

Extract of a Letter from Pondicherry, dated the 3d of June, 1787; taken from a Journal of the Isles of France and Bourbon; Vol. I. No. 3. July, 1787.

“We have suffered at Yanaon, and in all its environs, the same disaster which you have experienced at the Isle of France. We have had, during the night of the 19th and 20th of May, a most violent hurricane. The sea rose to an extraordinary height; all the houses at Yanaon have been inundated and destroyed: the English and Dutch factories have suffered a similar destruction. A considerable number of Negroes have been drowned. The ship called *Le Levrier*, which had been sent to Yanaon to take in merchandize on account of the Company, and had actually taken in the greater part of her cargo in the road of Coringa, has been driven two leagues to the leeward, into a plain in the midst of palm trees. The ship the *Heureux*, which was in the river of Coringa, is lost, and five or six leagues of the country are inundated.

“Four days after the hurricane the waters still remained, as it had rained during that time without ceasing. The extent of our losses has not yet been ascertained; they must be very considerable to the Company, as well as several individuals of Pondicherry. The waters have carried away a large quantity of linens, not only from the grounds where they were bleaching, but from the warehouses; some of which, however, have been recovered, by drawing them out of the mud and sand with which they were covered. Such is the detail of this ruinous event.”*

Account of the Volcano in the Isle of Bourbon, by M. Rochon.

“This volcano, though its eruptions are frequent, has not occasioned any injury to the island since it has been inhabited. The colonists have very wisely kept at a distance from this gulph, whose vicinity is very much to be dreaded, according to the description given of it by M. de Commerson, a very learned naturalist.

“M. de Cremont, at that time Intendant of the Isle of Bourbon, not only gave M. de Commerson all the assistance in his power, in order to facilitate his approach to the mouth of the volcano, and to examine its productions, but accompanied him in his researches.

“The approaches to the volcano of the Isle of Bourbon are very difficult: the country is entirely burnt up for six miles round it; and very few of the inhabitants

* Mr. Dalrymple—Oriental Repository, Vol. II. p. 98.

are acquainted with the way by which its summit is to be attained. Seven days are requisite to perform that journey. Heaps of cinders, lava, and vitrified earth, with rifts and precipices, render all access not only laborious but dangerous. The time must be very favourable, and without the appearance of a cloud, to allow of a visit to the crater; as a few drops of rain would be sufficient to provoke an eruption; when the imprudence of approaching it would cost the rash adventurer his life.

"The volcanic productions are very various; and sometimes there are found, at a great distance from the mountain, certain glassy filaments, of an exceeding fineness resembling hair. This kind of lava is not very common."

The following Description of this Volcano is by M. Brunel.

"It is situated almost at the summit of an hollow and detruncated mountain, whose base, falling down with a gentle inclination, rests upon a bed of calcined earth, at the distance of a league from the sea. Though the matter it contains is continually boiling, it never rises so high as to proceed from the crater. In the moment of an eruption, the lava is seen taking its course down the side of the mountain, in such a manner as to offer the appearance of a fiery cascade. The light, which is diffused to a great distance, as well on sea as land, is equal to that of the moon in its full splendour. According to the tradition of the country, it was this natural Pharos, that attracted the curiosity of the first Europeans who visited these coasts.

"The environs of the volcano are covered with sal ammoniac, sulphur, alum, and pumice stone. It is a remarkable circumstance, and very different from other volcanoes, that though its eruptions are frequent, they are never accompanied with earthquakes. The security of the inhabitants, therefore, is not endangered by the vicinity of such a phænomenon, as is known to be the case in every country afflicted by them: nor has it been observed that water is at any time thrown forth from this volcano; or has any warm mineral spring been discovered in this island.

"In the month of June, 1787, this volcano was in a very remarkable state of eruption. The summit of the mountain was covered with thick vapours, of a black colour, which issued in clouds of a spiral form from the mouth of the ancient crater. On the 24th the lava ran down as far as the sea; nine days after it had begun to flow, it extended in certain places to eighty fathom in breadth, and in others to forty. The liquid matter continued to run during a month, in great abundance, and formed a fiery current to the very sea, of about sixty fathom in breadth, and

from ten to sixteen feet deep. The waves of the sea smoked at the distance of thirty fathom from the place where the lava precipitated itself into the waters, assuming a yellowish-green colour, and forming a broad line, to the leeward, of the same hue.

