds named cardinals and bishops.

The *Cardinal* owes its name to the bright red of the feathers, and to a little cowl on the hind part of the head, which resembles that of the bishop's ornament, called a *Camail*. It is as large as a black-bird but not so long. Its bill and toes are large, strong, and black. Its notes are so strong and piercing that they are only agreeable in the woods. It is remarkable for laying up its winter provision in the summer, and near a *Paris* bushel of maiz has been found in its retreat, artfully covered, first with leaves, and then with small branches, with only a little opening for the bird itself to enter.

The *Bishop* is a bird smaller than the linnet; its plumage is a violet-coloured blue, and its wings, which serve it for a cope, are entirely violet colour. Its notes are so sweet, so variable, and tender, that those who have once heard it, are apt to abate in their praises of the nightingale. I had such great pleasure in hearing this charming bird, that I left an oak standing very

near my apartment, upon which he used to come and perch, tho' I very well knew, that the tree, which stood single, might be overturned by a blast of wind, and fall upon my house to my great loss.

The *Humming Bird* is not larger even with its feathers than a large beetle. The colour of its feathers is variable according to the light they are exposed in ; in the sun they appear like enamel upon a gold ground, which delights the eyes. The longest feathers of the wings of this bird are not much more than half an inch long, its bill is about the same length, and pointed like an awl ; and its tongue resembles a sewing needle ; its feet are like those of a large fly. Notwithstanding its little size, its flight is so rapid, that it is always heard before it be seen. Altho' like the bee it sucks the flowers, it never rests upon them, but supports itself upon its wings, and passes from one flower to another with the rapidity of lightning. It is a rare thing to catch a humming bird alive ; one of my friends however had the happiness to catch one. He had observed it enter the flower of a convolvulus, and as it had quite buried itself to get at the bottom, he run forwards, shut the flower, cut it from the stalk, and carried off the bird a prisoner.

prisoner. He could not however prevail upon it to eat, and it died four days after.

The *Troniou* is a small bird about the size of a sparrow; its plumage is likewise the same; but its beak is slenderer. Its notes seem to express its name.

The *French* settlers raise in this province turkeys of the same kind with those of *France*, fowls, capons, &c. of an excellent taste. The pigeons for their fine flavour and delicacy are preferred by *Europeans* to those of any other country. The *Guiney Fowl* is here delicious.

In *Louisiana* we have two kinds of *Silk Worms*; one was brought from *France*, the other is natural to the country. I shall enlarge upon them under the article of agriculture.

The *Tobacco Worm* is a caterpillar of the size and figure of a silk worm. It is of a fine sea-green colour, with rings of silver colour; on its rump it has a sting near a quarter of an inch long. These insects quickly do a great deal of mischief, therefore care is taken every day while the tobacco is rising, to pick them off and kill them.

In summer *Caterpillars* are sometimes found upon the plants, but these insects are very rare in the colony. Glow-worms are here the same as in *France*.

*Butterflies* are not near so common as in *France*; the consequence of there being fewer caterpillars; but they are of incomparable beauty, and have the most brilliant colours. In the meadows are to be seen black grasshoppers, which almost always walk, rarely leap, and still seldom fly. They are about the size of the finger or thumb, and their head is shaped somewhat like that of a horse. Their four small wings are of a most beautiful purple. Cats are very fond of grasshoppers.

The *Bees* of *Louisiana* lodge in the earth to secure their honey from the ravages of the bears. Some few indeed build their combs in the trunks of trees as in *Europe*; but by far the greatest number in the earth in the lofty forests, where the bears seldom go.

The *Flies* are of two kinds, one a yellowish brown, as in *France*, and the other black.



The *Wasps* in this country take up their abode near the houses where they smell victuals. Several *French* settlers endeavoured to root them out of their neighbourhood; but I acted otherwise; for reflecting, that no flies are to be seen where the wasps frequent, I invited them by hanging up a piece of flesh in the air.

The *Quick Stinger* is a long and yellowish fly, and it receives its name from its stinging the moment it lights. The common flies of *France* are very common also in *Louisiana*.

The *Cantbarides*, or *Spanish Flies*, are very numerous, and larger than in *Europe*; they are of such an acid nature, that if they but slightly touch the skin as they pass, a pretty large blister instantly rises. These flies live upon the leaves of the oak.

The *Green Flies* appear only every other year, and the natives superstitiously look upon their appearance as a presage of a good crop. It is a pity that the cattle are so greatly molested by them, that they cannot remain in the fields; for they are extremely beautiful, and twice as large as bees.

*Fire Flies* are very common; when the night is serene they are so very numerous, that if the light they dart out were constant, one might see as clearly as in fine moonshine.

The *Fly-Ants*, which we see, attach themselves to the flower of the acacia, and which disappear when that flower is gone, do not proceed from the common ants. The fly-ants, tho' shaped like the other kind, are however longer and larger. They have a square head; their colour is a brownish red bordered with black; they have four red and grey wings, and fly like common flies, which the other ants do not even when they have wings.

The *Dragon Flies* are pretty numerous; they do not want to destroy them because they feed upon *Moskitos*, which is one of the most troublesome kind of insects.

The *Moskitos* are famous all over *America*, for their multitude, the troublesome nature of their buzzing, and the venom of their stings, which occasion an insupportable itching, and often form so many small ulcers, if the person stung does not immediately put some spittle on the wound. In open places they are less torment-

ing; but still they are troublesome; and the best way of driving them out of the houses is to burn a little brimstone in the mornings and evenings. The smoke of this infallibly kills them, and the smell keeps others away for several days. An hour after the brimstone has been burnt, the apartments may be safely entered into by men.

By the same means we may rid ourselves of the *flies* and *moskitos*, whose sting is so painful and so frequent during the short time they fly about; for they do not rise till about sun-set, and they retire at night. This is not the case with the *Burning Fly*. These, tho' not much larger than the point of a pin, are insupportable to the people who labour in the fields. They fly from sun-rising to sun-setting, and the wounds they give burn like fire.

The *Lavert* is an insect about an inch and a quarter long, a little more than a quarter broad; and but the tenth part of an inch thick. It enters the houses by the smallest crevices, and in the night time it falls upon dishes that are even covered with a plate, which renders it very troublesome to those whose houses are only built of wood. But they are so relishing to the cats,

cats, that these last quit every thing to fall upon them wherever they perceive them. When a new settler has once cleared the ground about his house, and is at some distance from the woods, he is quickly freed from them.

In *Louisiana* there are white ants, which seem to love dead wood. Persons who have been in the *East Indies* have assured me, that they are quite like those which in that country are called *Cancarla*, and that they would eat thro' glass, which I never had the experience of. There are in *Louisiana*, as in *France*, red, black, and flying ants.



## C H A P. VII.

*Of Fishes and Shell-Fish.*

THO' there is an incredible quantity of fishes in this country, I shall however be very concise in my account of them; because during my abode in the country they were not sufficiently known; and the people were not experienced enough in the art of catching them. The most of the rivers being very deep, and the *Missisipi*, as I have mentioned, being between thirty-eight and forty fathoms, from its mouth to the fall of *St. Anthony*, it may be easily conceived that the instruments used for fishing in *France*, cannot be of any use in *Louisiana*, because they cannot go to the bottom of the rivers, or at least so deep as to prevent the fish from escaping. The line therefore can be only used, and it is with it they catch all the fish that are eaten by the settlers upon the river. I proceed to an account of those fish.

The *Bardel* is of two sorts, the large and the small. The first is about four feet long, and the smallest of this sort that is ever seen is two feet long, the young ones doubtless keeping at the bottom of the water. This kind has a very large

large head, and a round body, which gradually lessens towards the tail. The fish has no scales, nor any bones, excepting that of the middle: its flesh is very good and delicate, but in a small degree very insipid, which is easily remedied; in other respects it eats very like the fresh cod of the country.

The small is from a foot to two feet in length. Its head is shaped like that of the other kind; but its body is not so round nor so pointed at the tail.

The *Carp* of the river *Missisipi* is monstrous. None are seen under two feet long; and many are met with three and four feet in length. The *carps* are not so very good in the lower part of the river; but the higher one goes the finer they are, on account of the plenty of sand in those parts. A great number of *carps* are carried into the lakes that are filled by the overflowing of the river, and in those lakes they are found of all sizes, in great abundance, and of a better relish than those of the river.

The *Burgo-Breaker* is an excellent fish; it is usually a foot and a foot and a half long: it is round with gold-coloured scales. In its throat

it has two bones with a surface like that of a file to break the shell-fish named *Burgo*. Tho' delicate it is nevertheless very firm. It is best when not much boiled.

The *Ring-Skate* is found in the river up as far as *New Orleans*, but no higher. It is very good, and no way tough. In other respects it is exactly like that of *France*.

The *Spatula* is so called, because from its snout a substance extends about a foot in length in the form of an apothecary's spatula. This fish, which is about two feet in length, is neither round or flat, but square, having at its sides and in the under part bones that form an angle like those of the back.

No *Pikes* are caught above a foot and a half long. As this is a voracious fish, perhaps the armed-fish pursues it, both from jealousy and appetite. The pike besides being small is very rare.

The *Choupic* is a very beautiful fish; many people mistake it for the trout, as it takes a fly in the same manner. But it is very different from the trout, as it prefers muddy and dead water to a clear stream, and its flesh is so soft that it is only good when fried.

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The *Sardine* or *small Pilchard* of the river *Mississipi*, is about three or four fingers in breadth, and between six and seven inches long; it is good and delicate. One year I salted about the quantity of forty pints of them, and all the *French* who eat of them acknowledged them to be *sardines* from their flesh, their bones, and their taste. They appear only for a short season, and are caught by the natives, when swimming against the strongest current, with nets made for that purpose only.

The *Patassa*, so called by the natives for its flatness, is the roach or fresh-water mullet of this country.

The *Armed-Fish* has its name from its arms, and its scaly mail. Its arms are its very sharp teeth about the tenth of an inch in diameter, and as much distant from each other, and near half an inch long. The interval of the larger teeth is filled with shorter teeth. These arms are a proof of its voracity. Its mail is nothing but its scales, which are white, as hard as ivory, and about the tenth of an inch in thickness. They are near an inch long, about half as much in breadth, end in a point, and have two cutting sides. There are two ranges of them down the back, shaped exactly like the head of a spon-

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toon, and opposite to the point the scale has a little shank, about three tenths of an inch long, which the natives insert into the end of their arrows, making the scale serve for a head. The flesh of this fish is hard and not relishing.

There are a great number of *Eels* in the river *Missisipi*, and very large ones are found in all the rivers and creeks.

The whole lower part of the river abounds in *Crayfish*. Upon my first arrival in the colony the ground was covered with little hillocks, about six or seven inches high, which the *Crayfish* had made for taking the air out of the water; but since dikes have been raised for keeping off the river from the low grounds, they no longer shew themselves. Whenever they are wanted they fish for them with the leg of a frog, and in a few moments they will catch a large dish of them.

The *Shrimps* are diminutive *Crayfish*; they are usually about three inches long, and of the size of the little finger. Altho' in other countries they are generally found in the sea only, yet in *Louisiana* you will meet with great numbers of them more than an hundred leagues up the river. In the lake *St. Louis*, about two leagues from

*New*

*New Orleans*, the waters of which having a communication with the sea, are somewhat brackish, are found several sorts both of sea fish, and fresh water fish. As the bottom of the lake is very level, they fish in it with large nets lately brought from *France*.

Near the lake when we pass by the outlets to the sea, and continue along the coasts, we meet with small oysters in great abundance, that are very well tasted. On the other hand, when we quit the lake by another lake that communicates with one of the mouths of the river, we meet with oysters four or five inches broad, and six or seven long. These large oysters eat best fried, having hardly any saltness, but in other respects are large and delicate.

Having spoken of the oysters of *Louisiana*, I shall take some notice of the oysters that are found on the trees at *St. Domingo*. When I arrived at the harbour of *Cape François* in my way to *Louisiana*, I was much surprized to see oysters hanging to the branches of some shrubs; but *M. Chanieau*, who was our second captain, explained the phenomenon to me. According to him, the twigs of the shrubs are bent down high water to the very bottom of the shore, whenever the sea is any ways agitated. The oysters

in that place no sooner feel the twigs than they lay hold of them, and when the sea retires they appear suspended upon them.

Towards the mouths of the river we meet with mussels no falter than the large oysters above-mentioned; and this is owing to the water being only brackish in those parts, as the river there empties itself by three large mouths, and five other small ones, besides several short creeks, which all together throw at once an immense quantity of water into the sea; the whole marshy ground occupies an extent of ten or twelve leagues.

There are likewise excellent mussels upon the northern shore of the lake *St. Louis*, especially in the river of *Pearls*; they may be about six or seven inches long, and sometimes contain pretty large pearls, but of no great value.

The largest of the shell-fish on the coast is the *Burgo*, well known in *France*. There is another fish much smaller and of a different shape. Its hollow shell is strong and beautiful, and the flat one is generally black; some blue ones are found and are much esteemed. These shells have long been in request for tobacco-boxes.

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
LOUISIANA.

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BOOK IV.

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CHAP. I.

*The origin of the Americans.*

THE remarkable difference I observed between the *Natches*, including in that name the nations whom they treat as brethren, and the other people of *Louisiana*, made me extremely desirous to know whence both of them might originally come. We had not then that full information which we have since received from the voyages and discoveries of M. *De Lisle*



NO. THE HISTORY

in the eastern parts of the *Russian* empire. I therefore applied myself one day to put the keeper of the temple in good humour, and having succeeded in that without much difficulty, I then told him, that from the little resemblance I observed between the *Natches* and the neighbouring nations, I was inclined to believe that they were not originally of the country which they then inhabited; and that if the ancient speech taught him any thing on that subject, he would do me a great pleasure to inform me of it. At these words he leaned his head on his two hands, with which he covered his eyes, and having remained in that posture about a quarter of an hour, as if to recollect himself, he answered to the following effect.

“ Before we came into this land we lived yonder under the sun, (pointing with his finger nearly south west, by which I understood that he meant *Mexico*); we lived in a fine country where the earth is always pleasant; there our *Suns* had their abode, and our nation maintained itself for a long time against the ancients of the country, who conquered some of our villages in the plains, but never could force us from the mountains. Our nation extended itself along the great water where this large river loses itself;

self; but as our enemies were become very numerous, and very wicked, our *Suns* sent some of their subjects who lived near this river, to examine whether we could retire into the country thro' which it flowed. The country on the east side of the river being found extremely pleasant, the *Great Sun*, upon the return of those who had examined it, ordered all his subjects who lived in the plains, and who still defended themselves against the antients of the country, to remove into this land, here to build a temple, and to preserve the eternal fire.

“ A great part of our nation accordingly settled here, where they lived in peace and abundance for several generations. The *Great Sun*, and those who had remained with him, never thought of joining us, being tempted to continue where they were by the pleasantness of the country, which was very warm, and by the weakness of their enemies who had fallen into civil dissensions, in consequence of the ambition of one of their chiefs, who wanted to raise himself from a state of equality with the other chiefs of the villages, and to treat all the people of his nation as slaves. During those discords among our enemies, some of them even entered into an alliance with the *Great Sun*, who still remained  
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in our old country, that he might conveniently assist our other brethren who had settled on the banks of the great water to the east of the large river, and extended themselves so far on the coast and among the isles, that the *Great Sun* did not hear of them sometimes for five or six years together.

“ It was not till after many generations that the *Great Suns* came and joined us in this country, where, from the fine climate, and the peace we had enjoyed, we had multiplied like the leaves of the trees. Warriors of fire who made the earth to tremble, had arrived in our old country, and having entered into an alliance with our brethren, conquered our ancient enemies; but attempting afterwards to make slaves of our *Suns*, they, rather than submit to them, left our brethren who refused to follow them, and came hither attended only with their slaves.”

Upon my asking him who those warriors of fire were, he replied, that they were bearded white men, somewhat of a brownish colour, who carried arms that darted out fire with a great noise, and killed at a great distance; that they had likewise heavy arms which killed a great many men at once, and like thunder made the

the

the earth tremble; and that they came from the sun-rising in floating villages.

The antients of the country he said were very numerous, and inhabited from the western coast of the great water to the northern countries on this side the sun, and very far upon the same coast beyond the sun. They had a great number of large and small villages, which were all built of stone, and in which there were houses large enough to lodge a whole village. Their temples were built with great labour and art, and they made beautiful works of all kinds of materials.

But ye yourselves, said I, whence are ye come? The ancient speech, he replied, does not say from what land we came; all that we know is, that our fathers, to come hither, followed the sun, and came with him from the place where he rises; that they were a long time on their journey, were all on the point of perishing, and were brought into this country without seeking it.

To this account of the keeper of the temple, which was afterwards confirmed to me by the *Great Sun*, I shall add the following passage of  
*Diodorus*



*Diodorus Siculus*, which seems to confirm the opinion of those who think the eastern *Americans* are descended from the *Europeans*, who may have been driven by the winds upon the coasts of *Guiana* or *Brazil*.

“ To the west of *Africa*, he says, lies a very large island, distant many days sail from that part of our continent. Its fertile soil is partly plain, and partly mountainous. The plain country is most sweet and pleasant, being watered everywhere with rivulets, and navigable rivers; it is beautified with many gardens which are planted with all kinds of trees, and the orchards particularly are watered with pleasant streams. The villages are adorned with houses built in a magnificent taste, having parterres ornamented with arbours covered with flowers. Hither the inhabitants retire during the summer to enjoy the fruits which the country furnishes them with in the greatest abundance. The mountainous part is covered with large woods, and all manner of fruit trees, and in the vallies, which are watered with rivulets, the inhabitants meet with every thing that can render life agreeable. In a word, the whole island, by its fertility and the abundance of its springs, furnishes the inhabitants not only with every thing that

that may flatter their wishes, but with what may also contribute to their health and strength of body. Hunting furnishes them with such an infinite number of animals, that in their feasts they have nothing to wish for in regard either to plenty or delicacy. Besides, the sea, which surrounds the island, supplies them plentifully with all kinds of fish, and indeed the sea in general is very abundant. The air of this island is so temperate that the trees bear leaves and fruit almost the whole year round. In a word, this island is so delicious, that it seems rather the abode of the gods than of men.

“Anciently, on account of its remote situation, it was altogether unknown; but afterwards it was discovered by accident. It is well known that from the earliest ages the *Phenicians* undertook long voyages in order to extend their commerce, and in consequence of those voyages established several colonies in *Africa* and the western parts of *Europe*. Every thing succeeding to their wish, and being become very powerful, they attempted to pass the pillars of *Hercules* and enter the ocean. They accordingly passed those pillars, and in their neighbourhood built a city upon a peninsula of *Spain*, which they named *Gades*. There, amongst the  
other

other buildings proper for the place, they built a temple to *Hercules*, to whom they instituted splendid sacrifices after the manner of their country. This temple is in great veneration at this day, and several *Romans* who have rendered themselves illustrious by their exploits, have performed their vows to *Hercules* for the success of their enterprizes.

“ The *Phenicians* accordingly having passed the Straights of *Spain*, sailed along *Africa*, when by the violence of the winds they were driven far out to sea, and the storm continuing several days, they were at length thrown on this island. Being the first who were acquainted with its beauty and fertility, they published them to other nations. The *Tuscans*, when they were masters at sea, designed to send a colony thither, but the *Carthaginians* found means to prevent them on the two following accounts; first, they were afraid lest their citizens, tempted by the charms of that island, should pass over thither in too great numbers, and desert their own country; next they looked upon it as a secure asylum for themselves, if ever any terrible disaster should befall their republic.”

This description of *Diodorus* is very applicable in many circumstances to *America*, particularly the agreeable temperature of the climate to the *Africans*, the prodigious fertility of the earth, the vast forests, the large rivers, and the multitude of rivulets and springs. The *Natches* may then justly be supposed to be descended from some *Phenicians* or *Carthaginians*, who had been wrecked on the shores of *South America*, in which case they might well be imagined to have but little acquaintance with the arts, as those who first landed would be obliged to apply all their thoughts to their immediate subsistence, and consequently would soon become rude and barbarous. Their worship of the eternal fire likewise implies their descent from the *Phenicians*; for every body knows that this superstition, which first took its rise in *Egypt*, was introduced by the *Phenicians* into all the countries that they visited. The figurative style, and the bold and *Syriac* expressions in the language of the *Natches*, is likewise another proof of their being descended from the *Phenicians* \*.

\* The author might have mentioned a singular custom, in which both nations agree; for it appears from *Polybius*, l. 1. c. 6. that the *Carthaginians* practised scalping.