“ This current running parallel to another of a former period, which consists also of several beds of melted matter, formed a projection, whose base was volcanised sand, mixed with a kind of ferruginous foam. Eleven days after the lava had reached the sea, a solid crust was formed on its surface, which was sufficiently strong to admit of being ascended, to about fifteen paces from the place whence it issued. Indeed one might venture to walk without danger on a torrent of burning lava, if due precautions were taken. In the level parts it soon grows cool, and becomes hard as thick ice, while, through the crevices, the liquid matter might be seen flowing on without interruption. When, however, it meets with any obstacle, it forces its way through the external crust, and covers it with a new bed of boiling lava. On the 1st of August the lava ceased to flow, but it diffused a considerable quantity of smoke, and appeared at the bottom to be red-hot for some time afterwards. It was believed that another crater was discovered at about a league from St. Denis, the capital of the island: clouds of smoke and a very strong heat issued from a ravine, which it was impracticable to approach during the space of a month. At the end, however, of that period, it appeared that this heat and the smoke that accompanied it, issued from a cavern, that was the hiding-place of some Maroon Negroes. A fire having been lighted in this place, either on purpose or by accident, was maintained by a large quantity of leaves, stalks, and other combustible materials, which were very slow in consuming, because the cavern admitted but a small portion of air. The remains of birds nests, which were found there, clearly proved that the cavern had not always been exposed to a similar degree of heat; and this circumstance, strengthened by other observations, quieted the alarms that this novel appearance had excited.

“ The Isle of France, which is in the vicinity of the Isle of Bourbon, is considered as a country which has been exposed to the violent convulsions of nature. It abounds in caverns, precipices, waterfalls, subterraneous passages, iron mines, calcined stones, vitrifications, burnt sand, and pyrites, which are general indications of ancient volcanoes; but, on account of their antiquity, it is not possible at this time to determine their situation. The most lofty mountains in this island have not more than five hundred fathom of elevation, while, in the Isle of Bourbon, there are peaks

which rise to upwards of fifteen hundred fathom. The two islands, which are more than thirty-five leagues distant from each other, were, without doubt, formerly united, but have been divided by some violent effort of nature: there is indeed every reason to believe that they are still connected, though the conjoining parts are covered by the sea, and that some subterraneous passage forms a communication between them.

“The earthquake which happened in the Isle of France on the 4th of August, 1786, appeared to favour this conjecture. On that day, at thirty-five minutes past six in the morning, a calm succeeded to a strong east and east-south-east wind, which had prevailed during four days; a subterraneous noise, that terminated by a sudden explosion, like the discharge of a cannon, was heard in the south-east quarter, and at the same moment two violent shocks were felt, the one vertical, and the other horizontal: the barometer did not on this occasion indicate the least change in the atmosphere, and an east-south-east breeze commenced within a quarter of an hour, and continued till eleven on the following night. This strange phenomenon was not accompanied with any destructive circumstance in the Isle of France; but it appeared that, at the same moment, the volcano in the Isle of Bourbon had poured forth a greater quantity of lava than it had done on the preceding days.

“It is reasonable therefore to suppose, that the combustible matter in the Isle of France had fermented till it took fire, and having met with a resistance superior to its own force, occasioned the shocks which have been mentioned; when, being impelled in every direction, it found a passage, by a subterraneous gallery, to the Isle of Bourbon, and not meeting with any resistance, issued from the crater of the volcano.”

The succeeding Observations will enable our Readers to compare the Volcano of the Isle of Bourbon, with the two most celebrated Volcanoes of Europe.

Mount Vesuvius is two leagues to the east of Naples, and about two thousand fathom from the sea; the circumference of its base is about ten leagues, and its elevation above the level of the sea, or the Gulf of Naples, is five hundred and ninety-five fathom. It divides at about two-thirds of its height, and its two summits are about five hundred fathom from each other: that towards the sea forms the volcano.

Its first eruption, as recorded in history, was during the reign of Titus, in the seventy-ninth year of the Christian era, and which was rendered remarkable by the

death of Pliny the Naturalist, and the destruction of the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Some authors however pretend, that this mountain had experienced seven eruptions previous to the reign of Augustus Cæsar.

According to a discourse of Silius Italicus, who lived before the time of Titus, it was very evident to ocular examination, that it had discharged volcanic matter previous to that period, though there was no tradition of such an event.

From the first known eruption to that which took place in the year 1754, there have been twenty-four; there have also been several since the latter period. That of April in 1694, was one of the most considerable. The mountain then vomited forth flames during the greater part of the month, and the lava ran from the upper part of the volcano like a river, to the distance of three miles, destroying every thing which obstructed its passage.

In 1707, while the Neapolitans were occupied in making rejoicings for the success of the Imperial forces, they were interrupted by a terrible eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The sky was entirely obscured in the middle of the day, by the quantity of cinders which issued from the volcano.

In the intervals of these eruptions the inhabitants are often alarmed by earthquakes, which, however, do not prevent them from cultivating and inhabiting the sides of this dangerous mountain.*

Mount Ætna is situated fifty miles south-west of Messina, and ten miles west of Catania, whose vicinity is filled with other towns, villages, vineyards, and plantations, which, as in the environs of Vesuvius, spring out of an abundant soil, that has been fertilized by the volcano. The mountain itself is enriched with trees almost to its summit, which is surrounded with a circle of snow.

The grand crater of Mount Ætna is six miles in circumference. The base of the mountain occupies a circuit of twenty leagues, and its elevation rises to two thousand fathom.

On the eruption of this volcano in 1693, the town of Catania was destroyed in a moment, and eighteen thousand persons perished in its ruins.

A learned and distinct description of Mount Ætna, is to be found in a work entitled *La Pyrologie de Bottoni de Leontini*: that intrepid naturalist had the courage to ascend the summit of the mountain three different times, in 1540, 1545, and 1553.

* See Sir William Hamilton on the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius.

In 1537, the wind bore the ashes, produced by the conflagration of the mountain, to upwards of an hundred leagues.

In 1692 and 1693, on the 9th, 10th, and 11th of January, there was an earthquake throughout Sicily, which not only overthrew the town of Catania, but also of Agousta, greatly damaged that of Syracuse, with many towns and villages, and buried in their ruins upwards of forty thousand persons. But, notwithstanding such disasters, these towns have been re-established, perhaps, to be again destroyed.

The destruction of Messina on the 5th of February, 1783, and the terrible phenomenon which occasioned it, is well known; we shall, nevertheless, present to the attention of our readers, the following correct and curious account, by the learned M. Gallo, who was himself a witness of it.

“ The preceding autumn had been rainy and cold; the winds varied between the south-west, the west, and the north-west; and if the south-east was at any time perceived, it was known to foretel a sudden storm and of short duration. Before the rising and setting of the sun, the horizon appeared to be charged with thick clouds, which displayed themselves between the east, the south-west, and the south. The beginning of the winter was dry and temperate: in the month of January it frequently rained; and the showers were not only violent, but accompanied with a stormy wind from the south-east and the south. The air was rather temperate than cold, because after the rain the rays of the sun were extremely hot. The winds continued to be stormy.

“ At the extremity of the Strait of Charybdis, there appeared some irregularity in tide, an extraordinary boiling up of the waters, and at intervals a noise was heard; but these phenomena did not attract attention. On the 5th of February, at forty-eight minutes past eleven in the morning, the earth experienced some light shocks, which soon became violent, and were accompanied with roarings and such irregular motions that the ground was seen to undulate on all sides, while the walls of houses dashed against each other, and fell in large masses, with the floors and roofs. Three or four successive shocks increased the horror of the moment. Houses, palaces, steeples, and churches, were shaken down. The earth sunk in some places, and opened in others, emitting flames from its burning chasms. The neighbouring mountains opened, the sea rose above its ordinary level, entered the mole, dashed its impetuous waves against the palace, and covered a considerable part of the maritime theatre, which is situated below the custom-house. In this scene of

confusion and desolation, the inhabitants rushed into the larger streets and the fields; where, while consternation had seized their hearts, the earth shook under their feet, and the clouds poured forth hail and rain with resistless impetuosity on their heads. It was a varied and indescribable scene of ruin, distress, and death.