As



As to those whom the *Natches*, long after their first establishment, found inhabiting the western coasts of *America*, and whom we name *Mexicans*, the arts which they possessed and cultivated with success, oblige me to give them a different origin. Their temples, their sacrifices; their buildings, their form of government and their manner of making war, all denote people who have transmigrated in a body, and brought with them the arts, the sciences, and the customs of their country. Those people had the art of writing, and also of painting. Their archives consisted of cloths of cotton whereon they had painted or drawn all those transactions which they thought worthy of being transmitted to posterity. It were greatly to be wished that the first conquerors of this new world had preserved to us the figures of those drawings; for by comparing them with the characters used by other nations, we might perhaps have discovered the origin of the inhabitants. The knowledge which we have of the *Chinese* characters, which are rather irregular drawings than characters, would probably have facilitated such a discovery; and perhaps those of *Japan* would have been found greatly to have resembled the *Mexican*; for I am strongly of opinion that the *Mexicans* are descended from one of those two nations.

In fact, where is the impossibility, that some prince in one of those countries, upon failing in an attempt to raise himself to the sovereign power, should leave his native country with all his partizans, and look for some new land, where, after he had established himself, he might drop all foreign correspondence? The easy navigation of the *South-Sea* renders the thing probable; and the new map of the eastern bounds of *Asia*, and the western of *North America*, lately published by Mr. *De Lisle*, makes it still more likely. This map makes it plainly appear, that between the islands of *Japan*, or northern coasts of *China*, and those of *America*, there are other lands which to this day have remained unknown; and who will take upon him to say there is no land, because it has never yet been discovered? I have therefore good grounds to believe, that the *Mexicans* came originally from *China* or *Japan*, especially when I consider their reserved and uncommunicative disposition, which to this day prevails among the people of the eastern parts of *Asia*. The great antiquity of the *Chinese* nation likewise makes it possible that a colony might have gone from thence to *America* early enough to be looked upon as *the Antients of the country*, by the first of the *Phenicians* who could be supposed

posed to arrive there. As a further corroboration of my conjectures, I was informed by a man of learning in 1752, that in the king's library there is a *Chinese* manuscript, which positively affirms that *America* was peopled by the inhabitants of *Corea*.

When the *Natches* retired to this part of *America*, where I saw them, they there found several nations, or rather the remains of several nations, some on the east, others on the west of the *Missisipi*. These are the people who are distinguished among the natives by the name of *Red Men*; and their origin is so much the more obscure, as they have not so distinct a tradition as the *Natches*, nor arts and sciences like the *Mexicans*, from whence we might draw some satisfactory inferences. All that I could learn from them was, that they came from between the north and the sun-setting; and this account they uniformly adhered to whenever they gave any account of their origin. This lame tradition no ways satisfying the desire I had to be informed on this point, I made great inquiries to know if there was any wise old man among the neighbouring nations, who could give me further intelligence about the origin of the natives. I was happy enough to discover one,

named *Moncacht-apé* among the *Tazous*, a nation about forty leagues north from the *Natches*. This man was remarkable for his solid understanding and elevation of sentiments; and I may justly compare him to those first *Greeks*, who travelled chiefly into the east to examine the manners and customs of different nations, and to communicate to their fellow-citizens upon their return the knowledge which they had acquired. *Moncacht-apé* indeed, never executed so noble a plan; but he had however conceived it, and had spared no labour and pains to effectuate it. He was by the *French* called the *Interpreter*, because he understood several of the *North American* languages; but the other name which I have mentioned was given him by his own nation, and signifies *the killer of pain and fatigue*. This name was indeed most justly applicable to him; for, to satisfy his curiosity, he had made light of the most dangerous and painful journeys, in which he had spent several years of his life. He stayed two or three days with me; and upon my desiring him to give me an account of his travels, he very readily complied with my request, and spoke to the following effect:



“ I had lost my wife, and all the children whom I had by her, when I undertook my journey towards the sun-rising. I set out from my village contrary to the inclination of all my relations, and went first to the *Chicasaws*, our friends and neighbours. I continued among them several days to inform myself whether they knew whence we all came, or at least whence they themselves came; they, who were our elders; since from them came the language of the country. As they could not inform me, I proceeded on my journey. I reached the country of the *Chaouanous*, and afterwards went up the *Wabash* or *Ohio*, almost to its source, which is in the country of the *Iroquois* or *Five Nations*. I left them however towards the north; and during the winter, which in that country is very severe and very long, I lived in a village of the *Abenakis*, where I contracted an acquaintance with a man somewhat older than myself, who promised to conduct me the following spring to the *Great Water*. Accordingly when the snows were melted, and the weather was settled, we proceeded eastward, and, after several days journey, I at length saw the *Great Water*, which filled me with such joy and admiration that I could not speak. Night drawing on, we took up our lodging on a high bank  
above

above the water, which was forely vexed by the wind, and made so great a noise that I could not sleep. Next day the ebbing and flowing of the water filled me with great apprehension; but my companion quieted my fears, by assuring me that the water observed certain bounds both in advancing and retiring. Having satisfied our curiosity in viewing the great water, we returned to the village of the *Abenakis*, where I continued the following winter; and after the snows were melted, my companion and I went and viewed the great fall of the river *St. Laurence* at *Niagara*, which was distant from the village several days journey. The view of this great fall at first made my hair stand on end, and my heart almost leap out of its place; but afterwards, before I left it, I had the courage to walk under it. Next day we took the shortest road to the *Ohio*, and my companion and I cutting down a tree on the banks of the river, we formed it into a pettiaugre, which served to conduct me down the *Ohio* and the *Missisipi*, after which, with much difficulty, I went up our small river; and at length arrived safe among my relations, who were rejoiced to see me in good health."

“ This journey, instead of satisfying, only served to excite my curiosity. Our old men, for several years, had told me that the *antient speech* informed them that the *Red Men* of the north came originally much higher and much farther than the source of the river *Missouri*; and as I had longed to see, with my own eyes, the land from whence our first fathers came, I took my precautions for my journey westwards. Having provided a small quantity of corn, I proceeded up along the eastern bank of the river *Missisipi*, till I came to the *Ohio*. I went up along the bank of this last river about the fourth part of a day’s journey, that I might be able to cross it without being carried into the *Missisipi*. There I formed a *Cajoux* or raft of canes, by the assistance of which I passed over the river; and next day meeting with a herd of buffaloes in the meadows, I killed a fat one, and took from it the fillets, the bunch, and the tongue. Soon after I arrived among the *Tamaroas*, a village of the nation of the *Illinois*, where I rested several days, and then proceeded northwards to the mouth of the *Missouri*, which, after it enters the great river, runs for a considerable time without intermixing its muddy waters with the clear stream of the other. Having, crossed the *Missisipi*, I went up the *Missouri*

*four* along its northern bank, and after several days journey I arrived at the nation of the *Missouris*, where I staid a long time to learn the language that is spoken beyond them. In going along the *Missouri* I passed thro' meadows a whole day's journey in length, which were quite covered with bufaloes.

“ When the cold was past, and the snows were melted, I continued my journey up along the *Missouri* till I came to the nation of the *West*, or the *Canzas*. Afterwards, in consequence of directions from them, I proceeded in the same course near thirty days, and at length I met with some of the nation of the *Otters*, who were hunting in that neighbourhood, and were surpris'd to see me alone. I continued with the hunters two or three days, and then accompanied one of them and his wife, who was near her time of lying in, to their village, which lay far off betwixt the north and west. We continued our journey along the *Missouri* for nine days, and then we marched directly northwards for five days more, when we came to the *Fine River*, which runs westwards in a direction contrary to that of the *Missouri*. We proceeded down this river a whole day, and then arriv'd at the village of



the *Otters*, who received me with as much kindness as if I had been of their own nation. A few days after I joined a party of the *Otters*, who were going to carry a calumet of peace to a nation beyond them, and we embarked in a pettiaugre, and went down the river for eighteen days, landing now and then to supply ourselves with provisions. When I arrived at the nation who were at peace with the *Otters*, I staid with them till the cold was passed, that I might learn their language, which was common to most of the nations that lived beyond them.

“The cold was hardly gone when I again embarked on the *Fine River*, and in my course I met with several nations, with whom I generally staid but one night, till I arrived at the nation that is but one day’s journey from the *Great Water* on the west. This nation live in the woods about the distance of a league from the river, from their apprehension of bearded men, who come upon their coasts in floating villages, and carry off their children to make slaves of them. These men were described to be white, with long black beards that came down to their breasts; they were thick and short, had large heads, which were covered with cloth; they

they were always dressed, even in the greatest heats; their cloaths fell down to the middle of their legs, which with their feet were covered with red or yellow stuff. Their arms made a great fire and a great noise; and when they saw themselves out-numbered by *Red Men*, they retired on board their large pettiaugre, their number sometimes amounting to thirty, but never more.

Those strangers came from the sun-setting, in search of a yellow stinking wood, which dyes a fine yellow colour; but the people of this nation, that they might not be tempted to visit them, had destroyed all those kind of trees. Two other nations in their neighbourhood however, having no other wood, could not destroy the trees, and were still visited by the strangers; and being greatly incommoded by them, had invited their allies to assist them in making an attack upon them the next time they should return. The following summer I accordingly joined in this expedition, and after travelling five long days journey, we came to the place where the bearded men usually landed, where we waited seventeen days for their arrival. The *Red Men*, by my advice, placed themselves in ambuscade to surprize the stran-

gers, and accordingly when they landed to cut the wood, we were so successful as to kill eleven of them, the rest immediately escaping on board two large pettiaugres, and flying westward upon the *Great Water*.

“ Upon examining those whom we had killed, we found them much smaller than ourselves, and very white; they had a large head, and in the middle of the crown the hair was very long; their head was wrapt in a great many folds of stuff, and their cloaths seemed to be made neither of wool nor silk; they were very soft, and of different colours. Two only of the eleven who were slain had fire-arms with powder and ball. I tried their pieces, and found that they were much heavier than yours, and did not kill at so great a distance.

“ After this expedition I thought of nothing but proceeding on my journey, and with that design I let the *Red Men* return home, and joined myself to those who inhabited more westward on the coast, with whom I travelled along the shore of the *Great Water*, which bends directly betwixt the north and the sun-setting. When I arrived at the villages of my fellow-travellers, where I found the days very long  
and

and the nights very short, I was advised by the old men to give over all thoughts of continuing my journey. They told me that the land extended still a long way in a direction between the north and sun-setting, after which it ran directly west, and at length was cut by the *Great Water* from north to south. One of them added, that when he was young, he knew a very old man who had seen that distant land before it was eat away by the *Great Water*, and that when the *Great Water* was low, many rocks still appeared in those parts. Finding it therefore impracticable to proceed much further, on account of the severity of the climate, and the want of game, I returned by the same route by which I had set out; and reducing my whole travels westward to days journeys, I compute that they would have employed me thirty-six moons; but on account of my frequent delays, it was five years before I returned to my relations among the *Yazous*."

*Moncacht-apé*, after giving me an account of his travels, spent four or five days visiting among the *Natches*, and then returned to take leave of me, when I made him a present of several wares of no great value, among which was a concave mirror about two inches and a half di-



ameter, which had cost me about three half-pence. As this magnified the face to four or five time its natural size, he was wonderfully delighted with it; and would not have exchanged it with the best mirror in *France*. After expressing his regret at parting with me, he returned highly satisfied to his own nation.

*Moncacht-apé's* account of the junction of *America* with the eastern parts of *Asia* seems confirmed from the following remarkable fact. Some years ago the skeletons of two large elephants and two small ones were discovered in a marsh near the river *Ohio*; and as they were not much consumed, it is supposed that the elephants came from *Asia* not many years before. If we also consider the form of government, and the manner of living among the northern nations of *America*, there will appear a great resemblance betwixt them and the *Tartars* in the north-east parts of *Asia*.

## C H A P. II.

*An account of the several nations of Indians in Louisiana.*

## S E C T. I.

*Of the nations inhabiting on the east of the Missisipi.*

**I**F to the history of the discoveries and conquests of the *Spaniards* we join the tradition of all the nations of *America*, we shall be fully persuaded, that this quarter of the world, before it was discovered by *Christopher Columbus*, was very populous, not only on the continent, but also in the islands.

However, by an incomprehensible fatality, the arrival of the *Spaniards* in this new world seems to have been the unhappy epoch of the destruction of all the nations of *America*, not only by war, but by nature itself. As it is but

too well known, how many millions of natives were destroyed by the *Spanish* sword, I shall not therefore present my readers with that horrible detail; but perhaps many people do not know that an innumerable multitude of the natives of *Mexico* and *Peru* voluntarily put an end to their own lives, some by sacrificing themselves to the manes of their sovereigns who had been cut off, and whose born victims they, according to their detestable customs, looked upon themselves to be; and others, to avoid falling under the subjection of the *Spaniards*, thinking death a less evil by far than slavery.

The same effect has been produced among the people of *North America* by two or three warlike nations of the natives. The *Chicasaws* have not only cut off a great many nations who were adjoining to them, but have even carried their fury as far as *New Mexico*, near 600 miles from the place of their residence, to root out a nation that had removed at that distance from them, in a firm expectation that their enemies would not come so far in search of them. They were however deceived and cut off. The *Iroquois* have done the same

same in the east parts of *Louisiana*; and the *Padoucas* and others have acted in the same manner to the nations in the west of the colony. We may here observe that those nations could not succeed against their enemies without considerable loss to themselves, and that they have therefore greatly lessened their own numbers by their many warlike expeditions.

I mentioned that nature had contributed no less than war to the destruction of these people. Two distempers that are not very fatal in other parts of the world make dreadful ravages among them; I mean the small-pox and a cold, which baffle all the art of their physicians, who in other respects are very skilful. When a nation is attacked by the small-pox, it quickly makes great havock; for as a whole family is crowded into a small hut, which has no communication with the external air, but by a door about two feet wide and four feet high, the distemper, if it seizes one, is quickly communicated to all. The aged die in consequence of their advanced years and the bad quality of their food; and the young, if they are not strictly watched, destroy themselves, from an abhorrence of the blotches in their skin. If they



they can but escape from their hut, they run out and bathe themselves in the river, which is certain death in that distemper. The *Chathas*, being naturally not very handsome, are not so apt to regret the loss of their beauty; consequently suffer less, and are much more numerous than the other nations.

Colds, which are very common in the winter, likewise destroy great numbers of the natives. In that season they keep fires in their huts day and night; and as there is no other opening but the door, the air within the hut is kept excessive warm without any free circulation; so that when they have occasion to go out, the cold seizes them, and the consequences of it are almost always fatal.

The first nations that the *French* were acquainted with in this part of *North America*, were those on the east of the colony; for the first settlement we made there was at *Fort Louis* on the river *Mobile*. I shall therefore begin my account of the different nations of *Indians* on this side of the colony, and proceed westwards in the same order as they are situated.

But

But however zealous I may be in displaying not only the beauties, but the riches and advantages of *Louisiana*, yet I am not at all inclined to attribute to it what it does not possess; therefore I warn my reader not to be surpris'd, if I make mention of a few nations in this colony, in comparison of the great number which he may perhaps have seen in the first maps of this country. Those maps were made from memoirs sent by different travellers, who noted down all the names they heard mentioned, and then fixed upon a spot for their residence; so that a map appeared filled with the names of nations, many of whom were destroyed, and others were refugees among nations who had adopted them and taken them under their protection. Thus, tho' the nations on this continent were formerly both numerous and populous, they are now so thinned and diminished, that there does not exist at present a third part of the nations whose names are to be found in the maps.

The most eastern nation of *Louisiana* is that called the *Apalaches*, which is a branch of the great nation of the *Apalaches*, who inhabited near the mountains to which they have given  
their

their name. This great nation is divided into several branches, who take different names. The branch in the neighbourhood of the river *Mobile* is but inconsiderable, and part of it is *Roman Catholic*.

On the north of the *Apalaches* are the *Alibamous*, a pretty considerable nation; they love the *French*, and receive the *English* rather out of necessity than friendship. On the first settling of the colony we had some commerce with them; but since the main part of the colony has fixed on the river, we have somewhat neglected them, on account of the great distance.

East from the *Alibamous* are the *Caouitas*, whom M. *Blainville*, governor of *Louisiana*, wanted to distinguish above the other nations, by giving the title of emperor to their sovereign, who then would have been chief of all the neighbouring nations; but those nations refused to acknowledge him as such, and said that it was enough if each nation obeyed its own chief; that it was improper for the chiefs themselves to be subject to other chiefs, and that such a custom had never prevailed among them,

them, as they chose rather to be destroyed by a great nation than to be subject to them. This nation is one of the most considerable; the *English* trade with them, and they suffer the traders to come among them from policy.

To the north of the *Alibamous* are the *Abeikas* and *Conchacs*, who, as far as I can learn, are the same people; yet the name of *Conchac* seems appropriated to one part more than another. They are situated at a distance from the great rivers, and consequently have no large canes in their territory. The canes that grow among them are not thicker than one's finger, and are at the same time so very hard, that when they are split they cut like knives, which these people call *Conchacs*. The language of this nation is almost the same with that of the *Chicasaws*, in which the word *conchac* signifies a knife.

The *Abeikas*, on the east of them, have the *Cherokees*, divided into several branches, and situated very near the *Apalachean* mountains. All the nations whom I have mentioned have been united in a general alliance for a long time past, in order to defend themselves against  
the



the *Iroquois* or *Five Nations*, who, before this alliance was formed, made continual war upon them; but have ceased to molest them since they have seen them united. All these nations and some small ones intermixed among them have always been looked upon as belonging to no colony, excepting the *Apalaches*; but since the breaking out of the war with the *English* in 1756, it is said they have voluntarily declared for us.

The nations in the neighbourhood of the *Mobile* are first the *Chatots*, a small nation consisting of about forty huts, adjoining to the river and the sea. They are *Roman Catholics* or reputed such; and are friends to the *French* whom they are always ready to serve upon being paid for it. North from the *Chatots*, and very near them, is the *French* settlement of *Fort Louis* on the *Mobile*.

A little north from *Fort Louis* are situated the *Thomez*, which are not more numerous than the *Chatots*, and are said to be *Roman Catholics*. They are our friends to such a degree as even to teize us with their officiousness.

Further

Further north live the *Taensas*, who are a branch of the *Natches*, of whom I shall have occasion to speak more at large. Both of these nations keep the eternal fire with the utmost care; but they trust the guard of it to men, from a persuasion that none of their daughters would sacrifice their liberty for that office. The whole nation of the *Taensas* consists only of about 100 huts.

Proceeding still northwards along the bay, we meet with the nation of the *Mobiliens*, near the mouth of the river *Mobile*, in the bay of that name. The true name of this nation is *Mowvill*, which the *French* have turned into *Mobile*, calling the river and the bay from the nation that inhabited near them. All these small nations were living in peace upon the arrival of the *French*, and still continue so; the nations on the east of the *Mobile* serving as a barrier to them against the incursions of the *Iroquois*. Besides, the *Chicasaws* look upon them as their brethren, as both they, and their neighbours on the east of the *Mobile*, speak a language which is nearly the same with that of the *Chicasaws*.

Returning

Returning towards the sea, on the west of the *Mobile*, we find the small nation of the *Pacha-Ogoulas*, that is, *nation of bread*, situated upon the bay of the same name. This nation consists only of one village of about thirty huts. Some *French Canadians* have settled in their neighbourhood, and they live together like brethren, as the *Canadians*, who are naturally of a peaceable disposition, know the character of the natives, and have the art of living with the nations of *America*. What chiefly renders the harmony betwixt them durable, is the absence of soldiers, who never appear in this nation.

Further northwards, near the river *Pacha-Ogoulas*, is situated the great nation of the *Chatkas*, or *Flat-heads*. I call them the great nation, for I have not known or heard of any other near so numerous. They reckon in this nation 25,000 warriors. There may perhaps be such a number of men among them, who take that name; but I am far from thinking that all these have a title to the character of warriors.

According to the tradition of the natives, this nation arrived so suddenly, and passed so rapidly

thro' the territories of others, that when I  
 ed them, whence came the *Chatkas*? they an-  
 red me, that they sprung out of the ground;  
 which they meant to expresse their great fur-  
 ze at seeing them appear so suddenly. Their  
 eat numbers awed the natives near whom they  
 sed; their character; being but little inclined  
 war, did not inspire them with the fury of  
 conquests; thus they at length arrived in an un-  
 habited country which nobody disputed with  
 em. They have since lived without any dif-  
 fies with their neighbours; who on the other  
 nd have never dared to try whether they  
 re brave or not. It is doubtless owing to this  
 at they have increased to their present numbers.

They are called *Flat-heads*; but I do not  
 ow why that name has been given to them  
 ore than to others, since all the nations of  
*Louisiana* have their heads as flat, or nearly so.  
 hey are situated about 250 miles north from  
 e sea, and extend more from east to west than  
 om south to north.

Those who travel from the *Chatkas* to the  
*Michasaws*, seldom go by the shortest road,  
 hich extends about 180 miles, and is very  
 oody and mountainous. They choose rather  
 to



to go along the river *Mobile*, which is both the easiest and most pleasant route. The nation the *Chicasaws* is very warlike. The men have very regular features, are large, well shaped and neatly dressed; they are fierce, and have a high opinion of themselves. They seem to be the remains of a populous nation, whose warlike disposition had prompted them to invade several nations, whom they have indeed destroyed, but not without diminishing their own numbers by those expeditions. What induces me to believe that this nation has been formerly very considerable, is that the nations who border upon them, and whom I have just mentioned, speak the *Chicasaw* language, tho' somewhat corrupted, and those who speak it but value themselves upon it.