"The trepidation however of the earth continued with a concentrated murmur, like that of a bomb which bursts after it is buried in the earth. At three in the morning the shocks increased to such a degree, that those buildings which had resisted, from their massive strength, were thrown down, and the principal public edifices shaken into ruins. The sea also, by its violence and unusual rise, aided the general scene of devastation.

"On the 22d of the same month at ten in the evening, the buildings which had only crumbled in parts, fell at once, and Messina was destroyed. The very stones appeared as if they had been pounded in a mortar.

From the 5th of February to the 9th of March inclusive, there were no less than one hundred and eighty commotions.

"It is not easy to determine the number of inhabitants which perished at Messina; they are not, however, supposed to have exceeded five hundred, as the shocks were preceded by certain notices which gave them an opportunity to escape: though of the number of those who survived, the fourth part was dragged forth from the ruins of the buildings in a wounded or maimed condition.

"The value of the public edifices and houses which were destroyed amounted at least to fifteen millions of Roman crowns, and the loss of furniture, merchandize, and gold and silver, was still more considerable."

The Agriculture of the Isle of Bourbon, by M. Poivre.

"The soil of the Isles of France and Bourbon is naturally as fertile as that of Madagascar, and they enjoy a more favourable climate. The latter of these islands has no port, and is not much frequented by shipping: but the manners of the inhabitants are simple, and its agriculture flourishes. The Isle of Bourbon produces wheat, rice, and maize, more than sufficient for its own consumption, as it affords a portion of those grains for the supply of the Isle of France. The same mode of cultivation is pursued as in the Island of Madagascar. The cattle and sheep which were transported from thence have also succeeded, more particularly as the grass called Fatak, which forms an excellent pasturage, was also brought with them,

and naturalized in the Isle of Bourbon. But the principal object of cultivation is coffee. The first plants of this shrub was brought from Moka, and it is multiplied by its grains, which it sows itself. It is necessary to dress the ground round the young plant two or three times in the course of the first year, in order to destroy the weeds which might share in its subsistence, and it will then require no further care. Its branches, that extend horizontally and are very thick, suffocate, as it were, any other plants which might spring up about it. In about eighteen months the coffee tree begins to bear fruit, and in the third year it is in full bearing. The young shrubs are planted in squares, at the distance of about seven feet from each other, and they are kept down, by the pruning knife, to about two feet from the earth.

“ The coffee tree requires a light earth, and succeeds better in pure sand than in a rich earth. In the Isle of Bourbon, each tree produced, on an average, a pound of berries, and it ripens and is gathered in a dry season; a circumstance which gives it a very great advantage over the coffee of the American islands, that ripens and is gathered in rainy seasons. It is afterwards exposed to the sun during several days, till the berry is dry and contracted: it is then disembarassed of its pulp.

“ Cocoa trees flourish in the Isle of Bourbon, though they are no longer to be seen in the Isle of France:* they were probably destroyed by the first inhabitants. This tree is very useful, not only for its fruit, but as it supplies the principal wants of man; who derives from it not only food and drink, but wood for building his habitation, which is covered with its leaves, while its bark furnishes him with clothing and with fuel.

“ This island also produces the tree from whence the benzoin is distilled, a resinous and sweet-smelling gum, which issues from the tree by incision, and whose qualities are well known. This tree is also a native of Siam, Sumatra, &c. There are two kinds of benzoin, the one collected in drops, which is the best, and the other in large pieces.

“ The first is clean, transparent, and of a reddish colour, speckled, as it were, with white spots, that resemble broken almonds. This circumstance has given it the name of *Benzoinum Amygdaloides*. It affords an aromatic and pleasant odour,

* There were cocoa trees at Mauritius when it was discovered, but their usefulness has proved their destruction.

and is used by perfumers as well as by physicians. . The flower of benzoin is an excellent pectoral medicine, and is used also to remove obstructions.