I ought perhaps to except out of this number the *Taensas*, who being a branch of the *Natches*, have still preserved their peculiar language; but even these speak, in general, the corrupted *Chicasaw* language, which our French settlers call the *Mobilian* language. As to the *Chatkas*, I suppose, that being very numerous they have been able to preserve their own language in a great measure; and have only adopted

d some words of the *Chicasaw* language. They always spoke to me in the *Chicasaw* tongue.

In returning towards the coast next the river *Mississipi*, we meet with a small nation of about twenty huts, named *Aquelou-pissas*, that is, men who understand and see. This nation formerly lived within three or four miles of the place where *New Orleans* is built; but they are further north at present, and not far from the lake *St. Lewis* or *Pontchartrain*. They speak a language somewhat approaching to that of the *Chicasaws*. We have never had great dealings with them.

Being now arrived at the river *Mississipi*, I shall proceed upwards along its banks, as far as to the most distant nations that are knownto us.

The first nation that I meet with is the *Ou-nas*, which signifies the red nation. They are situated about twenty leagues from *New Orleans*, where I saw some of them upon my arrival in this province. Upon the first establishment of the colony, some *French* went and settled near them; and they have been very fatal neighbours, by furnishing them with brandy, which they drink to great excess.

Crossing

Crossing the *Red River*, and proceeding still upwards, we find the remains of the nation of the *Tonicas*, who have always been very much attached to the *French*, and have even been our auxiliaries in war. The Chief of this nation was our very zealous friend; and as he was full of courage, and always ready to make war on the enemies of the *French*, the king sent him a brevet of brigadier of the red armies, and a blue ribbon, from whence hung a silver medal, which on one side represented the marriage of the king, and on the reverse had the city of *Paris*. He likewise sent him a gold-headed cane; and the *Indian* Chief was not a little proud of wearing those honourable distinctions, which were certainly well bestowed. This nation speaks a language so far different from that of their neighbours, in that they pronounce the letter *R*, which the others have not. They have likewise different customs.

The *Natches* in former times appear to have been one of the most respectable nations in the colony, not only from their own tradition, but from that of the other nations, in whom their greatness and civilized customs raised no less jealousy than admiration. I could fill a volume with what relates to this people alone; but as

I am

I am now giving a concise account of the people of *Louisiana*, I shall speak of them as of the rest, only enlarging a little upon some important transactions concerning them.

When I arrived in 1720 among the *Natches*, that nation was situated upon a small river of the same name; the chief village where the *Great Sun* resided was built along the banks of the river, and the other villages were planted round it. They were two leagues above the confluence of the river, which joins the *Mississippi* at the foot of the great precipices of the *Natches*. From thence are four leagues to its source, and as many to *Fort Rosalie*, and they were situated within a league of the fort.

Two small nations lived as refugees among the *Natches*. The most ancient of these adopted nations were the *Grigras*, who seem to have received that name from the *French*, because when talking with one another they often pronounce those two syllables, which makes them be remarked as strangers among the *Natches*, who, as well as the *Chicasaws*, and all the nations that speak the *Chicasaw* language, cannot pronounce the letter *R*.



The other small nation adopted by the *Natches*, are the *Thioux*, who have also the letter *R* in their language. These were the weak remains of the *Thioux* nation, formerly one of the strongest in the country. However, according to the account of the other nations, being of a turbulent disposition, they drew upon themselves the resentment of the *Chicasaws*, which was the occasion of their ruin; for by their many engagements they were at length so weakened that they durst not face their enemy, and consequently were obliged to take refuge among the *Natches*.

The *Natches*, the *Grigras*, and the *Thioux*, may together raise about 1200 warriors; which is but a small force in comparison of what the *Natches* could formerly have raised alone; for according to their traditions they were the most powerful nation of all *North America*, and were looked upon by the other nations as their superiors, and on that account respected by them. To give an idea of their power, I shall only mention, that formerly they extended from the river *Manchac* or *Iberville*, which is about 50 leagues from the sea, to the river *Wabash*, which is distant from the sea about 460 leagues; and that they had about five hundred *Suns* or princes.

ices. From these facts we may judge how  
 glorious this nation formerly has been; but  
 the pride of their *Great Suns*, or sovereigns, and  
 the pride of their inferior *Suns*, joined to the pre-  
 judices of the people, has made greater havoc  
 among them, and contributed more to their de-  
 struction, than long and bloody wars would  
 have done.

As their sovereigns were despotic, they had  
 for a long time past established the following in-  
 human and impolitic custom, that when any of  
 them died, a great number of their subjects,  
 both men and women, should likewise be put  
 to death. A proportionable number of subjects  
 were likewise killed upon the death of any of the  
 inferior *Suns*; and the people on the other hand  
 had imbibed a belief that all those who fol-  
 lowed their princes into the other world, to serve  
 them there, would be eternally happy. It is  
 difficult to conceive how ruinous such an inhuman  
 custom would be among a nation who had so  
 many princes as the *Natches*.

It would seem that some of the *Suns*, more hu-  
 man than the rest, had disapproved of this bar-  
 barous custom, and had therefore retired to places  
 at a remote distance from the center of their na-

tion. For we have two branches of this great nation settled in other parts of the colony, who have preserved the greatest part of the customs of the *Natches*. One of these branches is the nation of the *Taensas* on the banks of the *Mobile*, who preserve the eternal fire, and several other usages of the nation from whom they are descended. The other branch is the nation of the *Chitimachás*, whom the *Natches* have always looked upon as their brethren.

Forty leagues north from the *Natches* is the river *Yazous* which runs into the *Missisipi*, and is so called from a nation of the same name who had about a hundred huts on its banks.

Near the *Yazous* on the same river lived the *Coroas*, a nation consisting of about forty huts. These two nations pronounce the letter *R*.

Upon the same river likewise lived the *Chacchi Oumas*, a name which signifies *red Cray-fish*. These people had not above fifty huts.

Near the same river dwelt the *Oufe Ogoulas* or the nation of the *dog*, which might have about sixty huts.

The *Tapouffas* likewise inhabited upon the banks of this river, and had not above twenty-five huts. These three last nations do not pronounce the letter *R*, and seem to be branches of the *Chicasaws*, especially as they speak their language. Since the massacre of the *French* settlers at the *Natches*, these five small nations who had joined in the conspiracy against us, have all retired among the *Chicasaws*, and make now but one nation with them.

To the north of the *Ohio*, not far from the banks of the *Missisipi*, inhabit the *Illinois*, who have given their name to the river on the banks of which they have settled. They are divided into several villages, such as the *Tamaroas*, the *Caskaquias*, the *Caouquias*, the *Pimiteouis*, and some others. Near the village of the *Tamaroas* is a *French* post, where several *French* *Canadians* have settled.

This is one of the most considerable posts in all *Louisiana*, which will appear not at all surprising, when we consider that the *Illinois* were one of the first nations whom we discovered in the colony, and that they have always remained most faithful allies of the *French*; an advantage which is in a great measure owing to the pro-



per manner of living with the natives of *America*, which the *Canadians* have always observed. It is not their want of courage that renders them so peaceable, for their valour is well known. The letter *R* is pronounced by the *Illinois*.

Proceeding further northwards we meet with a pretty large nation, known by the name of the *Foxes*, with whom we have been at war near these forty years past, yet I have not heard that we have had any blows with them for long time.

From the *Foxes* to the *Fall of St. Anthony* we meet with no nation, nor any above the *Fall* for near an hundred leagues. About that distance north of the *Fall* the *Sioux* are settled and are said to inhabit several scattered villages both on the east and west of the *Mississipi*.

## SECT. II.

*Of the nations inhabiting on the west of  
the Missisipi.*

**H**AVING described as exactly as possible all the nations on the east of the *Missisipi*, as well those who are included within the bounds of the colony, as those who are adjoining to it, and have some connection with the others; I shall now proceed to give an account of those who inhabit on the west of the river, from the sea northwards.

Between the river *Missisipi*, and those lakes which are filled by its waters upon their overflowing, is a small nation named *Chaouchas*, or *Ouachas*, who inhabit some little villages, but are of so little consequence that they are no otherwise known to our colonists but by their name.

In the neighbourhood of the lakes above-mentioned live the *Chitimachas*. These are the remains of a nation which was formerly pretty considerable; but we have destroyed part of them by exciting our allies to attack them. I have already observed that they were a branch

of the *Natches*, and upon my first settling among these, I found several *Chitimachas*, who had taken refuge among them to avoid the calamities of the war which had been made upon them near the lakes.

Since the peace that was concluded with them in 1719, they have not only remained quiet, but kept themselves so prudently retired, that, rather than have any intercourse with the *French*, or traffic with them for what they look upon as superfluities, they choose to live in the manner they did an hundred years ago.

Along the west coast, not far from the sea, inhabit the nation named *Atacapas*, that is, men-eaters, being so called by the other nations on account of their detestable custom of eating their enemies, or such as they believe to be their enemies. In this vast country there are no other *Canibals* to be met with besides the *Atacapas*; and since the *French* have gone among them, they have raised in them so great an horror of that abominable practice of devouring creatures of their own species, that they have promised to leave it off; and accordingly for a long time past we have heard of no such barbarity among them.

The *Bayouc Ogoulas* were formerly situated in the country that still bears their name. This nation is now confounded with the others to whom it is joined.

The *Oque-Louffas* are a small nation situated north-west from the *Cut Point*. They live on the banks of two small lakes, the waters of which appear black by reason of the great number of leaves which cover the bottom of them, and have given name to the nation, *Oque-Louffas* in their language signifying *black water*.

From the *Oque-Louffas* to the *Red River*, we meet with no other nation; but upon the banks of this river, a little above the *Rapid*, is seated the small nation of the *Avoyels*. These are the people who bring to our settlers horses, oxen, and cows. I know not in what fair they buy them, nor with what money they pay for them; but the truth is, they sell them to us for about seventeen shillings a-piece. The *Spaniards* of *New-Spain* have such numbers of them that they do not know what to do with them, and are obliged to those who will take them off their hands. At present the *French* have a greater number of them than they want, especially of horses.



About fifty leagues higher up the *Red River*, live the *Nachitoches*, near a *French* post of the same name. They are a pretty considerable nation, having about two hundred huts. They have always been greatly attached to the *French*; but never were friends to the *Spaniards*. There are some branches of this nation situated further westward; but the huts are not numerous.

Three hundred miles west from the *Mississippi*, upon the *Red River*, we find the great nation of the *Cadodaquioux*. It is divided into several branches which extend very widely. This people, as well as the *Nachitoches*, have a peculiar language; however, there is not a village in either of the nations, nor indeed in any nation of *Louisiana*, where there are not some who can speak the *Chicasaw* language, which is called the vulgar tongue, and is the same here as the *Lingua Franca* is in the *Levant*.

Between the *Red River* and the *Arkansas* there is at present no nation. Formerly the *Ouachites* lived upon the *Black River*, and gave their name to it, but at this time there are no remains of that nation; the *Chicasaws* having destroyed great part of them, and the rest took refuge among the *Cadodaquioux*, where their enemies durst not molest them. The *Taensas* lived

lived formerly in this neighbourhood upon a river of their name; but they took refuge on the banks of the *Mobile* near the allies of the *Chicasaws*, who leave them undisturbed.

The nation of the *Arkansas* have given their name to the river on which they are situated, about four leagues from its confluence with the *Missipi*. This nation is pretty considerable, and its men are no less distinguished for being good hunters than stout warriors. The *Chicasaws*, who are of a restless disposition, have more than once wanted to make trial of the bravery of the *Arkansas*; but they were opposed with such firmness, that they have now laid aside all thoughts of attacking them, especially since they have been joined by the *Kappas*, the *Michigamias*, and a part of the *Illinois*, who have settled among them. Accordingly there is no longer any mention either of the *Kappas* or *Michigamias*, who are now all adopted by the *Arkansas*.

The reader may have already observed, in this account of the natives of *Louisiana*, that several nations of those people had joined themselves to others, either because they could no longer resist their enemies, or because they hoped to improve their condition by intermixing with

another nation. I am glad to have this occasion of observing that those people respect the rights of hospitality, and that those rights always prevail, notwithstanding any superiority that one nation may have over another with whom they are at war, or even over those people among whom their enemies take refuge. For example, a nation of 2000 warriors makes war upon, and violently pursues another nation of 500 warriors, who retire among a nation in alliance with their enemies. If this last nation adopt the 500, the first nation, tho' 2000 in number, immediately lay down their arms, and instead of continuing hostilities, reckon the adopted nation among the number of their allies.

Besides the *Arkansas*, some authors place other nations upon their river. I cannot take upon me to say that there never were any; but I can positively affirm, from my own observation upon the spot, that no other nation is to be met with at present on this river, or even as far as the *Missouri*.

Not far from the river *Missouri* is situated the nation of the *Osages* upon a small river of the same name. This nation is said to have been pretty

pretty considerable formerly, but at present they can neither be said to be great nor small.

The nation of the *Missouris* is very considerable, and has given its name to the large river that empties itself into the *Mississippi*. It is the first nation we meet with from the confluence of the two rivers, and yet it is situated above forty leagues up the *Missouri*. The *French* had a settlement pretty near this nation, at the time when *M. de Bourgmont* was commandant in those parts; but soon after he left them, the inhabitants massacred the *French* garrison.

The *Spaniards*, as well as our other neighbours, being continually jealous of our superiority over them, formed a design of establishing themselves among the *Missouris*, about forty leagues from the *Illinois*, in order to limit our boundaries westward. They judged it necessary, for the security of their colony, entirely to cut off the *Missouris*, and for that purpose they courted the friendship of the *Osages*, whose assistance they thought would be of service to them in their enterprize, and who were generally at enmity with the *Missouris*. A company of *Spaniards*, men, women, and soldiers, accordingly set out from *Santa Fe*, having a *Dominican* for their chaplain,



chaplain, and an engineer for their guide and commander. The caravan was furnished with horses, and all other kinds of beasts necessary; for it is one of their prudent maxims, to send off all those things together. By a fatal mistake the *Spaniards* arrived first among the *Missouris*, whom they mistook for the *Osages*, and imprudently discovering their hostile intentions, they were themselves surpris'd and cut off by those whom they intended for destruction. The *Missouris* some time afterwards dressed themselves with the ornaments of the chapel; and carried them in a kind of triumphant procession to the *French* commandant among the *Illinois*. Along with the ornaments they brought a *Spanish* map, which seem'd to me to be a better draught of the west part of our colony, towards them, than of the countries we are most concerned with. From this map it appears, that we ought to bend the *Red River*, and that of the *Arkansas*, somewhat more, and place the source of the *Missisipi* more westerly than our geographers do.

The principal nations who inhabit upon the banks, or in the neighbourhood of the *Missouri*, are, besides those already mentioned, the *Canzas*, the *Othoues*, the *White Panis*, the *Black Panis*,

*Panis*, the *Panimachas*, the *Aiouez*, and the *Padoucas*. The most numerous of all those nations are the *Padoucas*, the smallest are the *Aiouez*, the *Othoues*, and the *Osages*; the others are pretty considerable.

To the north of all those nations, and near the river *Mississipi*, it is pretended that a part of the nation of the *Sioux* have their residence. Some affirm that they inhabit now on one side of the river, now on another. From what I could learn from travellers, I am inclined to think, that they occupy at the same time both sides of the *Mississipi*, and their settlements, as I have elsewhere observed, are more than an hundred leagues above the Fall of *St. Anthony*. But we need not yet disquiet ourselves about the advantages which might result to us from those very remote countries. Many ages must pass before we can penetrate into the northern parts of *Louisiana*.

## C H A P. III.

*A Description of the natives of Louisiana; of their manners and customs, particularly those of the Natches: Of their language, their religion, ceremonies, Rulers or Suns, feasts, marriages, &c.*

## S E C T. I.

*A description of the natives; the different employments of the two sexes; and their manner of bringing up their children.*

**I**N the concise history which I have given of the people of *Louisiana*, and in several other places where I have happened to mention them, the reader may have observed that these nations have not all the same character; altho' they live adjoining to each other. He therefore ought not to expect a perfect uniformity in their manners, or that I should describe all the different usages that prevail in different parts, which would create a disagreeable medley, and tend only to confound his ideas which cannot be too clear. My design is only to shew in general, from the character of those people, what course

we ought to observe, in order to draw advantage from our intercourse with them. I shall however be more full in speaking of the *Natches*, a populous nation, among whom I lived the space of eight years, and whose sovereign, the chief of war, and the chief of the keepers of the temple, were among my most intimate friends. Besides, their manners were more civilized, their manner of thinking more just and fuller of sentiment, their customs more reasonable, and their ceremonies more natural and serious; on all which accounts they were eminently distinguished above the other nations.

All the natives of *America* in general are extremely well made; very few of them are to be seen under five feet and an half, and very many of them above that; their leg seems as if it was fashioned in a mould; it is nervous, and the calf is firm; they are long waisted; their head is upright and somewhat flat in the upper part; and their features are regular; they have black eyes, and thick black hair without curls. If we see none that are extremely fat and purfy, neither do we meet with any that are so lean as if they were in a consumption. The men in general are better made than the women; they are more nervous, and the women more plump  
and



and fleshy; the men are almost all large, and the women of a middle size. I have always been inclined to think, that the care they take of their children in their infancy contributes greatly to their fine shapes, tho' the climate has also its share in that, for the *French* born in *Louisiana* are all large, well shaped, and of good flesh and blood.

When any of the women of the natives is delivered, she goes immediately to the water and washes herself and the infant; she then comes home and lies down, after having disposed her infant in the cradle, which is about two feet and a half long, nine inches broad, and half a foot deep, being formed of streight pieces of cane bent up at one end, to serve for a foot or stay. Betwixt the canes and the infant is a kind of matrafs of the tufted herb called *Spanisb beard*, and under its head is a little skin cushion, stuffed with the same herb. The infant is laid on its back in the cradle, and fastened to it by the shoulders, the arms, the legs, the thighs, and the hips; and over its forehead are two bands of deer-skin which keeps its head to the cushion, and renders that part flat. As the cradle does not weigh much above two pounds, it generally lies on the mother's bed, who

who suckles the infant occasionally. The infant is rocked not side-ways but end-ways, and when it is a month old they put under its knees garters made of buffalo's wool which is very soft, and above the ankle bones they bind the legs with threads of the same wool for the breadth of three or four inches. And these ligatures the child wears till it be four or five years old.

The infants of the natives are white when they are born, but they soon turn brown, as they are rubbed with bear's oil and exposed to the sun. They rub them with oil, both to render their nerves more flexible, and also to prevent the flies from stinging them, as they suffer them to roll about naked upon all fours, before they are able to walk upright. They never put them upon their legs till they are a year old, and they suffer them to suck as long as they please, unless the mother prove with child, in which case she ceases to suckle.

When the boys are about twelve years of age, they give them a bow and arrows proportioned to their strength, and in order to exercise them they tie some hay, about twice as large as the fist,

fiſt, to the end of a pole about ten feet high. He who brings down the hay receives the prize from an old man who is always preſent: the beſt ſhooter is called the young warrior, the next beſt is called the apprentice warrior, and ſo on of the others, who are prompted to excel more by ſentiments of honour than by blows.

As they are threatened from their moſt tender infancy with the reſentment of the old man, if they are any ways refractory or do any miſchievous tricks, which is very rare, they fear and reſpect him above every one elſe. This old man is frequently the great-grandfather, or the great-great-grandfather of the family, for thoſe natives live to a very great age. I have ſeen ſome of them not able to walk, without having any other diſtemper or infirmity than old age, ſo that when the neceſſities of nature required it, or they wanted to take the air, they were obliged to be carried out of their hut, an aſſiſtance which is always readily offered to the old men. The reſpect paid to them by their family is ſo great, that they are looked upon as the judges of all differences, and their counſels are decrees. An old man who is the head of a fa-

family is called father, even by his grand children, and great-grand children, who to distinguish their immediate father call him their true father.

If any of their young people happen to fight, which I never saw nor heard of during the whole time I resided in their neighbourhood, they threaten to put them in a hut at a great distance from their nation, as persons unworthy to live among others; and this is repeated to them so often, that if they happen to have had a battle, they take care never to have another. I have already observed that I studied them a considerable number of years; and I never could learn that there ever were any disputes or boxing matches among either their boys or men.