* * We shall still have occasion to make frequent mention of the Isle of Bourbon in the accounts which will follow of the Isle of France, with whose history it is evidently connected, and particularly as they are both under the general jurisdiction of the same governors. The description of the Isle of France which has been already given, contains a chronological table of all its governors from its first discovery. As it furnishes but few interesting events till the arrival of M. de la Bourdonnais, and as the most authentic and instructive materials, since the commencement of his government, are to be found in the correspondence of Baron Grant, who was not only an eye witness of, but absolutely engaged in, that administration, during a period of eleven years; we shall proceed to give his letters in a regular series, which will communicate every thing that is to be known of the civil and military history of this island, with the manners and customs of the inhabitants, for the space of twenty years, without the least interruption.

CHAPTER VI.

Letters of Baron Grant, respecting the Isle of France.—The following contains a short general Description, with an Account of the first Operations of M. de la Bourdonnais, Governor of that Island, to the Year 1744.

LETTER II.*

Isle of France, 12th of February, 1744.

MY first letter contained an extract from the journal of my voyage, with some local descriptions of this island, as well as those of Rodriguez and Bourbon, both from my own observations, and the best information I could obtain from others: after having considered the soil and its productions, I shall proceed to describe the uses to which they are applied, by those whose culture has either produced or improved them for the public advantage.†

It will not appear surprising, that the far greater part of the military officers whom war has conducted to this island, should wish to fix their abode in it, when all the circumstances attached to it are faithfully enumerated: a delightful climate, a clear sky, and a soil which produces every thing that is useful and gratifying to man. While mountains, whose summits are never covered with snow, and whose declivities, bright with verdure, are contrasted with towering rocks, compose amphitheatres, which present a varied and picturesque scene of grandeur and beauty.

From the tops of the hills, small streams and rivers of a pure and limpid water gush forth, and, forming beautiful cascades as they fall, wind at length through the vallies which they fertilize and adorn, at once enriching the country, and refreshing the dwellings of the happy inhabitants.

* The first Letter was inserted in the Introduction.

† Having assisted my father since his return to France, in arranging these letters, (which were written by him, to his family in Normandy, during his residence at Mauritius), we have enriched them with observations, the fruits of subsequent inquiry and information.

Africa and Asia dispute the property of this island, which nature has placed in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean; but our modern geographers, better instructed than the Ptolomies and the Strabos, have assigned it to the first of these two ancient quarters of the globe; though it is altogether free from the dangerous animals with which those continents are infested.

Certain parts of the forests have been cleared, particularly in the neighbourhood of Port Louis, &c. and plantations established.

There is but the difference of an hour between the longest and the shortest day.

I shall not mention in this place the violence of the winds, which has already been particularly detailed: at the same time I shall just observe, that the rains form our happiness, not only because they refresh the air and are never of long duration, but as they are the first cause of the fertility which is our boast.

Hunting, which is pursued without difficulty, and with continual success, is one of our principal resources.

We have three kinds of partridge, none of which are the same as those of France, though some of them approach the red-legged species of our country. From the heat of the earth, they are compelled to perch on the trees. Guinea fowls are common in the woods, and there were plenty of white hares, whose flesh is indifferent, but they are now become very rare.

Monkeys, parroquets, and bats, are in great abundance, and are pursued by the sportsman. The two latter are generally admitted to the tables of the inhabitants, notwithstanding the repugnance which the bat at first inspires as an article of food. The Portuguese alone add monkeys to the number of comestible animals.

The number of plantations at this time established in the island amount to one hundred and fourteen, which are divided into four principal districts, or quarters.

The first, and which is nearest to the town, is that of *la Montagne Longue*, making a part of, or adjoining to *Pamplemousses*.

The second is on the left side of the port, diverging from the quarter of Flacq.

The third is three leagues from the town, in returning to the right, and is named by the Dutch, the plains of *Willems*.

The fourth, named *Moka*, is situated a league beyond the latter, and at the extremity of the mountains *de la Ville*.

There is also a fifth quarter, which received from M. de la Bourdonnais the name of *Villebague*, and is above that of *Pamplemousses*.

There is still another small increasing quarter, called Flick, or Flacq.

The quarter of *Port Bourbon*, on the south-east, continues to be neglected.

The town of Port Louis, which is also called the Camp, because the Dutch, when they first visited the island, formed a camp there, is situated at the extremity of Port Louis, at the opening of a valley which is about three quarters of a league in depth, and four hundred fathoms in breadth, and is terminated by a circular chain of lofty mountains.

The sides of these mountains are covered with an high grass, which, in dry seasons, is commonly burned by the Maroon Negroes. This circumstance gives to the mountains a dreary aspect, and has occasioned some navigators, who have not landed on the island, to describe it as a barren country.

The highest part of the *Mornes*, or mountains which inclose the bottom of the valley, has been shattered; the most elevated of its parts is at its extremity, and is called *Peterbotte*. Its summit is terminated by a naked and insulated rock, called *le Pouce*, which is said to resemble the figure of a woman. There are a great number of trees in the vicinity of the Pouce; and a rivulet springs from it, which flows through the town.*

* The following extract from the Romance of Paul and Virginia, by Bernardin St. Pierre, and which is the opening of it, is such a correct as well as interesting description, that we have no hesitation in offering it as an embellishment to this part of our History.

“On the eastern side of the mountain which rises above Port Louis, in the Isle of France, and in a spot that bears the marks of former cultivation, are seen the ruins of two huts. They are situated near the centre of a circular valley, formed by stupendous rocks, and which opens only to the north. On the left rises the mountain called the *Morne de la Découverte*, from whence signals are displayed to the ships which approach the island, and at the foot of it is the town of Port Louis. On the right is the road which leads from Port Louis to Pamplémousses, and beyond it the church lifts its head, surrounded by its avenues of bamboo, in the midst of a spacious plain: a forest then succeeds, which stretches on to the extremities of the island. This spot commands a view of the Bay du Tombeau; a little to the right is *Cap Malheureux*; and beyond is the expanded ocean, on the surface of which appear several uninhabited islands; and among the rest the *Coin de Mire*, which resembles a bastion in the midst of the waves.

“At the entrance of the valley, which displays a view of so many various objects, the echoes of the mountains incessantly repeat the hollow noise of the winds which agitate the neighbouring forests, and the hoarse murmur of the waves that break over the distant reefs; but near the ruined huts all is calm and still; and the objects which there meet the eye, are rude steep rocks, that rise like a surrounding rampart. Knots of trees grow at their base, in their rifted sides, and on their

The houses of which the town consists are built of wood, and covered with planks and the leaves of the palm tree. They do not rise above the ground floor, in consequence of the winds and the heat: they are separated from each other by the gardens that surround them: the streets are in a straight line, and trees should be planted to render them cool. It is indeed to be lamented, that those which covered the environs should have been destroyed, as they must have protected the town and port from the fury of the winds. The soil, as we have already observed, is sprinkled with rocks.

The island is watered with more than sixty rivulets, though some of them lose their water in the dry season; a circumstance which has become more prevalent, since so much of the wood has been destroyed.

There are a considerable number of pools in the interior parts, which, being in the midst of the woods, retain their water. Among others, there is a small lake near the mountain called the *Piton*, which is in the centre of the island. It is said that sea-fish are found in it, though I cannot confirm that account by my own experience: it is however but little known, from the remoteness of its situation.

There is frequently a great difference in the temperature of the air between two neighbouring plantations, according to the side of the mountains where they are respectively placed.

There is at present but a small quantity of cattle, as the inhabitants do not avail themselves of the rivulets to water the districts, which by such a contrivance would become excellent pasturage; so that the cows have no more milk than is necessary to maintain their young.

As there is no butter, we make use of hogs-lard and *mantaigre*, a kind of grease which is brought from India. It resembles the rank butter of Normandy, and its name indicates its quality. Grease is also furnished from the fat lumps which grow

majestic summits, where the clouds seem to repose. The showers which their bold pinnacles attract, illuminate the dusky declivities with the colours of the rainbow, and feed the springs at their feet, which swell into the river of the *Lataniers*.

"In this seclusion reigns the most profound silence: the waters, the air, in short, every element is at peace. The echo scarce repeats the whispers of the palm trees, the points of whose broad leaves wave gently in the wind. A soft light beams on the bottom of this deep valley, which the sun does not reach till noon; but his earliest rays gild the summits of the rocks, whose sharp peaks, rising above the shadows of the mountain, are clothed in tints of gold and purple, gleaming on the azure sky."

above the shoulders of the cattle that are brought from Madagascar, and serve as a saddle to those who ride on them. One of these lumps will weigh from thirty to forty pounds, and upwards. Its grease, however, is very unpalatable, and instantly coagulates: hence it is that we prefer hog's-lard and turtle oil, which never congeals.