As the children grow up, the fathers and mothers take care each to accustom those of their own sex to the labours and exercises suited to them, and they have no great trouble to keep them employed; but it must be confessed that the girls and the women work more than the men and the boys. These last go a hunting and fishing, cut the wood, the smallest bits of which



which are carried home by the women; they clear the fields for corn, and how it; and on days when they cannot go abroad they amuse themselves with making, after their fashion, pick-axes, oars, paddles, and other instruments, which once made last a long while. The women on the other hand have their children to bring up, have to pound the maiz for the subsistence of the family, have to keep up the fire, and to make a great many utensils, which require a good deal of work, and last but a short time, such as their earthen ware, their matts, their clothes, and a thousand other things of that kind.

When the children are about ten or twelve years of age they accustom them by degrees to carry small loads, which they increase with their years. The boys are from time to time exercised in running; but they never suffer them to exhaust themselves by the length of the race, lest they should overheat themselves. The more nimble at that exercise sometimes sportfully challenges those who are more slow and heavy; but the old man who presides hinders the raillery from being carried to any excess, carefully avoiding all subjects of quarrel and  
dis-

dispute, on which account doubtless it is that they will never suffer them to wrestle.

Both boys and girls are early accustomed to bathe every morning, in order to strengthen the nerves, and harden them against cold and fatigue, and likewise to teach them to swim, that they may avoid or pursue an enemy, even across a river. The boys and girls, from the time they are three years of age, are called out every morning by an old man, to go to the river; and here is some more employment for the mothers who accompany them thither to teach them to swim. Those who can swim tolerably well, make a great noise in winter by beating the water in order to frighten away the crocodiles, and keep themselves warm.

The reader will have observed that most of the labour and fatigue falls to the share of the women; but I can declare that I never heard them complain of their fatigues, unless of the trouble their children gave them, which complaint arose as much from maternal affection, as from any attention that the children required. The girls from their infancy have it instilled into them, that if they are sluttish or unhandy they will

will have none but a dull awkward fellow for their husband; I observed in all the nations I visited, that this threatenng was never lost upon the young girls.

I would not have it thought however, that the young men are altogether idle. Their occupations indeed are not of such a long continuance; but they are much more laborious. As the men have occasion for more strength, reason requires that they should not exhaust themselves in their youth; but at the same time they are not exempted from those exercises that fit them for war and hunting. The children are educated without blows; and the body is left at full liberty to grow, and to form and strengthen itself with their years. The youths accompany the men in hunting, in order to learn the wiles and tricks necessary to be practised in the field, and accustom themselves to suffering and patience. When they are full grown men, they dress the field or waste land, and prepare it to receive the seed; they go to war or hunting, dress the skins, cut the wood, make their bows and arrows, and assist each other in building their huts.

They have still I allow a great deal of more spare time than the women; but this is not all thrown away. As these people have not the assistance of writing, they are obliged to have recourse to tradition, in order to preserve the remembrance of any remarkable transactions; and this tradition cannot be learned but by frequent repetitions, consequently many of the youths are often employed in hearing the old men narrate the history of their ancestors, which is thus transmitted from generation to generation. In order to preserve their traditions pure and uncorrupt, they are careful not to deliver them indifferently to all their young people, but teach them only to those young men of whom they have the best opinion.



## S E C T. II.

*Of the language, government, religion, ceremonies, and feasts of the natives.*

**D**URING my residence among the *Natches* I contracted an intimate friendship, not only with the chiefs or guardians of the temple, but with the *Great Sun*, or the sovereign of the nation, and his brother the *Stung Serpent*, the chief of the warriors; and by my great intimacy with them, and the respect I acquired among the people, I easily learned the peculiar language of the nation.

This language is easy in the pronunciation, and expressive in the terms. The natives, like the *Oriental*s, speak much in a figurative stile, the *Natches* in particular more than any other people of *Louisiana*. They have two languages, that of the nobles and that of the people, and both are very copious. I will give two or three examples to shew the difference of these two languages. When I call one of the common

mon people, I say to him *aquenán*, that is, *hark ye*: if, on the other hand, I want to speak to a *Sun*, or one of their nobles, I say to him, *magani*, which signifies, *hark ye*. If one of the common people call at my house, I say to him, *tachte-cabanañte*, *are you there*, or I am glad to see you, which is equivalent to our good morrow. I express the same thing to a *Sun* by the word *apapégouaiché*. Again, according to their custom, I say to one of the common people, *petchi*, *sit you down*; but to a *Sun*, when I desire him to sit down, I say, *cabam*. The two languages are nearly the same in all other respects; for the difference of expression seems only to take place in matters relating to the persons of the *Suns* and nobles, in distinction from those of the people.

Tho' the women speak the same language with the men, yet, in their manner of pronunciation, they soften and smooth the words, whereas the speech of the men is more grave and serious. The *French*, by chiefly frequenting the women, contracted their manner of speaking, which was ridiculed as an effeminacy by the women, as well as the men, among the natives.

From my conversations with the chief of the guardians of the temple, I discovered that they acknowledged a supreme being, whom they called *Coyocop-Chill*, or *Great Spirit*. The *Spirit infinitely great*, or the *Spirit* by way of excellence. The word *chill*, in their language, signifies the most superlative degree of perfection, and is added by them to the word which signifies *fire*, when they want to mention the *Sun*; thus *Oua* is *fire*, and *Oua-chill* is the *supreme fire*, or the *Sun*; therefore, by the word *Coyocop-Chill* they mean a spirit that surpasses other spirits as much as the sun does common fire.

“God,” according to the definition of the guardian of the temple, “was so great and powerful, that, in comparison with him, all other things were as nothing; he had made all that we see, all that we can see, and all that we cannot see; he was so good, that he could not do ill to any one, even if he had a mind to it. They believe that God had made all things by his will; that nevertheless the little spirits, who are his servants, might, by his orders, have made many excellent works in the universe,

verse, which we admire; but that God himself had formed man with his own hands."

The guardian added, that they named those little spirits, *Coyocop-techou*, that is, a *free servant*, but as submissive and as respectful as a slave; that those spirits were always present before God, ready to execute his pleasure with an extreme diligence; that the air was filled with other spirits, some good some wicked; and that the latter had a chief, who was more wicked than them all; that God had found him so wicked, that he had bound him for ever, so that the other spirits of the air no longer did so much harm, especially when they were by prayers entreated not to do it; for it is one of the religious customs of those people to invoke the spirits of the air for rain or fine weather, according as each is needed. I have seen the *Great Sun* fast for nine days together, eating nothing but maiz-corn, without meat or fish, drinking nothing but water, and abstaining from the company of his wives during the whole time. He underwent this rigorous fast out of complaisance to some *Frenchmen*, who had been complaining that it had not rained for a long time. Those inconsiderate people had not re-



marked, that notwithstanding the want of rain, the fruits of the earth had not suffered, as the dew is so plentiful in summer as fully to supply that deficiency.

The guardian of the temple having told me that God had made man with his own hands, I asked him if he knew how that was done. He answered, "that God had kneaded some clay, such as that which potters use, and had made it into a little man; and that after examining it, and finding it well formed, he blew upon his work, and forthwith that little man had life, grew, acted, walked, and found himself a man perfectly well shaped." As he made no mention of the woman, I asked him how he believed she was made; he told me, "that probably in the same manner as the man; that their *antient speech* made no mention of any difference, only told them that the man was made first, and was the strongest and most courageous, because he was to be the head and support of the woman, who was made to be his companion."

Here I did not omit to rectify his notions on the subjects we had been talking about, and to give

give him those just ideas which religion teaches us, and the sacred writings have transmitted to us. He hearkened to me with great attention, and promised to repeat all that I had told him to the old men of his nation, who certainly would not forget it; adding, that we were very happy in being able to retain the knowledge of such fine things by means of the *speaking cloth*, so they name books and manuscripts.

I next proceeded to ask him, who had taught them to build a temple? whence had they their eternal fire, which they preserved with so much care? and who was the person that first instituted their feasts? He replied, "The charge I am entrusted with obliges me to know all these things you ask of me; I will therefore satisfy you: hearken to me. A great number of years ago there appeared among us a man and his wife, who came down from the sun. Not that we believe that the sun had a wife who bore him children, or that these were the descendants of the sun; but when they first appeared among us they were so bright and luminous, that we had no difficulty to believe that they came down from the sun. This

man told us, that having seen from on high that we did not govern ourselves well; that we had no master; that each of us had presumption enough to think himself capable of governing others, while he could not even conduct himself; he had thought fit to come down among us to teach us to live better.

“ He moreover told us, that in order to live in peace among ourselves, and to please the supreme Spirit, we must indispensably observe the following points; we must never kill any one but in defence of our own lives; we must never know any other woman besides our own; we must never take any thing that belongs to another; we must never lye nor get drunk; we must not be avaricious, but must give liberally, and with joy, part of what we have to others who are in want, and generously share our subsistence with those who are in need of it.

“ The words of this man deeply affected us, for he spoke them with authority, and he procured the respect even of the old men themselves, tho’ he reprehended them as freely as the rest. Next day we offered to acknowledge him as our sovereign. He at first refused, saying

ing that he should not be obeyed, and that the disobedient would infallibly die; but at length he accepted the offer that was made him on the following conditions :

“ That we would go and inhabit another country, better than that in which we were, which he would shew us ; that we would afterwards live conformable to the instructions he had given us ; that we would promise never to acknowledge any other soveraigns but him and his descendants ; that the nobility should be perpetuated by the women after this manner ; if I, said he, have male and female children, they being brothers and sisters cannot marry together ; the eldest boy may chuse a wife from among the people, but his sons shall be only nobles ; the children of the eldest girl, on the other hand, shall be princes and princesses, and her eldest son be soveraign ; but her eldest daughter be the mother of the next soveraign, even tho’ she should marry one of the common people ; and, in defect of the eldest daughter, the next female relation to the person reigning shall be the mother of the future soveraign ; the sons of the soveraign and princes shall lose their rank, but the daughters shall preserve theirs.



“ He then told us, that in order to preserve the excellent precepts he had given us, it was necessary to build a temple, into which it should be lawful for none but the princes and princesses to enter, to speak to the *Spirit*. That in the temple they should eternally preserve a fire, which he would bring down from the sun, from whence he himself had descended; that the wood with which the fire was supplied should be pure wood without bark; that eight wise men of the nation should be chosen for guarding the fire night and day; that those eight men should have a chief, who should see them do their duty, and that if any of them failed in it he should be put to death. He likewise ordered another temple to be built in a distant part of our nation, which was then very populous, and the eternal fire to be kept there also, that in case it should be extinguished in the one it might be brought from the other; in which case, till it was again lighted, the nation would be afflicted with a great mortality.

“ Our nation having consented to these conditions, he agreed to be our sovereign; and in presence of all the people he brought down the  
the

the fire from the sun, upon some wood of the walnut-tree which he had prepared, which fire was deposited in both the temples. He lived a long time, and saw his children's children. To conclude, he instituted our feasts such as you see them."

The *Natches* have neither sacrifices, libations, nor offerings; their whole worship consists in preserving the eternal fire, and this the *Great Sun* watches over with a peculiar attention. The *Sun*, who reigned when I was in the country, was extremely solicitous about it, and visited the temple every day. His vigilance had been awakened by a terrible hurricane, which some years before had happened in the country, and was looked upon as an extraordinary event, the air being generally clear and serene in that climate. If to that calamity should be joined the extinction of the eternal fire, he was apprehensive their whole nation would be destroyed.

One day, when the *Great Sun* called upon me, he gave me an account of a dreadful calamity that had formerly befallen the nation of the *Natches*, in consequence, as he believed,

of the extinction of the eternal fire. He introduced his account in the following manner; " Our nation was formerly very numerous and very powerful; it extended more than twelve days journey from east to west, and more than fifteen from south to north. We reckoned then 500 suns, and you may judge by that what was the number of the nobles, of the people of rank, and the common people. Now in times past it happened, that one of the two guardians, who were upon duty in the temple, left it on some business, and the other fell asleep, and suffered the fire to go out. When he awaked and saw that he had incurred the penalty of death, he went and got some profane fire, as tho' he had been going to light his pipe, and with that he renewed the eternal fire. His transgression was by that means concealed; but a dreadful mortality immediately ensued, and raged for four years, during which many *Suns* and an infinite number of the people died.

The guardian at length sickened, and found himself dying, upon which he sent for the *Great Sun*, and confessed the heinous crime he had been guilty of. The old men were immediately assembled, and, by their advice, fire being

ing snatched from the other temple, and brought into this, the mortality quickly ceased." Upon my asking him what he meant by "snatching the fire," he replied, "that it must always be brought away by violence, and that some blood must be shed, unless some tree on the road was set on fire by lightning, and then the fire might be brought from thence; but that the fire of the sun was always preferable.

It is impossible to express his astonishment when I told him, that it was a trifling matter to bring down fire from the sun, and that I had it in my power to do it whenever I pleased. As he was extremely desirous to see me perform that seeming miracle, I took the smallest of two burning glasses which I had brought from *France*, and placing some dry punk (or agaric) upon a chip of wood, I drew the focus of the glass upon it, and with a tone of authority pronounced the word *Cabeuch*, that is, *come*, as tho' I had been commanding the fire to come down. The punk immediately smoaking, I blew a little and made it flame to the utter astonishment of the *Great Sun* and his whole retinue, some of whom stood trembling with amazement and religious awe. The  
prince



prince himself could not help exclaiming, "Ah, what an extraordinary thing is here!" I confirmed him in his idea, by telling him, that I greatly loved and esteemed that useful instrument, as it was most valuable, and was given to me by my grand-father, who was a very learned man.

Upon his asking me, if another man could do the same thing with that instrument that he had seen me do, I told him that every man might do it, and I encouraged him to make the experiment himself. I accordingly put the glass in his hand, and leading it with mine over another piece of agaric, I desired him to pronounce the word *Cabeuch*, which he did, but with a very faint and diffident tone, nevertheless, to his great amazement, he saw the agaric begin to smoke, which so confounded him that he dropt both the chip on which it was laid and the glass out of his hands, crying out, "Ah, what a miracle!"

Their curiosity being now fully raised, they held a consultation in my yard, and resolved to purchase at any rate my wonderful glass, which would prevent any future mortality in their nation, in consequence of the extinction of the

eternal fire. I, in the mean time, had gone out to my field, as if about some business; but in reality to have a hearty laugh at the comical scene which I had just occasioned. Upon my return the *Great Sun* entered my apartment with me, and laying his hand upon mine, told me, that tho' he loved all the *French*, he was more my friend than of any of the rest, because most of the *French* carried all their understanding upon their tongue, but that I carried mine in my whole head and my whole body. After this preamble he offered to bargain for my glass, and desired me to set what value I pleased upon it, adding that he would not only cause the price to be paid by all the families of the nation, but would declare to them that they lay under an obligation to me for giving up to them a thing which saved them from a general mortality. I replied, that tho' I bore his whole nation in my heart, yet nothing made me part with my glass, but my affection for him and his brother; that, besides, I asked nothing in return but things necessary for my subsistence, such as corn, fowls, game, and fish, when they brought him any of these. He offered me twenty barrels of maiz, of 150 pounds each, twenty fowls, twenty turkies, and told me that he would send me game and fish every time his

war-

warriors brought him any, and his promise was punctually fulfilled. He engaged likewise not to speak any thing about it to the *Frenchmen*, lest they should be angry with me for parting with an instrument of so great a value. Next day the glass was tried before a general assembly of all the *Suns*, both men and women, the nobles, and the men of rank, who all met together at the temple; and the same effect being produced as the day before, the bargain was ratified; but it was resolved not to mention the affair to the common people, who, from their curiosity to know the secrets of their court, were assembled in great numbers not far from the temple, but only to tell them, that the whole nation of the *Natches* were under great obligations to me.

The *Natches* are brought up in a most perfect submission to their sovereign; the authority which their princes exercise over them is absolutely despotic, and can be compared to nothing but that of the first *Ottoman* emperors. Like these, the *Great Sun* is absolute master of the lives and estates of his subjects, which he disposes of at his pleasure, his will being the only law; but he has this singular advantage over the *Ottoman* princes, that he has no occasion

sion to fear any seditious tumults, or any conspiracy against his person. If he orders a man guilty of a capital crime to be put to death, the criminal neither supplicates, nor procures intercession to be made for his life, nor attempts to run away. The order of the sovereign is executed on the spot, and nobody murmurs. But however absolute the authority of the *Great Sun* may be, and altho' a number of warriors and others attach themselves to him, to serve him, to follow him wherever he goes, and to hunt for him, yet he raises no stated impositions; and what he receives from those people appears given, not so much as a right due, as a voluntary homage, and a testimony of their love and gratitude.

The *Natches* begin their year in the month of *March*, as was the practice a long time in *Europe*, and divide it into thirteen moons. At every new moon they celebrate a feast, which takes its name from the principal fruits reaped in the preceding moon, or from the animals that are then usually hunted. I shall give an account of one or two of these feasts as concisely as I can.

The



The first moon is called that of the *Deer*; and begins their new year, which is celebrated by them with universal joy, and is at the same time an anniversary memorial of one of the most interesting events in their history. In former times a *Great Sun*, upon hearing a sudden tumult in his village, had left his hut in a great hurry, in order to appease it, and fell into the hands of his enemies; but was quickly after rescued by his warriors, who repulsed the invaders, and put them to flight. In order to preserve the remembrance of this honourable exploit, the warriors divide themselves into two bodies, distinguished from each other by the colour of their feathers. One of these bodies represents the invaders, and after raising loud shouts and cries, seize the *Great Sun*, who comes out of his hut undrest, and rubbing his eyes, as tho' he were just awake. The *Great Sun* defends himself intrepidly with a wooden tomahawk, and lays a great many of his enemies upon the ground, without however giving them a single blow, for he only seems to touch them with his weapon. In the meantime the other party come out of their ambushade, attack the invaders, and, after fighting with them for some time, rescue their prince, and drive them into a wood, which is represented

ented by an arbour made of canes. During the whole time of the skirmish, the parties keep up the war-cry, or the cry of terror, as each of them seem to be victors or vanquished. The *Great Sun* is brought back to his hut in a triumphant manner; and the old men, women, and children, who were spectators of the engagement, rend the sky with their joyful acclamations. The *Great Sun* continues in his hut about half an hour, to repose himself after his great fatigues, which are such that an actor of thirty years of age would with difficulty have supported them, and he however, when I saw this feast, was above ninety. He then makes his appearance again to the people, who salute him with loud acclamations, which cease upon his proceeding towards the temple. When he is arrived in the middle of the court before the temple he makes several gesticulations, then stretches out his arms horizontally, and remains in that posture motionless as a statue for half an hour. He is then relieved by the master of the ceremonies, who places himself in the same attitude, and half an hour after is relieved by the great chief of war, who remains as long in the same posture. When this ceremony is over, the *Great Sun*, who, when he was relieved, had returned to his hut, appear

pears again before the people in the ornaments of his dignity, is placed upon his throne, which is a large stool with four feet cut out of one piece of wood, has a fine bufaloe's skin thrown over his shoulders, and several furs laid upon his feet, and receives various presents from the women, who all the while continue to express their joy by their shouts and acclamations. Strangers are then invited to dine with the *Great Sun*, and in the evening there is a dance in his hut, which is about thirty feet square, and twenty feet high, and like the temple is built upon a mount of earth, about eight feet high, and sixty feet over on the surface.

The second moon, which answers to our *April*, is called the *Strawberry* moon, as that fruit abounds then in great quantities.

The third moon is that of the *Small corn*. This moon is often impatiently looked for, their crop of large corn never sufficing to nourish them from one harvest to another.

The fourth is that of *Water melons*, and answers to our *June*.

The

The fifth moon is that of the *Fishes*: in this month also they gather grapes, if the birds have suffered them to ripen.

The sixth, which answers to our *August*, is that of the *Mulberries*. At this feast they likewise carry fowls to the *Great Sun*.

The seventh, which is that of *Maiz*, or *Great Corn*. This feast is beyond dispute the most solemn of all. It principally consists in eating in common, and in a religious manner, of new corn, which had been sown expressly with that design, with suitable ceremonies. This corn is sown upon a spot of ground never before cultivated; which ground is dressed and prepared by the warriors alone, who also are the only persons that sow the corn, weed it, reap it, and gather it. When this corn is near ripe, the warriors fix on a place proper for the general feast, and close adjoining to that they form a round granary, the bottom and sides of which are of cane; this they fill with the corn, and when they have finished the harvest, and covered the granary, they acquaint the *Great Sun*, who appoints the day for the general feast. Some days before the feast, they build huts for the *Great Sun*, and for all the other families,  
round



round the granary, that of the *Great Sun* being raised upon a mount of earth about two feet high. On the feast day the whole nation set out from their village at sun-rising, leaving behind only the aged and infirm that are not able to travel, and a few warriors, who are to carry the *Great Sun* on a litter upon their shoulders. The seat of this litter is covered with several deer skins, and to its four sides are fastened four bars which cross each other, and are supported by eight men, who at every hundred paces transfer their burden to eight other men, and thus successively transport it to the place where the feast is celebrated, which may be near two miles from the village. About nine o'clock the *Great Sun* comes out of his hut dressed in the ornaments of his dignity, and being placed in his litter, which has a canopy at the head formed of flowers, he is carried in a few minutes to the sacred granary, shouts of joy echoing on all sides. Before he alights he makes the tour of the whole place deliberately, and when he comes before the corn he salutes it thrice with the words, *hoo, hoo, hoo*, lengthened and pronounced respectfully. The salutation is repeated by the whole nation, who pronounce the word *hoo* nine times distinctly and

and at the ninth time he alights and places himself on his throne.