The water of the rivers appeared at first to be unwholesome, as it gave the cramp to the young ducks, and brought on the bloody-flux in those persons who drank them: a quality natural to all waters which are shaded by woods from the influence of the sun. For though it is injudicious to strip an hot country of its wood, it is dangerous to inhabit it when entirely covered with forests, particularly in the vicinity of water.

The temperature of a country lately discovered, or newly inhabited, may be entirely changed by destroying the wood; though such a measure should be adopted with great consideration, according to the heat of the climate, and the nature of the soil. It would be necessary to leave the woods on the mountains, and a certain proportion of them on the plains, in order to attract the clouds, and to feed the sources of those streams, which, on quitting the shade, would be purified by the sun, before they arrive in those parts, beneath the hills, which are generally preferred by new settlers for their habitations; they would then refresh the grounds which are prepared for pastures in the bottom of vallies. Meadow, as well as arable land, should be partially decorated with masses of wood, inclosing lines, or single trees: they should also be left or planted in such a manner that the air may freely circulate through them; while at the same time they may protect the crops from destructive winds and parching heat.

The woods which are felled must necessarily be burned; and their ashes will not only fertilize the soil, but purify it from reptiles and insects. This plan however will be adopted, with the exception of those trees which may be applied to useful purposes; and magazines of them must be formed, to prevent the future devastation of those parts where it may be necessary to preserve them.

On the first settlement of any country, a regular and general plan should be formed, by which all future operations should be governed; and when fire is employed to clear the ground, and a small number of settlers have no other means of performing such an operation, the axe must be used to direct its course, and check its expansion beyond the limits submitted to its fury. A neglect of such precautions caused the

destruction of almost all the wood which covered the island of Madeira, on the first discovery of it. This conflagration, it is said, lasted seven years.

In the Isle of France, the banks of the rivers were no sooner deprived of their shade, than the water became wholesome ; but the destruction of all the wood in the environs of Port Louis, was a fatal error, as it is now exposed to the violence of the winds, as well as to the heat of the sun, and several of the neighbouring rivulets have been dried up.*

At this moment (1740) an eighth part of the island is not yet cleared, so that it will be long before the population is equal to the extent.

If, however, we are not rich in cattle, we possess a great abundance of fowl, as well as both land and sea turtle, which are not only a great resource for the supply of our ordinary wants, but serve to barter with the crews of ships who put in here for refreshment in their voyage to India.

The time of my arrival, which was the month of August, is the winter season in this island ; if I may employ such an expression in a country where the houses are built without chimnies, except for the purposes of the kitchen.

The summer is very dry, and the ground is in a state of aridity during that season. The warm rains then succeed, giving such vigour to vegetation, that the weeds frequently prevail over the regular crops, which are twofold in the course of the year. In this season is sown the maize, which serves as the food of the Negroes, as well as the rice, which the Creole ladies prefer to the finest bread, though simply boiled in water, and without the least seasoning : they however season their favourite dishes, which they call *Caris* and *Plots*, with the hottest spices.

In the months of May and June we sow our corn, which we reap at the end of September, as well as various kinds of beans, the greater part of which is sent to the magazines of the Company, to be ready for supplying the ships. Corn generally produces an hundred-fold.

When the grass springs up in the rainy seasons, it is necessary to take care that the cattle do not gorge themselves with it, which would be attended with fatal consequences. This year has been marked with sterility, and our island is menaced with dearth : indeed, it has happened that the Negroes and labourers have been necessarily sent to live by hunting in the woods, or the produce of the waters.

* These inconveniences however are fully counterbalanced, if it be true, that the cessation of hurricanes, since the year 1789, has been caused by the great diminution of the woods.

The coasts abound in fish, which have been already described, as well as the enormous eels that are found in the rivers. I have frequently killed them with my gun in shallow waters. In the rainy and hurricane seasons these rivers become stupendous cataracts. Our venison, which is fat, is very good, and serves us instead of beef: but it must be got from the forests, where the deer are very numerous: on account of the heat and their fat, they are easily taken. It is however a circumstance to be lamented, that, from the temperature of the air, fresh meat cannot be kept longer than two days.