Immediately after they light a fire by rubbing two pieces of wood violently against each other, and when every thing is prepared for dressing the corn, the chief of war, accompanied by the warriors belonging to each family, presents himself before the throne, and addresses the *Sun* in these words, *Speak, for I hear thee*. The sovereign then rises up, bows towards the four quarters of the world, and advancing to the granary, lifts his eyes and hands to heaven, and says, "Give us corn:" upon which the great chief of war, the princes and princesses, and all the men, thank him separately, by pronouncing the word *hoo*. The corn is then distributed, first to the female *Suns*, and then to all the women, who run with it to their huts, and dress it with the utmost dispatch. When the corn is dressed in all the huts, a plate of it is put into the hands of the *Great Sun*, who presents it to the four quarters of the world, and then says to the chief of war, *eat*; upon this signal the warriors begin to eat in all the huts; after them the boys of whatever age, excepting those who are on the breast; and last of all the women. When the warriors have finished their repast, they  
form

form themselves into two choirs before the huts, and sing war songs for half an hour; after which the chief of war, and all the warriors in succession, recount their brave exploits, and mention, in a boasting manner, the number of enemies they have slain. The youths are next allowed to harangue, and each tells in the best manner he can, not what he has done, but what he intends to do; and if his discourse merits approbation, he is answered by a general *hoo*; if not, the warriors hang down down their heads and are silent.

This great solemnity is concluded with a general dance by torch-light. Upwards of 200 torches of dried canes, each of the thickness of a child, are lighted round the place, where the men and women often continue dancing till day light; and the following is the disposition of their dance. A man places himself on the ground with a pot covered with a deer-skin, in the manner of a drum, to beat time to the dancers, round him the women form themselves into a circle, not joining hands, but at some distance from each other; and they are inclosed by the men in another circle, who have in each hand a *chichicóis*, or calabash, with a stick thrust thro' it to serve for a handle. When the dance begins, the  
 women

women move round the man in the center, from left to right, and the men contrariwise from right to left, and they sometimes narrow and sometimes widen their circles. In this manner the dance continues without intermission the whole night, new performers successively taking the place of those who are wearied and fatigued.

Next morning no person is seen abroad before the *Great Sun* comes out of his hut, which is generally about nine o'clock, and then upon a signal made by the drum, the warriors make their appearance, distinguished into two troops by the feathers which they wear on their heads. One of these troops is headed by the *Great Sun*, and the other by the chief of war, who begin a new diversion by tossing a ball of deer-skin stuffed with *Spanish* beard from the one to the other. The warriors quickly take part in the sport, and a violent contest ensues which of the two parties shall drive the ball to the hut of the opposite chief. The diversion generally lasts two hours, and the victors are allowed to wear the feathers of superiority till the following year, or till the next time they play at the ball. After this the warriors perform the war dance; and last of all they go and bathe; an ex-



ercise which they are very fond of when they are heated or fatigued.

The rest of that day is employed as the preceding ; for the feast holds as long as any of the corn remains. When it is all eat up, the *Great Sun* is carried back in his litter, and they all return to the village, after which he sends the warriors to hunt both for themselves and him.

The eighth moon is that of *Turkies*, and answers to our *October*.

The ninth moon is that of the *Bufalo* ; and it is then they go to hunt that animal. Having discovered whereabouts the herd feeds, they go out in a body to hunt them. Young and old, girls and married women, except those who are with child, are all of the party, for there is generally work for them all. Some nations are a little later in going out to this hunting, that they may find the cows fatter, and the herds more numerous.

The tenth moon is that of *Bears* ; at this time of hunting the feasts are not so grand and solemn, because great part of the nations are accompanying the hunters in their expeditions.

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The eleventh answers to our *January*, and is named the *Cold-meal moon*. The twelfth is that of *Chestnuts*. That fruit has been gathered long before, nevertheless it gives its name to this moon.

Lastly, the thirteenth is that of *Walnuts*, and it is added to compleat the year. It is then they break the nuts to make bread of them by mixing with them the flour of *maiz*.

The feasts which I saw celebrated in the chief village of the *Natches*, which is the residence of the *Great Sun*, are celebrated in the same manner in all the villages of the nation, which are each governed by a *Sun*, who is subordinate to the *Great Sun*, and acknowledge his absolute authority.

It is not to be conceived how exact these people are in assigning the pre-eminence to the men. In every assembly, whether of the whole nation in general, or of several families together, or of one single family, the youngest boys have the preference to the women of the most advanced age; and at their meals, when their food is distributed, none is presented to the women, till all the males have received their

share; so that a boy of two years old is served before his mother.

The women being always employed, without ever being diverted from their duty, or seduced by the gallantries of lovers, never think of objecting to the propriety of a custom, in which they have been constantly brought up. Never having seen any example that contradicted it, they have not the least idea of varying from it. Thus being submissive from habit, as well as from reason, they, by their docility, maintain that peace in their families, which they find established upon entering them.

SECT.

## S E C T. III.

*Of their marriages, and distinction of ranks.*

**P**ATERNAL authority, as I have elsewhere observed, is not less sacred and inviolable than the pre-eminence of the men. It still subsists among the *Natches*, such as it was in the first ages of the world. The children belong to the father, and while he lives they are under his power. They live with him, they, their wives, and their children; the same hut contains the whole family. The old man alone commands there, and nothing but death puts an end to his empire. As these people have seldom or rather never any differences among them, the paternal authority appears in nothing more conspicuous than in the marriages.

When the boys and girls arrive at the perfect age of puberty, they visit each other familiarly, and are suffered so to do. The girls, sensible that they will be no longer mistresses of their heart when once they are married, know how to dispose of it to advantage, and form their wardrobe by the sale of their favours; for there, as well as in other countries, nothing



for nothing. The lover, far from having any thing to object to this, on the contrary rates the merit of his future spouse, in proportion to the fruits she has produced. But when they are married they have no longer any intrigues; neither the husband nor the wife, because their heart is no longer their own. They may divorce their wives; it is, however, so rare to see the man and wife part, that during the eight years I lived in their neighbourhood, I knew but one example of it, and then each took with them the children of their own sex.

If a young man has obtained a girl's consent, and they desire to marry, it is not their fathers, and much less their mothers, or male or female relations who take upon them to conclude the match; it is the heads of the two families alone, who are usually great-grandfathers and sometimes more. These two old men have an interview, in which, after the young man has formally made a demand of the girl, they examine if there be any relation between the two parties, and if any, what degree it is; for they do not marry within the third degree. Notwithstanding this interview, and the two parties be found not within the prohibited degrees, yet if the proposed wife be disagreeable to the  
father,

father, grandfather, &c. of the husband, the match is never concluded. On the other hand, ambition, avarice, and the other passions, so common with us, never stifle in the breasts of the fathers those dictates of nature, which make us desire to see ourselves perpetuated in our offspring, nor influence them to thwart their children improperly, and much less to force their inclinations. By an admirable harmony, very worthy of our imitation, they only marry those who love one another, and those who love one another are only married when their parents agree to it. It is rare for young men to marry before they be five and twenty. Till they arrive at that age they are looked upon as too weak, without understanding and experience.

When the marriage-day is once fixed, preparations are made for it both by the men and women, the men go a hunting, and the women prepare the maiz, and deck out the young man's cabin to the best of their power. On the wedding-day the old man on the part of the girl leaves his hut, and conducts the bride to the hut of the bridegroom; his whole family follow him in order and silence; those who are inclined to laugh or be merry, indulging themselves only in a smile.

He finds before the other hut all the relations of the bridegroom, who receive and salute him with their usual expression of congratulation, namely, *hoo, hoo*, repeated several times. When he enters the hut, the old man on the part of the bridegroom says to him, in their language, *are you there?* to which he answers, *yes*. He is next desired to sit down, and then not a word passes for near ten minutes, it being one of their prudent customs to suffer a guest to rest himself a little after his arrival, before they begin a conversation; and besides, they look upon the time spent in compliments as thrown away.

After both the old men are fully rested, they rise, and the bridegroom and bride appearing before them, they ask them, if they love each other? and if they are willing to take one another for man and wife? observing to them at the same time, that they ought not to marry unless they propose to live amicably together, that no body forces them, and that as they are each other's free choice, they will be thrust out of the family if they do not live in peace. After this remonstrance the father of the bridegroom delivers the present which his son is to make into his hands, the bride's father at the same time placing himself by her side. The bridegroom



groom then addresses the bride; "Will you have me for your husband?" She answers, "Most willingly, and it gives me joy; love me, as well as I love you; for I love, and ever will love none but you." At these words the bridegroom covers the head of the bride with the present which he received from his father, and says to her, "I love you, and have therefore taken you for my wife, and this I give to your parents, to purchase you." He then gives the present to the bride's father.

The husband wears a tuft of feathers fastened to his hair, which is in the form of a cue, and hangs over his left ear, to which is fastened a sprig of oak with the leaves on, and in his left-hand he bears a bow and arrows. The young wife bears in her left-hand a small branch of laurel, and in her right a stalk of maiz, which was delivered to her by her mother at the time she received the present from her husband. This stalk she presents to her husband, who takes it from her with his right-hand, and says, "I am your husband;" she answers, and "I am your wife." They then shake hands reciprocally with each other's relations; after which he leads her towards the bed, and says, "There



is our bed, keep it tight;" which is as much as to say, do not defile the nuptial bed.

The marriage ceremony being thus concluded, the bridegroom and the bride, with their friends, sit down to a repast, and in the evening they begin their dances, which continue often till day-light.

The nation of the *Natches* is composed of nobility and common people. The common people are named in their language *Miche-Miche-Quipy*, that is, *Stinkards*; a name however which gives them great offence, and which it is proper to avoid pronouncing before them, as it would not fail to put them into a very bad humour. The common people are to the last degree submissive to the nobility, who are divided into *Suns*, nobles, and men of rank.

The *Suns* are the descendants of the man and woman who pretended to have come down from the sun. Among the other laws they gave to the *Natches*, they ordained that their race should always be distinguished from the bulk of the nation, and that none of them should ever be put to death upon any account. They established

blished likewise another usage which is found among no other people, except a nation of *Scythians* mentioned by *Herodotus*. They ordained that nobility should only be transmitted by the women. Their male and female children were equally named *Suns*, and regarded as such, but with this difference, that the males enjoyed this privilege only in their own person, and during their own lives. Their children had only the title of nobles, and the male children of those nobles were only men of rank. Those men of rank, however, if they distinguished themselves by their warlike exploits, might raise themselves again to the rank of nobles; but their children became only men of rank, and the children of those men of rank, as well as of the others, were confounded with the common people, and classed among the *Stinkards*. Thus as these people are very long-lived, and frequently see the fourth generation, it often happens that a *Sun* sees some of his posterity among the *Stinkards*; but they are at great pains to conceal this degradation of their race, especially from strangers, and almost totally disown those great-grand children; for when they speak of them they only say, they are dear to them. It is otherwise with the female posterity of the *Suns*, for they continue

thro' all generations to enjoy their rank. The descendants of the *Suns* being pretty numerous, it might be expected that those who are out of the prohibited degrees might intermarry, rather than ally with the *Stinkards*; but a most barbarous custom obliges them to their mis-alliances. When any of the *Suns*, either male or female, die, their law ordains that the husband or wife of that *Sun* shall be put to death on the day of the interment of the deceased: Now as another law prohibits the issue of the *Suns* from being put to death, it is therefore impossible for the descendants of the *Suns* to match with each other.

Whether it be that they are tired of this law, or that they wish their *Suns* descended of *French* blood, I shall not determine; but the wife of the *Great Sun* came one day to visit me so early in the morning that I was not got out of bed. She was accompanied with her only daughter, a girl between fourteen and fifteen years of age, handsome and well shaped; but she only sent in her own name by my slave; so that without getting up I made no scruple of desiring her to come in. When her daughter appeared I was not a little surpris'd; but I shook hands with them both, and desired them to sit down. The  
daughter



daughter sat down on the foot of my bed, and kept her eyes continually fixed on me, while the mother addressed herself to me in the most serious and pathetic tone. After some compliments to me, and commendations of our customs and manners, she condemned the barbarous usages that prevailed among themselves, and ended with proposing me as a husband for her daughter, that I might have it in my power to civilize their nation by abolishing their inhuman customs, and introducing those of the *French*. As I foresaw the danger of such an alliance, which would be opposed by the whole nation of the *Natches*, and at the same time was sensible that the resentment of a slighted woman is very formidable, I returned her such an answer as might shew my great respect for her daughter, and prevent her from making the same application to some brainless *Frenchman*, who by accepting the offer might expose the *French* settlement to some disastrous event. I told her that her daughter was handsome, and pleased me much, as she had a good heart, and a well turned mind; but the laws we received from the Great Spirit, forbid us to marry women who did not pray; and that those *Frenchmen* who lived with their daughters took them only for a time; but it was not proper that the  
daughter



daughter of the *Great Sun* should be disposed of in that manner. The mother acquiesced in my reasons; but when they took their leave I perceived plainly that the daughter was far from being satisfied. I never saw her from that day forwards; and I heard she was soon after married to another.

From this relation the reader may perceive that there needs nothing but prudence and good sense to persuade those people to what is reasonable, and to preserve their friendship without interruption. We may safely affirm that the differences we have had with them have been more owing to the *French* than to them. When they are treated insolently or oppressively, they have no less sensibility of injuries than others. If those who have occasion to live among them, will but have sentiments of humanity, they will in them meet with men.

## S E C T. IV.

*Of the temples, tombs, burials, and other religious ceremonies of the people of Louisiana.*

I SHALL now proceed to give some account of the customs that prevail in general among all the nations of *North America*; and these have a great resemblance to each other, as there is hardly any difference in the manner of thinking and acting among the several nations. These people have no religion expressed by any external worship. The strongest evidences that we discover of their having any religion at all, are their temples, and the eternal fire therein kept up by some of them. Some of them indeed do not keep up the eternal fire, and have turned their temples into charnel-houses.

However, all those people, without exception, acknowledge a supreme Being, but they never on any account address their prayers to him, from their fixt belief that God, whom they call the Great Spirit, is so good, that he cannot do  
evil,

evil, whatever provocation he may have. They believe the existence of two Great Spirits, a good and a bad. They do not, as I have said, invoke the Good Spirit; but they pray to the bad, in order to avert from their persons and possessions the evils which he might inflict upon them. They pray to the evil spirit, not because they think him almighty; for it is the Good Spirit whom they believe so; but because, according to them, he governs the air, the seasons, the rain, the fine weather, and all that may benefit or hurt the productions of the earth.

They are very superstitious in respect to the flight of birds, and the passage of some animals that are seldom seen in their country. They are much inclined to hear and believe diviners, especially in regard to discovering things to come; and they are kept up in their errors by the *Jongleurs*, who find their account in them.

The natives have all the same manner of bringing up their children, and are in general well shaped, and their limbs are justly proportioned. The *Chicasaws* are the most fierce and  
arrogant,

arrogant, which they undoubtedly owe to their frequent intercourse with the *English* of *Carolina*. They are brave; a disposition they may have inherited as the remains of that martial spirit that prompted them to invade their neighbouring nations, by which they themselves were at length greatly weakened. All the nations on the north of the colony are likewise brave, but they are more humane than the *Chicasaws*; and have not their high-spirited pride. All these nations of the north, and all those of *Louisiana*, have been inviolably attached to us ever since our establishment in this colony. The misfortune of the *Natches*, who, without dispute, were the finest of all those nations, and who loved us, ought not in the least to lessen our sentiments of those people, who are in general distinguished for their natural goodness of character. All those nations are prudent, and speak little; they are sober in their diet, but they are passionately fond of brandy, tho' they are singular in never tasting any wine, and neither know nor care to learn any composition of liquors. In their meals they content themselves with maiz prepared various ways, and sometimes they use fish and flesh. The meat that they eat is chiefly recommended to them for  
being



being wholesome; and therefore I have conjectured that dog's flesh, for which we have such an aversion, must however be as good as it is beautiful, since they rate it so highly as to use it by way of preference in their feasts of ceremony. They eat no young game, as they find plenty of the largest size, and do not think delicacy of taste alone any recommendation; and therefore, in general, they would not taste our ragouts, but, condemning them as unwholesome, prefer to them gruel made of maiz, called in the colony *Sagamity*.

The *Chaftaws* are the only ugly people among all the nations in *Louisiana*; which is chiefly owing to the fat with which they rub their skin and their hair, and to their manner of defending themselves against the moskitos, which they keep off by lighting fires of fir-wood, and standing in the smoke.

Altho' all the people of *Louisiana* have nearly the same usages and customs, yet as any nation is more or less populous, it has proportionally more or fewer ceremonies. Thus when the *French* first arrived in the colony, several nations kept up the eternal fire, and observed other religious

religious ceremonies, which they have now discontinued, since their numbers have been greatly diminished. Many of them still continue to have temples, but the common people never enter these, nor strangers, unless peculiarly favoured by the nation. As I was an intimate friend of the sovereign of the *Natches*, he shewed me their temple, which is about thirty feet square, and stands upon an artificial mount about eight feet high, by the side of a small river. The mount slopes insensibly from the main front, which is northwards, but on the other sides it is somewhat steeper. The four corners of the temple consist of four posts, about a foot and an half diameter, and ten feet high, each made of the heart of the cypress tree, which is incorruptible. The side-posts are of the same wood, but only about a foot square; and the walls are of mud, about nine inches thick; so that in the inside there is a hollow between every post. The inner space is divided from east to west into two apartments, one of which is twice as large as the other. In the largest apartment the eternal fire is kept, and there is likewise a table or altar in it, about four feet high, six long, and two broad. Upon this table lie the bones of the late *Great Sun* in a coffin of canes very neatly made. In the inner  
apart-

apartment, which is very dark, as it receives no light but from the door of communication, I could meet with nothing but two boards, on which were placed some things like small toys, which I had not light to peruse. The roof is in the form of a pavilion, and very neat both within and without, and on the top of it are placed three wooden birds, twice as large as a goose, with their heads turned towards the east. The corner and side-posts, as has been mentioned, rise above the earth ten feet high, and it is said they are as much sunk under ground; it cannot therefore but appear surprising how the natives could transport such large beams, fashion them, and raise them upright, when we know of no machines they had for that purpose. Besides the eight guardians of the temple, two of whom are always on watch, and the chief of those guardians, there also belongs to the service of the temple a master of the ceremonies, who is also master of the mysteries; since, according to them, he converses very familiarly with the Spirit. Above all these persons is the *Great Sun*, who is at the same time chief priest and sovereign of the nation. The temples of some of the nations of *Louisiana* are very mean, and one would often be apt to mistake them for the huts of private persons; but to



to those who are acquainted with their manners, they are easily distinguishable, as they have always before the door two posts formed like the antient *Termini*, that is, having the upper part cut into the shape of a man's head. The door of the temple, which is pretty weighty, is placed between the wall and those two posts, so that children may not be able to remove it, to go and play in the temple. The private huts have also posts before their doors, but these are never formed like *Termini*.

None of the nations of *Louisiana* are acquainted with the custom of burning their dead, which was practised by the *Greeks* and *Romans*; nor with that of the *Egyptians*, who studied to preserve them to perpetuity. The different *American* nations have a most religious attention for their dead, and each have some peculiar customs in respect to them; but all of them either inter them, or place them in tombs, and carefully carry victuals to them for some time. These tombs are either within their temples, or close adjoining to them, or in their neighbourhood. They are raised about three feet above the earth, and rest upon four pillars, which are forked stakes fixed fast in the ground. The tomb, or rather bier, is about eight feet long,



long, and a foot and a half broad; and after the body is placed upon it, a kind of basket-work of twigs is wove round it, and covered with mud, an opening being left at the head for placing the victuals that are presented to the dead person. When the body is all rotted but the bones, these are taken out of the tomb, and placed in a box of canes, which is deposited in the temple. They usually weep and lament for their dead three days; but for those who are killed in war, they make a much longer and a more grievous lamentation.

Among the *Natches* the death of any of their *Suns*, as I have before observed, is a most fatal event; for it is sure to be attended with the destruction of a great number of people of both sexes. Early in the spring, 1725, the *Stung Serpent*, who was the brother of the *Great Sun*, and my intimate friend, was seized with a mortal distemper, which filled the whole nation of the *Natches* with the greatest consternation and terror; for the two brothers had mutually engaged to follow each other to the land of spirits; and if the *Great Sun* should kill himself for the sake of his brother, very many people would likewise be put to death. When the *Stung Serpent* was despaired of, the chief of the guardians of the temple came to

me in the greatest confusion, and acquainting me with the mutual engagements of the two brothers, begged of me to interest myself in preserving the *Great Sun*, and consequently a great part of the nation. He made the same request to the commander of the fort. Accordingly we were no sooner informed of the death of the *Stung Serpent*, than the commander, some of the principal *Frenchmen*, and I, went in a body to the hut of the *Great Sun*. We found him in despair; but, after some time, he seemed to be influenced by the arguments I used to dissuade him from putting himself to death. The death of the *Stung Serpent* was published by the firing of two muskets, which were answered by the other villages, and immediately cries and lamentations were heard on all sides. The *Great Sun*, in the mean time, remained inconsolable, and sat bent forwards with his eyes towards the ground. In the evening, while we were still in his hut, he made a sign to his favourite wife; who in consequence of that threw a pailful of water on the fire, and extinguished it. This was a signal for extinguishing all the fires of the nation, and filled every one with terrible alarms, as it denoted that the *Great Sun* was still resolved to put himself to death. I gently chided him  
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for altering his former resolution, but he assured me that he had not, and desired us to go and sleep securely. We accordingly left him, pretending to rely on the assurance he had given us; but we took up our lodging in the hut of his chief servants, and stationed a foldier at the door of his hut, whom we ordered to give us notice of whatever happened. There was no need to fear our being betrayed by the wife of the *Great Sun*, or any others about him; for none of them had the least inclination to die, if they could help it. On the contrary, they all expressed the greatest thankfulness and gratitude to us for our endeavours to avert the threatened calamity from their nation.

Before we went to our lodgings we entered the hut of the deceased, and found him on his bed of state, dressed in his finest cloaths, his face painted with vermilion, shod as if for a journey, with his feather-crown on his head. To his bed were fastened his arms, which consisted of a double-barreled gun, a pistol, a bow, a quiver full of arrows, and a tomahawk. Round his bed were placed all the calumets of peace he had received during his life and on a pole, planted in the ground near it, hung a chain of forty-six rings of cane painted red, to express



the number of enemies he had slain. All his domesticks were round him, and they presented victuals to him at the usual hours, as if he were alive. The company in his hut were composed of his favourite wife, of a second wife, which he kept in another village, and visited when his favourite was with child; of his chancellor, his physician, his chief domestic, his pipe-bearer, and some old women, who were all to be strangled at his interment. To these victims a noble woman voluntarily joined herself, resolving, from her friendship to the *Stung Serpent*, to go and live with him in the country of spirits. I regretted her on many accounts, but particularly as she was intimately acquainted with the virtues of simples, had by her skill saved many of our people's lives, and given me many useful instructions. After we had satisfied our curiosity in the hut of the deceased, we retired to our hut, where we spent the night. But at day-break we were suddenly awaked, and told that it was with difficulty the *Great Sun* was kept from killing himself. We hastened to his hut, and upon entering it I remarked dismay and terror painted upon the countenances of all who were present. The *Great Sun* held his gun by the butt-end, and seemed enraged that the other *Suns* had seized



upon it, to prevent him from executing his purpose. I addressed myself to him, and after opening the pan of the lock, to let the priming fall out, I chided him gently for his not acting according to his former resolution. He pretended at first not to see me; but, after some time, he let go his hold of the musket, and shook hands with me without speaking a word. I then went towards his wife, who all this while had appeared in the utmost agony and terror, and I asked her if she was ill. She answered me, "Yes, very ill," and added, "if you leave us, my husband is a dead man, and all the *Natches* will die; stay then, for he opens his ears only to your words, which have the sharpness and strength of arrows. You are his true friend, and do not laugh when you speak, like most of the *Frenchmen*." The *Great Sun* at length consented to order his fire to be again lighted, which was the signal for lighting the other fires of the nation, and dispelled all their apprehensions.

Soon after the natives begun the dance of death, and prepared for the funeral of the *Stung Serpent*. Orders were given to put none to death on that occasion, but those who were in the hut of the deceased. A child however

had been already strangled by its father and mother, which ransomed their lives upon the death of the *Great Sun*, and raised them from the rank of *Stinkards* to that of *Nobles*. Those who were appointed to die were conducted twice a day, and placed in two rows, before the temple, where they acted over the scene of their death, each accompanied by eight of their own relations who were to be their executioners, and by that office exempted themselves from dying upon the death of any of the suns, and likewise raised themselves to the dignity of men of rank.

Mean while thirty warriors brought in a prisoner, who had formerly been married to a female sun; but, upon her death, instead of submitting to die with her, had fled to *New Orleans*, and offered to become the hunter and slave of our commander in chief. The commander accepting his offer, and granting him his protection, he often visited his countrymen, who, out of complaisance to the commander, never offered to apprehend him: but that officer being now returned to *France*, and the runaway appearing in the neighbourhood, he was now apprehended, and numbered among the other victims. Finding himself thus unexpect-

tedly trapped, he began to cry bitterly; but three very old women, who were his relations, offering to die in his stead, he was not only again exempted from death, but raised to the dignity of a man of rank. Upon this he afterwards became insolent, and profiting by what he had seen and learned at *New Orleans*, he easily, on many occasions, made his fellow-countrymen his dupes.

On the day of the interment, the wife of the deceased made a very moving speech to the *French* who were present, recommending her children, to whom she also addressed herself, to their friendship, and advising a perpetual union between the two nations. Soon after the master of the ceremonies appeared in a red-feathered crown, which half encircled his head, having a red staff in his hand in the form of a cross, at the end of which hung a garland of black feathers. All the upper part of his body was painted red, excepting his arms, and from his girdle to his knees hung a fringe of feathers, the rows of which were alternately white and red. When he came before the hut of the deceased, he saluted him with a great *boo*, and then began the cry of death, in which he was followed by the whole people. Immediately  
after

after the *Stung Serpent* was brought out on his bed of state, and was placed on a litter, which six of the guardians of the temple bore on their shoulders. The procession then began, the master of the ceremonies walking first, and after him the oldest warrior, holding in one hand the pole with the rings of canes, and in the other the pipe of war, a mark of the dignity of the deceased. Next followed the corpse, after which came those who were to die at the interment. The whole procession went three times round the hut of the deceased, and then those who carried the corpse proceeded in a circular kind of march, every turn intersecting the former, until they came to the temple. At every turn the dead child was thrown by its parents before the bearers of the corpse, that they might walk over it; and when the corpse was placed in the temple the victims were immediately strangled. The *Stung Serpent* and his two wives were buried in the same grave within the temple; the other victims were interred in different parts, and after the ceremony they burnt, according to custom, the hut of the deceased.



## S E C T. V.

*Of the arts and manufactures of the natives.*

THE arts and manufactures of the natives are so insignificant, when compared with ours, that I should not have thought of treating of them, if some persons of distinction had not desired me to say something of them, in order to shew the industry of those people, and how far invention could carry them, in supplying those wants which human nature is continually exposed to.

As they would have frequent occasion for fire, the manner of lighting it at pleasure must have been one of the first things that they invented. Not having those means which we use, they bethought themselves of another ingenious method which they generally practise. They take a dry dead stick from a tree, about the thickness of their finger, and pressing one end against another dry piece of wood, they turn it round as swiftly as they can till they see the smoke appear, then blowing gently soon make the wood flame.

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Cutting instruments are almost continually wanted; but as they had no iron, which, of all metals, is the most useful in human society, they were obliged, with infinite pains, to form hatchets out of large flints, by sharpening their thin edge, and making a hole through them for receiving the handle. To cut down trees with these axes would have been almost an impracticable work; they were therefore obliged to light fires round the roots of them, and to cut away the charcoal as the fire eat into the tree. They supplied the want of knives for cutting their victuals with thin splits of a hard cane, which they could easily renew as they wore out.

They made their bows of acacia-wood, which is hard and easily cleft; and at first their bow-strings were made of the bark of the wood, but now they make them of the thongs of hides. Their arrows are made of a shrub that sends out long straight shoots; but they make some of small hard reeds: those that are intended for war, or against the buffalo, the deer, or large carp, are pointed with the sharp scale of the armed fish, which is neatly fast-

ened to the head of the arrow with splits of cane and fish-glue.

The skins of the beasts which they killed in hunting naturally presented themselves for their covering; but they must be dressed however before they could be properly used. After much practice they at length discovered that the brain of any animal suffices to dress its skin. To sew those skins they use the tendons of animals beat and split into threads, and to pierce the skins they apply the bone of a heron's leg, sharpened like an awl.

To defend themselves against the inclemencies of the weather, they built huts of wood, which were close and strong enough to resist the impetuosity of the wind. These huts are each a perfect square; none of them are less than fifteen feet square, and some of them are more than thirty feet in each of their fronts. They erect these huts in the following manner: They bring from the woods several young walnut-trees, about four inches in diameter, and thirteen or twenty feet high; they plant the strongest of these in the four corners, and the others fifteen inches from each other in straight lines, for the sides of the building; a pole is  
then

then laid horizontally along the sides in the inside, and all the poles are strongly fastened to it by split canes. Then the four corner poles are bent inwards till they all meet in the centre, where they are strongly fastened together; the side-poles are then bent in the same direction, and bound down to the others; after which they make a mortar of mud mixed with *Spanish* beard, with which they fill up all the chinks, leaving no opening but the door, and the mud they cover both outside and inside with mats made of the splits of cane. The roof is thatched with turf and straw intermixed, and over all is laid a mat of canes, which is fastened to the tops of the walls by the creeping plant. These huts will last twenty years without any repairs.

The natives having once built for themselves fixed habitations, would next apply themselves to the cultivation of the ground. Accordingly, near all their habitations, they have fields of maiz, and of another nourishing grain called *Choupichoul*, which grows without culture. For dressing their fields they invented houghs, which are formed in the shape of an *L*, having the lower part flat and sharp; and to take the husk from their corn they made large



wooden mortars, by hollowing the trunks of trees with fire.

To prepare their maiz for food, and likewise their venison and game, there was a necessity for dressing them over the fire, and for this purpose they bethought themselves of earthen ware, which is made by the women, who not only form the vessel, but dig up and mix the clay. In this they are tolerable artists; they make kettles of an extraordinary size, pitchers with a small opening, gallon bottles with long necks, pots or pitchers for their bear oil, which will hold forty pints; lastly, large and small plates in the *French* fashion: I had some made out of curiosity upon the model of my delf-ware, which were a very pretty red. For sifting the flour of their maiz, and for other uses, the natives make sieves of various finenesses of the splits of cane. To supply themselves with fish they make nets of the bark of the lime-tree; but the large fish they shoot with arrows.

The beds of the natives are placed round the sides of their huts, about a foot and a half from the ground, and are formed in this manner. Six forked stakes support two poles, which  
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are crossed by three others, over which canes are laid so close as to form an even surface, and upon these are laid several bear skins, which serve for the bed furniture; a buffalo's skin is the coverlet, and a sack stuffed with *Spanish* beard is the bolster. The women sometimes add to this furniture of the bed mats wove of canes, dyed of three colours, which colours in the weaving are formed into various figures. These mats render the bottom of the bed still smoother, and in hot weather they remove the bear skins and lie upon them. Their seats or stools, which they seldom use, are about six or seven inches high, and the seat and feet are made of the same piece.

The women likewise make a kind of hampers to carry corn, flesh, fish, or any other thing which they want to transport from one place to another; they are round, deeper than broad, and of all sizes. Here, as well as in other countries, the women take special care to lay up securely all their trinkets and finery. They make baskets with long lids that roll doubly over them, and in these they place their earrings and pendants, their bracelets, garters, their ribbands for their hair, and their vermilion for painting themselves, if they have any,

but when they have no vermillion they boil ochre, and paint themselves with that.

The women also make the mens girdles and garters, and the collars for carrying their burdens. These collars are formed of two belts of the breadth of the hand of bear's skin, dressed so as to soften it, and these belts are joined together by long cross straps of the same leather, that serve to tie the bundles, which are oftener carried by the women than the men. One of the broad belts goes over their shoulders, and the other across their forehead, so that those two parts mutually ease each other.

The women also make several works in embroidery with the skin of the porcupine, which is black and white, and is cut by them into thin threads, which they dye of different colours. Their designs greatly resemble those which we meet with on *Gothic* architecture; they are formed of straight lines, which when they meet always cross each other, or turn off at square angles.

The conveniencies for passing rivers would soon be suggested to them by the floating of wood upon the water. Accordingly one of their

their methods of crossing rivers is upon floats of canes, which are called by them *Cajou*, and are formed in this manner. They cut a great number of canes, which they tie up into faggots, part of which they fasten together sideways, and over these they lay a row crossways, binding all close together, and then launching it into the water. For carrying a great number of men with their necessary baggage, they soon found it necessary to have other conveniencies; and nothing appeared so proper for this as some of their large trees hollowed; of these they accordingly made their pettiaugres, which as I mentioned above are sometimes so large as to carry ten or twelve ton weight. These pettiaugres are conducted by short oars, called *Pagaies*, about six feet long, with broad points, which are not fastened to the vessel, but managed by the rowers like shovels.

S E C T.



## S E C T. VI.

*Of the attire and diversions of the natives :  
Of their meals and fastings.*

THE natives of *Louisiana*, both men and women, wear a very thin dress in the summer. During the heats the men wear only a little apron of deer skin, dressed white or dyed black; but hardly any but chiefs wear black aprons. Those who live in the neighbourhood of the *French* settlements wear aprons of coarse limbours, a quarter of a yard broad, and the whole breadth of the cloth, or five quarters long; these aprons are fastened by a girdle about their waists, and are tucked up between the thighs.

During the heats the women wear only half a yard of limbourg stuff about their middle, which covers them down to the knees; or in place of that they use deer skin; and the rest of the body both in men and women is naked.

Many of the women wear cloaks of the bark of the mulberry-tree, or of the feathers of swans, turkies, or *India* ducks. The bark they take

take from young mulberry shoots that rise from the roots of trees that have been cut down; after it is dried in the sun they beat it to make all the woody part fall off, and they give the threads that remain a second beating, after which they bleach them by exposing them to the dew. When they are well whitened they spin them about the coarseness of pack-thread, and weave them in the following manner: they plant two stakes in the ground about a yard and a half asunder, and having stretched a cord from the one to the other, they fasten their threads of bark double to this cord, and then interweave them in a curious manner into a cloak of about a yard square with a wrought border round the edges.

The young boys and girls go quite naked; but the girls at the age of eight or ten put on a little petticoat, which is a kind of fringe made of threads of mulberry bark. The boys do not wear any covering till they are twelve or thirteen years of age.

Some women even in hot weather have a small cloak wrapt round like a waistcoat; but when the cold sets in, they wear a second, the middle of which passes under the right arm, and the two ends are fastened over the left shoulder,

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so that the two arms are at liberty, and one of the breasts is covered. They wear nothing on their heads; their hair is suffered to grow to its full length, except in the fore-part, and it is tied in a cue behind in a kind of net made of mulberry threads. They carefully pick out all the hairs that grow upon any part of their body.

The shoes of the men and women are of the same fashion, but they rarely wear any but when they travel. They are made of deer-skin, the sole and upper-leather of the same piece, which is sewed together on the upper part of the foot; they are cut about three inches longer than the foot, and are folded over the toes; the quarters are about nine inches high, and fasten round the leg like a buskin. The womens ear-rings are made of the center part of a large shell, called burgo, which is about the thickness of one's little finger, and there is a hole in the ear about that size for holding it. Their necklaces are composed of several strings of longish or roundish kernel-stones, somewhat resembling porcelaine; and with the smallest of these kernel-stones they ornament their furs, garters, &c.

From their early youth the women get a streak pricked cross their nose; some of them have a  
streak

break pricked down the middle of their chin ; others in different parts, especially the women of the nations who have the *R* in their language. I have seen some who were pricked all over the upper part of the body, not even excepting the breasts which are extremely sensible.

In the cold weather the men cover themselves with a shirt made of two dressed deer-skins, which is more like a fur night-gown than a shirt : they likewise, at the same time, wear a kind of breeches, which cover both the thighs and the legs. If the weather be very severe, they throw over all a buffalo's skin, which is dressed with the wool on, and this they keep next to their body to increase the warmth. In the countries where they hunt beavers, they make robes of six skins of those animals sewed together.

The youths here are as much taken up about dress, and as fond of vying with each other in finery as in other countries ; they paint themselves with vermilion very often ; they deck themselves with bracelets made of the ribs of deer, which are bent by the means of boiling water, and when polished, look as fine as ivory ;  
they



they wear necklaces like the women, and sometimes have a fan in their hand; they clip off the hair from the crown of the head, and there place a piece of swan's skin with the down on; to a few hairs that they leave on that part they fasten the finest white feathers that they can meet with; a part of their hair which is suffered to grow long, they weave into a cue, which hangs over their left ear.

They likewise have their nose pricked, but no other part till they are warriors, and have performed some brave action, such as killing an enemy, and bringing off his scalp. Those who have signalized themselves by some gallant exploit, cause a tomahawk to be pricked on their left shoulder, underneath which is also pricked the hieroglyphic sign of the conquered nation. Whatever figure they intend to prick, is first traced on the skin with a bit of charcoal, and having fixed six needles in a piece of wood in two rows, in such a manner that they only stick out about the tenth part of an inch, they prick the skin all over the mark, and then rub charcoal dust over the part, which enters the punctures, and leaves a mark that can never be effaced. This pricking generally gives a fit of sickness to the patient, who is obliged for some time

time to live only on boiled maiz. The warriors also pierce the lower part of their ears, and make a hole an inch diameter, which they fill with iron wire. Besides these ear-rings they have a belt hung round with little bells, if they can purchase any from the *French*, so that they march more like mules than men. When they can get no bells, they fasten to their belts wild gourds with two or three pebbles in each. The chief ornament of the sovereigns is their crown of feathers; this crown is composed of a black bonnet of net work, which is fastened to a red diadem about two inches broad. The diadem is embroidered with white kernel-stones, and surmounted with white feathers, which in the fore-part are about eight inches long, and half as much behind. This crown or feather hat makes a very pleasing appearance.

All nations are not equally ingenious at inventing feasts, shews, and diversions, for employing the people agreeably, and filling up the void of their usual employments. The natives of *Louisiana* have invented but a very few diversions, and these perhaps serve their turn as well as a greater variety would do. The warriors practise a diversion which is called the game of *the pole*, at which two only play together

ther at a time. Each has a pole about eight feet long, resembling a *Roman f*, and the game consists in rolling a flat round stone, about three inches diameter and an inch thick, with the edge somewhat sloping, and throwing the pole at the same time in such a manner, that when the stone rests the pole may touch it or be near it. Both antagonists throw their poles at the same time, and he whose pole is nearest the stone counts one, and has the right of rolling the stone. The men fatigue themselves much at this game, as they run after their poles at every throw; and some of them are so bewitched by it that they game away one piece of furniture after another. These gamesters however are very rare, and are greatly discountenanced by the rest of the people.

The women play with small bits of cane, about eight or nine inches long. Three of these they hold loosely in one hand, and knock them to the ground with another; if two of them fall with the round side undermost, she that played counts one; but if only one she counts nothing. They are ashamed to be seen or found playing, and as far as I could discover they never played for any stake.

The

The young people, especially the girls, have hardly any kind of diversion but that of the ball: this consists in tossing a ball from one to the other with the palm of the hand, which they perform with tolerable address.

When the natives meet with a *Frenchman* whom they know, they shake hands with him, incline their head a little, and say in their own language, "Are you there, my friend." If he has no serious affair to propose to them, or if they themselves have nothing of consequence to say, they pursue their journey.

If they happen to be going the same way with a *Frenchman*, they never go before him, unless something of consequence oblige them. When you enter into their hut, they welcome you with the word of salutation, which signifies "Are you there, my friend;" then shake hands with you, and pointing to a bed desire you to sit down. A silence of a few minutes then ensues till the stranger begins to speak, when he is offered some victuals, and desired to eat. You must taste of what they offer you, otherwise they will imagine that you despise them.

When



When the natives converse together, however numerous the assembly be, never more than one person speaks at once. If one of the company has any thing to say to another, he speaks so low that none of the rest hear him. Nobody is interrupted, even with the chiding of a child; and if the child be stubborn, it is removed elsewhere. In the council, when a point is deliberated upon and debated, they keep silence for a short time, and then they speak in their turns, no one offering to interrupt another.

The natives being habituated to their own prudent custom, it is with the utmost difficulty they can keep from laughing, when they see several *French* men or *French* women together, and always several of them speaking at the same time. I had observed them for two years stifling a laugh on those occasions, and had often asked the reason of it, without receiving any satisfactory answer. At length I pressed one of them so earnestly to satisfy me, that after some excuses, he told me in their language, "Our people say, that when several *French* men are together, they speak all at once, like a flock of geese."

All

All the nations whom I have known, and who inhabit from the sea as far as the *Illinois*, and even farther, which is a space of about 1500 miles, carefully cultivate the maiz corn, which they make their principal subsistence. They make bread of it baked in cakes, another kind baked among the ashes, and another kind in water; they make of it also cold meal, roasted meal, gruel, which in this country is called *Sagamity*. This and the cold meal in my opinion are the two best dishes that are made of it; the others are only for a change. They eat the *Sagamity* as we eat soup, with a spoon made of a buffalo's horn. When they eat flesh or fish they use bread. They likewise use two kinds of millet, which they shell in the manner of rice; one of these is called *Choupichoul*, and the other *Widlogouil*, and they both grow almost without any cultivation.

In a scarcity of these kinds of corn, they have recourse to earth-nuts, which they find in the woods; but they never use these or chefnuts but when necessity obliges them.

The flesh-meats they usually eat are the buffalo, the deer, the bear, and the dog: they eat of all kind of water-fowl and fish; but they

they have no other way of dressing their meat but by roasting or boiling. The following is their manner of roasting their meat when they are in the fields hunting: they plant a stake in the ground sloping towards the fire, and on the point of this stake they spit their meat, which they turn from time to time. To preserve what they do not then use, they cut it into thin pieces, which they dry, or rather half-roast, upon a grate made of canes placed cross-ways. They never eat raw flesh, as so many people have falsely imagined, and they limit themselves to no set hours for their meals, but eat whenever they are hungry; so that we seldom see several of them eating at once, unless at their feasts, when they all eat off the same plate, except the women, the boys, and the young girls, who have each a plate to themselves.

When the natives are sick, they eat neither flesh nor fish, but take *Sagamity* boiled in the broth of meat. When a man falls sick, his wife sleeps with the woman in the bed next to him, and the husband of that woman goes elsewhere. The natives, when they eat with *French* men, taste of nothing but of pure roast and boiled: they eat no salad, and nothing raw but fruit. Their drink is pure water or pure brandy,

brandy, but they dislike wine and all made liquors.

Having mentioned their manner of feeding, I shall say a word or two of their manner of fasting. When they want rain, or when they desire hot weather for ripening their corn, they address themselves to the old man who has the greatest character for living wisely, and they intreat him to invoke the aerial spirits, in order to obtain what they demand. This old man, who never refuses his countrymen's request, prepares to fast for nine days together. He orders his wife to withdraw, and during the whole time he eats nothing but a dish of gruel boiled in water, without salt, which is brought him once a day by his wife after sun-set. They never will accept of any reward for this service, that the spirits may not be angry with them.



## S E C T. VII.

*Of the Indian art of war.*

I Will now present the reader with their manner of making war, which is uniformly the same among all the nations. When one nation intends to make war upon another in all the forms, they hold a council of war, which is composed of the oldest and bravest warriors. It is to be supposed that this nation has been insulted, that the other has committed some hostilities against it, or that they have disturbed them in their hunting country, coming thither to steal their game, as they call it. There is always some pretence for declaring war; and this pretence, whether true or false, is explained by the war-chief, who omits no circumstance that may excite his nation to take up arms.

After he has explained the reasons for the war, the old men debate the question in presence of the great chief or sovereign of the nation. This sovereign and the great chief of war are only witnesses of the debate; for the opinion of the old men always prevails, and the

two chiefs voluntarily agree to it, from their respect and their great regard for the experience and wisdom of those venerable counsellors.

If it is resolved to demand from the other nation the reason of the hostilities committed by them, they name one of their bravest and most eloquent warriors as a second to their speech-maker or chancellor, who is to carry the pipe of peace, and address that nation. These two are accompanied by a troop of the bravest warriors, so that the embassy has the appearance of a warlike expedition; and, if satisfaction is not given, sometimes ends in one. The ambassadors carry no presents with them, to shew that they do not intend to supplicate or beg a peace: they take with them only the pipe of peace, as a proof that they come as friends. The embassy is always well received, entertained in the best manner, and kept as long as possible; and if the other nation is not inclined to begin a war, they make very large presents to the ambassadors, and all their retinue, to make up for the losses which their nation complains of.

If a nation begins actual hostilities without any formalities, the nation invaded is generally

assisted by several allies, keeps itself on the defensive, gives orders to those who live at a great distance to join the main body of the nation, prepares logs for building a fort, and every morning sends some warriors out upon the scout, choosing for that purpose those who trust more to their heels than their heart.

The assistance of the allies is generally solicited by the pipe of peace, the stalk of which is about four feet and a half long, and is covered all over with the skin of a duck's neck, the feathers of which are glossy and of various colours. To this pipe is fastened a fan made of the feathers of white eagles, the ends of which are black, and are ornamented with a tuft dyed a beautiful red.

When the allies are assembled a general council is held in presence of the sovereign, and is composed of the great war-chief, the war-chiefs of the allies, and all the old warriors. The great war-chief opens the assembly with a speech, in which he exhorts them to take vengeance of the insults they have received; and after the point is debated, and the war agreed upon, all the warriors go a hunting to procure game  
for

for the war-feast, which, as well as the war-dance, lasts three days.

The natives distinguish the warriors into three classes, namely, true warriors, who have always given proofs of their courage; common warriors, and apprentice-warriors. They likewise divide our military men into the two classes of true warriors and young warriors. By the former they mean the settlers, of whom the greatest part, upon their arrival, were soldiers, who being now perfectly acquainted with the tricks and wiles of the natives, practise them upon their enemy, whom they do not greatly fear. The young warriors are the soldiers of the regular troops, as the companies are generally composed of young men, who are ignorant of the stratagems used by the natives in time of war.

When the war-feast is ready the warriors repair to it, painted from head to foot with stripes of different colours. They have nothing on but their belt, from whence hangs their apron, their bells, or their rattling gourds, and their tomahawk. In their right hand they have a bow, and those of the north in their left carry



a buckler formed of two round pieces of buffalo's hide sewed together.

The feast is kept in a meadow, the grass of which is mowed to a great extent; there the dishes, which are of hollow wood, are placed round in circles of about twelve or fifteen feet diameter, and the number of those circular tables is proportioned to the largeness of the assembly, in the midst of whom is placed the pipe of war upon the end of a pole seven or eight feet high. At the foot of this pole, in the middle of a circle, is placed the chief dish of all, which is a large dog roasted whole; the other plates are ranged circularly by threes; one of these contains maiz boiled in broth like gruel, another roasted deer's flesh, and the other boiled. They all begin with eating of the dog, to denote their fidelity and attachment to their chief; but before they taste of any thing, an old warrior, who, on account of his great age, is not able to accompany the rest to the war, makes an harangue to the warriors, and by recounting his own exploits, excites them to act with bravery against the enemy. All the warriors then, according to their rank, smoke in the pipe of war, after which they begin their repast; but while they eat, they keep

keep walking continually, to signify that a warrior ought to be always in action and upon his guard.

While they are thus employed one of the young men goes behind a bush about 200 paces off, and raises the cry of death. Instantly all the warriors seize their arms, and run to the place whence the cry comes; and when they are near it the young warrior shews himself again, raises the cry of death, and is answered by all the rest, who then return to the feast, and take up the victuals which in their hurry they had thrown upon the ground. The same alarm is given two other times, and the warriors each time act as at first. The war drink then goes round, which is a heady liquor drawn from the leaves of the *Cassine* after they have been a long while boiled. The feast being finished, they all assemble about fifty paces from a large post, which represents the enemy; and this each of them in his turn runs up to, and strikes with his tomahawk, recounting at the same time all his former brave exploits, and sometimes boasting of valorous deeds that he never performed. But they have the complaisance to each other to pardon this gasconading.

All of them having successively struck the post, they begin the dance of war with their arms in their hands; and this dance and the war-feast are celebrated for three days together, after which they set out for the war. The women some time before are employed in preparing victuals for their husbands, and the old men in engraving upon bark the hieroglyphic sign of the nation that attacks, and of their number of warriors.

Their manner of making war is to attack by surprize; accordingly when they draw near to any of the enemy's villages, they march only in the night; and that they may not be discovered, raise up the grass over which they have trod. One half the warriors watch, while the other half sleep in the thickest and most unfrequented part of the wood.

If any of their scouts can discover a hut of the enemy detached from the rest, they all surround it about day-break, and some of the warriors entering endeavour to knock the people in the head as they awake, or take some man prisoner. Having scalped the dead, they carry off the women and children prisoners, and place against a tree near the hut the hieroglyphic picture,

ture, before which they plant two arrows with their points crossing each other. Instantly they retreat into the woods, and make great turnings to conceal their route.

The women and children whom they take prisoners are made slaves. But if they take a man prisoner the joy is universal, and the glory of their nation is at its height. The warriors when they draw near to their own villages after an expedition, raise the cry of war three times successively; and if they have a man prisoner with them, immediately go and look for three poles to torture him upon; which, however weary or hungry they be, must be provided before they take any refreshment. When they have provided those poles, and tied the prisoner to them, they may then go and take some victuals. The poles are about ten feet long; two of them are planted upright in the ground at a proper distance, and the other is cut thro' in the middle, and the two pieces are fastened cross-ways to the other two, so that they form a square about five feet every way. The prisoner being first scalped by the person who took him, is tied to this square, his hands to the upper part, and his feet to the lower, in such a manner that he forms the figure of a St. *Andrew's* cross. The



young men in the mean time having prepared several bundles of canes, set fire to them; and several of the warriors taking those flaming canes, burn the prisoner in different parts of his body, while others burn him in other parts with their tobacco-pipes. The patience of prisoners in those miserable circumstances is altogether astonishing. No cries or lamentations proceed from them; and some have been known to suffer tortures, and sing for three days and nights without intermission. Sometimes it happens that a young woman who has lost her husband in the war, asks the prisoner to supply the room of the deceased, and her request is immediately granted.

I mentioned above that when one nation declares war against another, they leave a picture near one of their villages. That picture is designed in the following manner. On the top towards the right hand is the hieroglyphic sign of the nation that declares war; next is a naked man with a tomahawk in his hand; and then an arrow pointed against a woman, who is flying away, her hair floating behind her in the air; immediately before this woman is the proper emblem of the nation against whom the war is declared. All this is on one line; and be-

below is drawn the figure of the moon, which is followed by one I, or more; and a man is here represented, before whom is a number of arrows which seem to pierce a woman who is running away. By this is denoted, when such a moon is so many days old, they will come in great numbers and attack such a nation; but this lower part of the picture does not always carry true intelligence. The nation that has offered the insult, or commenced hostilities wrongfully, rarely finds any allies even among those nations who call them brothers.

In carrying on a war they have no such thing as pitched battles, or carrying on of sieges; all the mischief they do each other, is by surprise and skirmishing, and in this their courage and address consists. Among them flight is no ways shameful; their bravery lies often in their legs; and to kill a man asleep or at unawares, is quite as honourable among them as to gain a signal victory after a stout battle.

When a nation is too weak to defend itself in the field, they endeavour to protect themselves by a fort. This fort is built circularly of two rows of large logs of wood, the logs of the inner row being opposite to the joining of

the logs of the outer row. These logs are about fifteen feet long, five feet of which are sunk in the ground. The outer logs are about two feet thick, and the inner about half as much. At every forty paces along the wall a circular tower jets out; and at the entrance of the fort, which is always next to the river, the two ends of the wall pass beyond each other, and leave a side opening. In the middle of the fort stands a tree with its branches lopt off within six or eight inches of the trunk, and this serves for a watch tower. Round this tree are some huts, for the protection of the women and children from random arrows; but notwithstanding all these precautions for defence, if the besieged are but hindered from coming out to water, they are soon obliged to surrender.

When a nation finds itself no longer able to oppose its enemy, the chiefs send a pipe of peace to a neutral nation, and solicit their mediation, which is generally successful, the vanquished nation sheltering themselves under the name of the mediators, and for the future making but one nation with them.

Here it may be observed that when they go to attack others, it sometimes happens that they

they lose some of their own warriors. In that case, they immediately, if possible, scalp their dead friends, to hinder the enemy from having that subject of triumph. Moreover when they return home, whether as victors or otherwise, the great war-chief pays to the respective families for those whom he does not bring back with him; which renders the chiefs very careful of the lives of their warriors.

## CHAP. IV.

*Of the negroes of Louisiana.*

### SECT. I.

*Of the choice of negroes; of their distempers, and the manner of curing them.*

HAVING finished my account of the natives of *Louisiana*, I shall conclude this treatise with some observations relating to the negroes, who, in the lower part of the province especially perform all the labours of agriculture. On that account I have thought proper to give some instructions concerning them, for the benefit of those who are inclined to settle in that province.

The



The negroes must be governed differently from the *Europeans*; not because they are black, nor because they are slaves; but because they think differently from the white men.

First, they imbibe a prejudice from their infancy, that the white men buy them for no other purpose but to drink their blood; which is owing to this, that when the first negroes saw the *Europeans* drink claret, they imagined it was blood, as that wine is of a deep red colour; so that nothing but the actual experience of the contrary can eradicate the false opinion. But as none of those slaves who have had that experience ever return to their own country, the same prejudice continues to subsist on the coast of *Guiney* where we purchase them. Some who are strangers to the manner of thinking that prevails among the negroes, may perhaps think that the above remark is of no consequence, in respect to those slaves who are already sold to the *French*. There have been instances however of bad consequences flowing from this prejudice; especially if the negroes found no old slave of their own country upon their first arrival in our colonies. Some of them have killed or drowned themselves, several of them have deserted (which they call making themselves

Ma-

*Marons*) and all this from an apprehension that the white men were going to drink their blood. When they desert they believe they can get back to their own country by going round the sea, and may live in the woods upon the fruits, which they imagine are as common every where as with them.

They are very superstitious, and are much attached to their prejudices, and little toys which they call *gris, gris*. It would be improper therefore to take them from them, or even speak of them to them; for they would believe themselves undone, if they were stripped of those trinkets. The old negroes soon make them lose conceit of them.

The first thing you ought to do when you purchase negroes, is to cause them to be examined by a skilful surgeon and an honest man, to discover if they have the venereal or any other distemper. When they are viewed, both men and women are stripped naked as the hand, and are carefully examined from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, then between the toes and between the fingers, in the mouth, in the ears, not excepting even the parts naturally concealed, tho' then exposed to view.

You

You must ask your examining surgeon if he is acquainted with the distemper of the yaws, which is the virus of *Guiney*, and incurable by a great many *French* surgeons, tho' very skilful in the management of *European* distempers. Be careful not to be deceived in this point; for your surgeon may be deceived himself; therefore attend at the examination yourself, and observe carefully over all the body of the negro, whether you can discover any parts of the skin, which tho' black like the rest, are however as smooth as a looking-glass, without any tumor or rising. Such spots may be easily discovered; for the skin of a person who goes naked is usually all over wrinkles. Wherefore if you see such marks you must reject the negro, whether man or woman. There are always experienced surgeons at the sale of new negroes, who purchase them; and many of those surgeons have made fortunes by that means; but they generally keep their secret to themselves.

Another mortal distemper with which many negroes from *Guiney* are attacked is the scurvy. It discovers itself by the gums, but sometimes it is so inveterate as to appear outwardly, in which case it is generally fatal. If any of my  
read-

readers shall have the misfortune to have a negro attacked with one of those distempers, I will now teach him how to save him, by putting him in a way of being radically cured by the surgeons; for I have no inclination to fall out with those gentlemen. I learned this secret from a negro physician, who was upon the king's plantation, when I took the superintendance of it.

You must never put an iron instrument into the yaw; such an application would be certain death. In order to open the yaw, you take iron rust reduced to an impalpable powder, and passed thro' a fine search; you afterwards mix that powder with citron juice till it be of the consistence of an ointment, which you spread upon a linen cloth greased with hogs grease, or fresh lard without salt, for want of a better. You lay the plaister upon the yaw, and renew it evening and morning, which will open the yaw in a very short time without any incision.

The opening being once made, you take about the bulk of a goose's egg of hog's lard without salt, in which you incorporate about an ounce of good terebinthine; after which take a quantity of powdered verdigris, and soak  
it



it half a day in good vinegar, which you must then pour off gently with all the scum that floats at the top. Drop a cloth all over with the verdigris that remains, and upon that apply your last ointment. All these operations are performed without the assistance of fire. The whole ointment being well mixed with a spatula, you dress the yaw with it; after that put your negro into a copious sweat, and he will be cured. Take special care that your surgeon uses no mercurial medicine, as I have seen; for that will occasion the death of the patient.

The scurvy is no less to be dreaded than the yaws; nevertheless you may get the better of it, by adhering exactly to the following prescription: take some scurvy-grass, if you have any plants of it, some ground-ivy, called by some *St. John's wort*, some water-creffes from a spring or brook, and for want of that, wild creffes; take these three herbs, or the two last, if you have no scurvy-grass; pound them, and mix them with citron-juice, to make of them a soft paste, which the patient must keep upon both his gums till they be clean, at all times but when he is eating. In the mean while he must be suffered to drink nothing but an infusion of  
the

the herbs above named. You pound two handfuls of them, roots and all, after washing off any earth that may be upon the roots or leaves; to these you join a fresh citron, cut into slices. Having pounded all together, you then steep them in an earthen pan in a pint of pure water of the measure of *Paris*; after that you add about the size of a walnut of powdered and purified salt-petre, and, to make it a little refreshing to the negro, you add some powder sugar. After the water has stood one night, you squeeze out the herbs pretty strongly. The whole is performed cold, or without fire. Such is the dose for a bottle of water *Paris* measure; but as the patient ought to drink two pints a day, you may make several pints at a time in the above proportion.

In these two distempers the patients must be supported with good nourishment, and made to sweat copiously. It would be a mistake to think that they ought to be kept to a spare diet; you must give them nourishing food, but little at a time. A negro can no more than any other person support remedies upon bad food, and still less upon a spare diet; but the quantity must be proportioned to the state of the patient, and the nature of the distemper.

Be-

Besides, good food makes the best part of the remedy to those who in common are but poorly fed. The negro who taught me these two remedies, observing the great care I took of both the negro men and negro women, taught me likewise the cure of all the distempers to which the women are subject; for the negro women are as liable to diseases as the white women.

## S E C T. II.

*Of the manner of governing the negroes.*

WHEN a negro man or woman comes home to you, it is proper to care for them, to give them something good to eat, with a glass of brandy; it is best to dress them the same day, to give them something to sleep on, and a covering. I suppose the others have been treated in the same manner; for those marks of humanity flatter them, and attach them to their masters. If they are fatigued or weakened by a journey, or by any distempers, make them work little; but keep them always busy as long as they are able to do any thing, never suffering them to be idle, but when they are at their meals. Take care of them

them when they are sick, and give attention both to their remedies and their food, which last ought then to be more nourishing than what they usually subsist upon. It is your interest so to do, both for their preservation, and to attach them more closely to you; for tho' many *French* men say that negroes are ungrateful, I have experienced that it is very easy to render them much attached to you by good treatment, and by doing them justice, as I shall mention afterwards.

If a negro woman lies in, cause her to be taken care of in every thing that her condition makes necessary, and let your wife, if you have one, not disdain to take the immediate care of her herself, or at least have an eye over her.

A Christian ought to take care that the children be baptised and instructed, since they have an immortal soul. The mother ought then to receive half a ration more than usual, and a quart of milk a day, to assist her to nurse her child.

Prudence requires that your negroes be lodged at a proper distance, to prevent them from being trou-



troublesome or offensive; but at the same time near enough for your conveniently observing what passes among them. When I say that they ought not to be placed so near your habitation as to be offensive, I mean by that the smell which is natural to some nations of negroes, such as the *Congos*, the *Angolas*, the *Aradas*, and others. On this account it is proper to have in their camp a bathing place formed by thick planks, buried in the earth about a foot or a foot and a half at most, and never more water in it than about that depth, for fear lest the children should drown themselves in it; it ought likewise to have an edge, that the little children may not have access to it, and there ought to be a pond without the camp to supply it with water and keep fish. The negro camp ought to be inclosed all round with palisades, and to have a door to shut with a lock and key. The huts ought to be detached from each other, for fear of fire, and to be built in direct lines, both for the sake of neatness, and in order to know easily the hut of each negro. But that you may be as little incommoded as possible with their natural smell, you must have the precaution to place the negro camp to the north or north-east of your house, as the winds that blow from these quarters are not

not so warm as the others, and it is only when the negroes are warm that they send forth a disagreeable smell.

The negroes that have the worst smell are those that are the least black; and what I have said of their bad smell, ought to warn you to keep always on the windward side of them when you visit them at their work; never to suffer them to come near your children, who, exclusive of the bad smell, can learn nothing good from them, either as to morals, education, or language.

From what I have said, I conclude that a *French* father and his wife are great enemies to their posterity when they give their children such nurses. For the milk being the purest blood of the woman, one must be a step-mother indeed to give her child to a negro nurse in such a country as *Louisiana*, where the mother has all conveniences of being served, of accommodating and carrying their children, who by that means may be always under their eyes. The mother then has nothing else to do but to give the breast to her child.

I have

I have no inclination to employ my pen in censuring the over-delicacy and selfishness of the women, who thus sacrifice their children; it may, without further illustration, be easily perceived how much society is interested in this affair. I shall only say, that for any kind of service whatever about the house, I would advise no other kind of negroes, either young or old, but *Senegals*, called among themselves *Diolaufs*, because of all the negroes I have known, these have the purest blood; they have more fidelity and a better understanding than the rest, and are consequently fitter for learning a trade, or for menial services. It is true they are not so strong as the others for the labours of the field, and for bearing the great heats.

The *Senegals* however are the blackest, and I never saw any who had a bad smell. They are very grateful; and when one knows how to attach them to him, they have been found to sacrifice their own life to save that of their master. They are good commanders over other negroes, both on account of their fidelity and gratitude, and because they seem to be born for commanding. As they are high-minded, they may be easily encouraged to learn a trade,

or to serve in the house, by the distinction they will thereby acquire over other negroes, and the neatness of dress which that condition will entir<sup>e</sup> them to.

When a settler wants to make a fortune, and manage his plantation with oeconomy, he ought to prefer his interest to his pleasure, and only take the last by snatches. He ought to be the first up and the last a-bed, that he may have an eye over every thing that passes in his plantation. It is certainly his interest that his negroes labour a good deal ; but it ought to be an equal and moderate labour, for violent and continual labours would soon exhaust and ruin them ; whereas by keeping them always moderately employed, they neither exhaust their strength nor ruin their constitution. By this they are kept in good health, and labour longer, and with more good will : besides, it must be allowed that the day is long enough for an assiduous labourer to deserve the repose of the evening.

To accustom them to labour in this manner I observed the following method : I took care to provide one piece of work for them before another was done, and I informed their com-



mander or driver in their presence, that they might not lose time, some in coming to ask what they were to do, and others in waiting for an answer. Besides I went several times a day to view them, by roads which they did not expect, pretending to be going a hunting or coming from it. If I observed them idle, I reprimanded them, and if when they saw me coming they wrought too hard, I told them that they fatigued themselves, and that they could not continue at such hard labour during the whole day without being harassed, which I did not want.

When I surpris'd them singing at their work, and perceived that they had discovered me, I said to them cheerfully, Courage, my boys, I love to see you merry at your work; but do not sing so loud, that you may not fatigue yourselves, and at night you shall have a cup of *Tafia* (or rum) to give you strength and spirits. One cannot believe the effect such a discourse would have upon their spirits, which was easily discernable from the cheerfulness upon their countenances, and their ardour at work.

If it be necessary not to pass over any essential fault in the negroes, it is no less necessary never to punish them but when they have deserved it, after a serious enquiry and examination supported by an absolute certainty, unless you happen to catch them in the fact. But when you are fully convinced of the crime, by no means pardon them upon any assurances or protestations of theirs, or upon the solicitations of others; but punish them in proportion to the fault they have done, yet always with humanity, that they may themselves be brought to confess that they have deserved the punishment they have received. A Christian is unworthy of that name when he punishes with cruelty, as is done to my knowledge in a certain colony, to such a degree that they entertain their guests with such spectacles, which have more of barbarity than humanity in them. When a negro comes from being whipped cause the fore parts to be washed with vinegar mixed with salt, *Jamaica* pepper, which grows in the gardens, and even a little gunpowder.

As we know from experience that most men of a low extraction, and without education, are subject to thieving in their necessities, it is

not at all surprizing to see negroes thieves, when they are in want of every thing, as I have seen many badly fed, badly cloathed, and having nothing to lie upon but the ground. I shall make but one reflection. If they are slaves, it is also true that they are men, and capable of becoming *Christians*: besides, it is your intention to draw advantage from them, is it not therefore reasonable to take all the care of them that you can? We see all those who understand the government of horses give an extraordinary attention to them, whether they be intended for the saddle or the draught. In the cold season they are well covered and kept in warm stables. In the summer they have a cloth thrown over them, to keep them from the dust, and at all times good litter to lie upon. Every morning their dung is carried away, and they are well curried and combed. If you ask those masters, why they bestow so much pains upon beasts? they will tell you, that, to make a horse serviceable to you, you must take a good deal of care of him, and that it is for the interest of the person to whom a horse belongs, so to do. After this example, can one hope for labour from negroes, who very often are in want of necessaries? Can one expect fidelity from a man, who is denied what he stands

stands most in need of? When one sees a negro, who labours hard and with much assiduity, it is common to say to him, by way of encouragement, that they are well pleased with him, and that he is a good negro. But when any of them, who understand our language, are so complimented, they very properly reply, *Masser, when negre be much fed, negre work much; when negre has good masser, negre be good.*

If I advise the planters to take great care of their negroes, I at the same time shew them that their interest is connected in that with their humanity. But I do no less advise them always to distrust them, without seeming to fear them, because it is as dangerous to shew a concealed enemy that you fear him, as to do him an injury.

Therefore make it your constant custom to shut your doors securely, and not to suffer any negro to sleep in the house with you, and have it in their power to open your door. Visit your negroes from time to time, at night and on days and hours when they least expect you, in order to keep them always in fear of being



being found absent from their huts. Endeavour to assign each of them a wife, to keep clear of debauchery and its bad consequences. It is necessary that the negroes have wives, and you ought to know that nothing attaches them so much to a plantation as children. But above all do not suffer any of them to abandon his wife, when he has once made choice of one in your presence. Prohibit all fighting under pain of the lash, otherwise the women will often raise squabbles among the men.

Do not suffer your negroes to carry their children to the field with them, when they begin to walk, as they only spoil the plants and take off the mothers from their work. If you have a few negro children it is better to employ an old negro woman to keep them in the camp, with whom the mothers may leave something for their children to eat. This you will find to be the most profitable way. Above all do not suffer the mothers ever to carry them to the edge of the water, where there is too much to be feared.

For the better subsistence of your negroes, you ought every week to give them a small  
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quantity of salt and of the herbs of your garden, to give a better relish to their *Coufcou*, which is a dish made of the meal of rice or maiz soaked in broth.

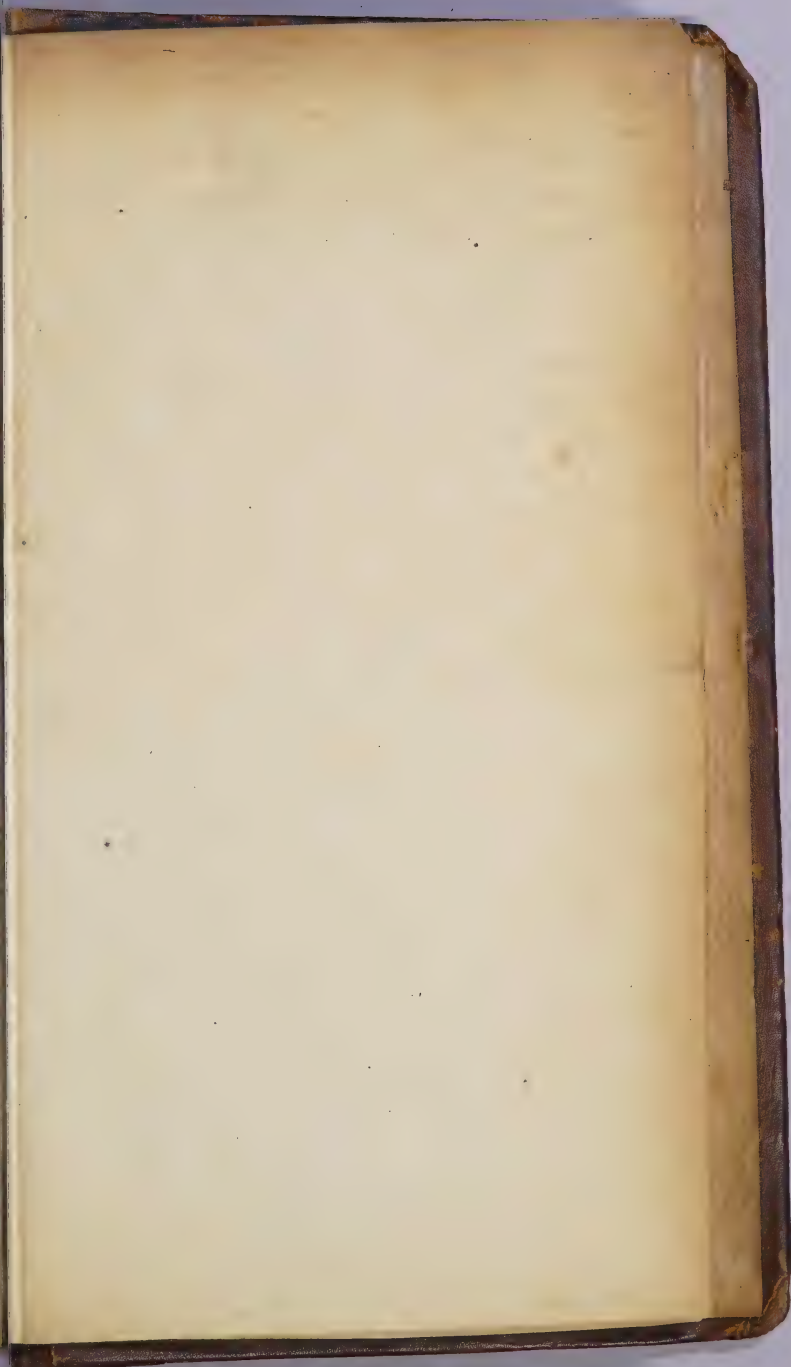
If you have any old negro, or one in weak health, employ him in fishing both for yourself and your negroes. His labour will be well worth his subsistence.

It is moreover for your own interest to give your negroes a small piece of waste ground to improve at the end of your own, and to engage them to cultivate it for their own profit, that they may be able to dress a little better, by selling the produce of it, which you ought to buy from them upon fair and just terms. It were better that they should employ themselves in cultivating that field on *Sundays*, when they are not *Christians*, than do worse. In a word nothing is more to be dreaded than to see the negroes assemble together on *Sundays*, since, under pretence of *Calinda* or the dance, they sometimes get together to the number of three or four hundred, and make a kind of *Sabbath*, which it is always prudent to avoid; for it is in those tumultuous meetings, that they sell what they have stolen to one another, and com-

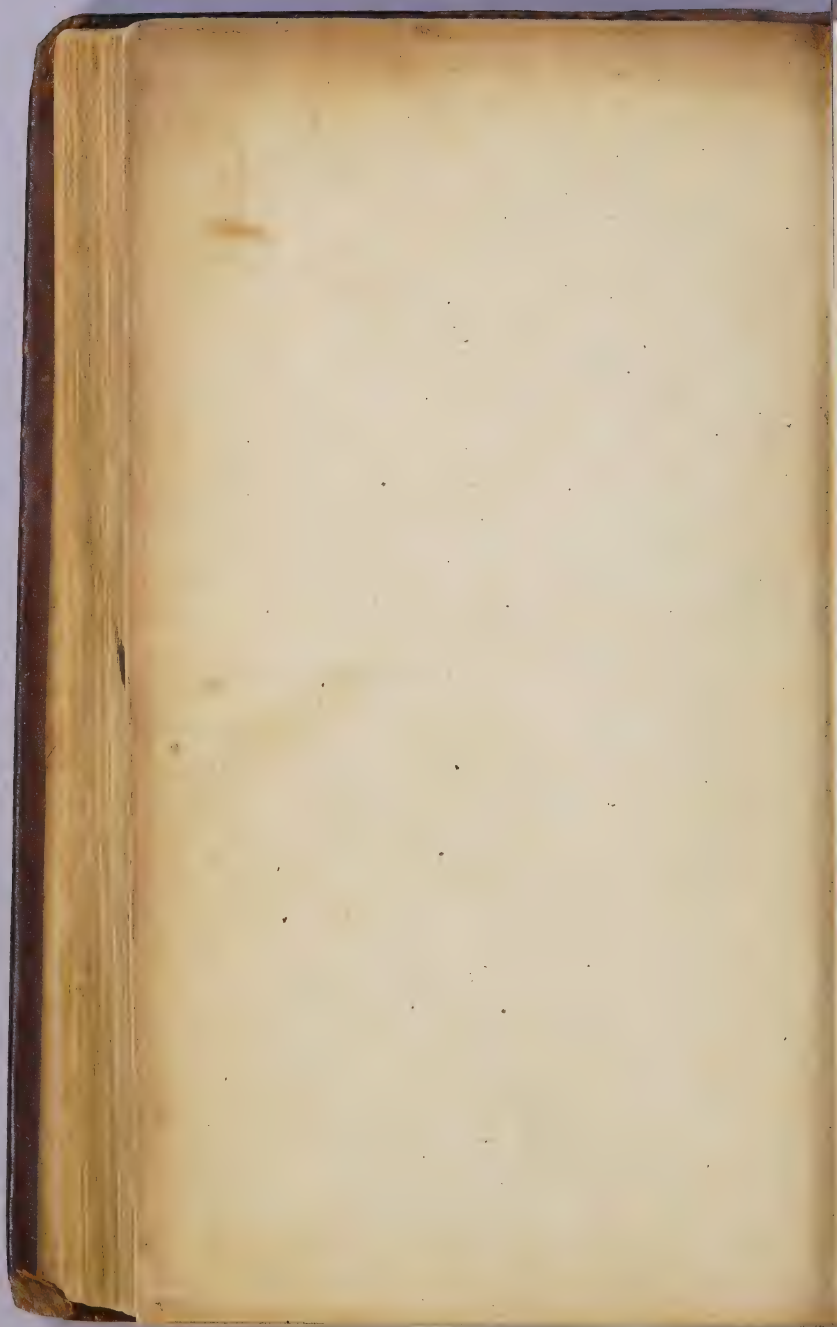
mit many crimes. In these likewise they plot their rebellions.

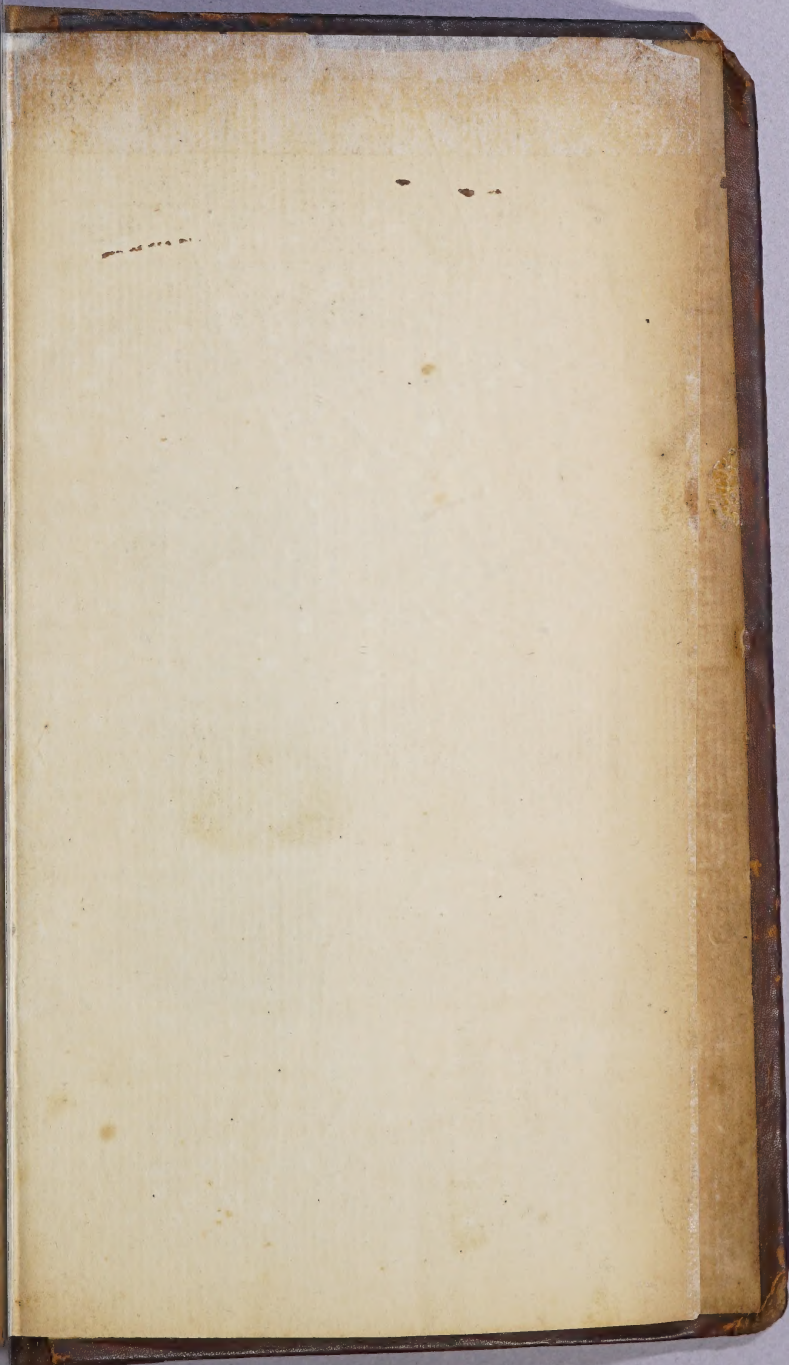
To conclude, one may, by attention and humanity, easily manage negroes; and, as an inducement, one has the satisfaction to draw great advantage from their labours.

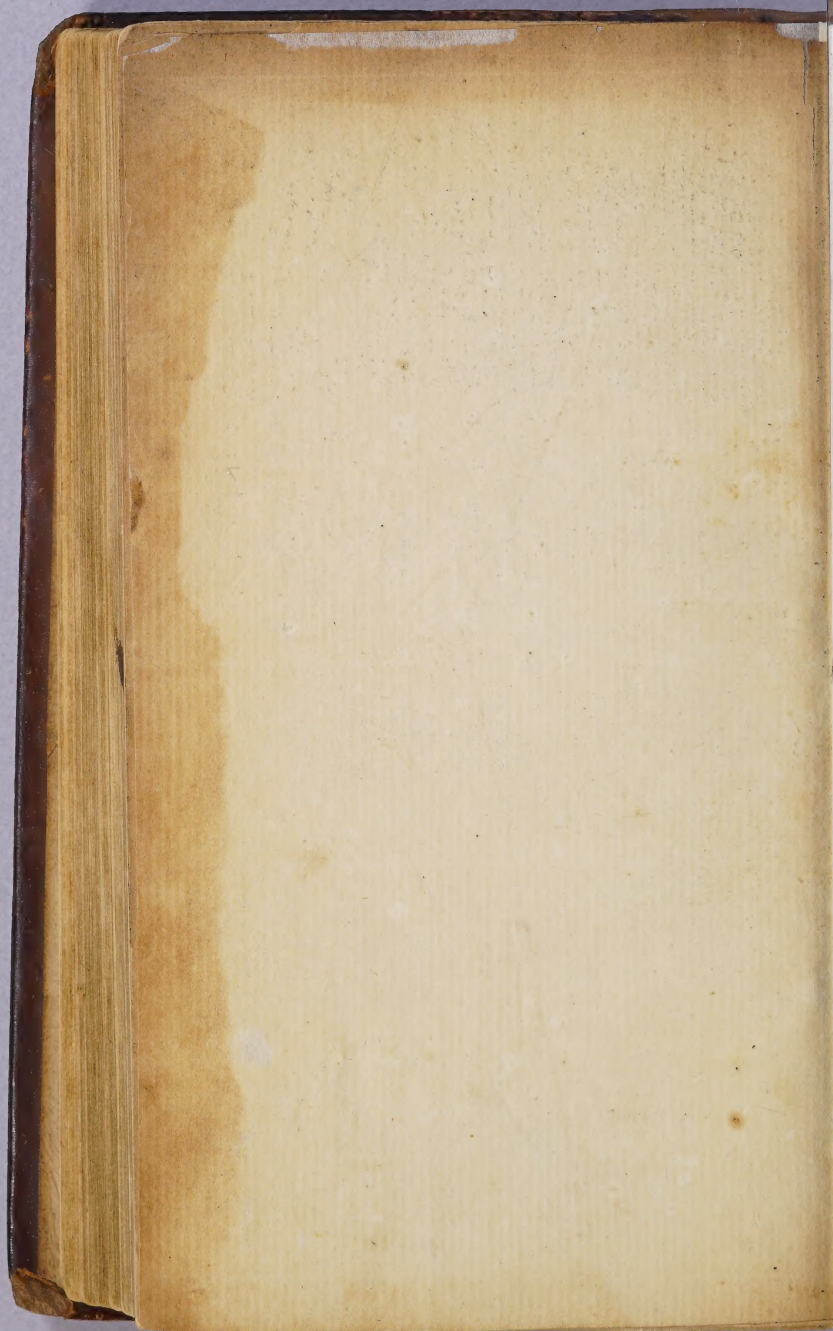
THE END.













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