The birds very much diminish in the woods, as the monkies, which are in great numbers, devour their eggs. The parroquets however are still numerous, as they make their nests in the holes of the rocks, which the monkies cannot ascend.

The Governor's house and the Company's magazines, which are situated at the entrance of the port, are built entirely of stone: the latter are placed in front on each side of the former; and the intermediate space, which is considerable, is used as a place of arms. These edifices are erected in the Italian style, with flat roofs, which serve as terraces. This small town is the habitation of all those who are employed in the service of government; as well as of merchants and others who are not possessed of plantations.

The India Company reserves the commerce to itself: it makes advances to the inhabitants, and is reimbursed by the produce of their plantations. The money of France is not current here, except pieces of two sous, which do not pass for more than eighteen deniers, by which valuation we are considerable losers. Of these we have adequate supplies; but the seafaring people, who sell us certain contraband articles, insist on being paid in currency, on every piece of which they gain one-fourth in France: hence it is that our coin is carried away.

We have Spanish piastres, which with us pass for four livres ten sous, and in France are taken for five livres two sous, and sometimes more. If we were permitted to engage in commerce, the profit would be certain, from the exchange in our favour. We have, besides, a paper currency, which is confined to the island: it consists of parchment bills, from ten to an hundred livres.

At the time of my arrival, M. de la Bourdonnais was Governor of the Isles of France and Bourbon, but he was gone to France, for reasons which will be hereafter explained; and M. St. Martin was Deputy Governor during his absence. M. de la Bourdonnais, who may be considered as the founder of this colony, acted

so important a part in its establishment and administration, that I should be guilty of an inexcusable omission, if I did not give a regular history of him and his transactions to the present moment.*

Account of the Administration of M. de la Bourdonnais, Governor General of the Isles of France and Bourbon.

1699.—M. de la Bourdonnais was born at St. Malo in 1699, and from his earliest years manifested a decided preference to the naval profession, for which he was prepared by the instructions of the best masters. At the age of ten years he made his first voyage to the South Seas. In 1713, he made a second, with the rank of Ensign, to the East Indies and the Phillipine Islands: in this voyage he studied mathematics under a learned professor of the order of Jesuits.

1717.—In 1716 and 1717, he made a third voyage, to the North Seas, and in 1718 a fourth voyage, to the Levant.

1719.—In 1719 he embarked, for the fourth time, in the service of the India Company, for Surat, with the rank of Second Lieutenant.

1723.—In 1723 he went in the same service, and with the rank of First Lieutenant, to India. In the course of this voyage he composed a treatise on the construction of ships. At the same time he rendered a signal service to the Company: a ship called the Bourbon was stranded, and there were no immediate means of saving her from destruction; when M. de la Bourdonnais had the courage to venture in a common boat from the Isle of Bourbon to the Isle of France, from whence he brought a ship, which came in time to save the stranded vessel, and to enable her to return to Europe.

1724.—No sooner was M. de la Bourdonnais returned to France, than he re-embarked in 1724 for the Indies, with the rank of Second Captain; and in the course of this voyage M. Didier, Engineer to the King, taught him the science of fortification and military tactics.

On his arrival in India, he found at Pondicherry several vessels belonging to the Company, ready to sail on an expedition to get possession of *Mabé*. The

* We shall proceed to give a detail of the operations of M. de la Bourdonnais, as well in the Isles as on the coast of India, to the end of the year 1744, before we resume the subsequent parts of the correspondence of Baron Grant, in order that no interruption might be given to the course of interesting events, in which M. de la Bourdonnais was so materially concerned.

squadron appointed to this attack was commanded by M. de Pardaillan; and though M. de la Bourdonnais enjoyed no higher rank than that of Second Captain, he was entrusted, on this occasion, with the greater part of the warlike operations, as well as the regulation of the forces. He, at the same time, invented a new kind of raft to facilitate the descent, so that the troops accomplished that object without wetting their feet, and in complete order of battle. This war lasted till the following year, and finished by the capture of *Mabé*, which was succeeded by a treaty of peace. At that period M. de la Bourdonnais had made effectual preparations to destroy the settlements of the enemy along the coast.

On the termination of the war, he gave himself up entirely to commercial enterprise, and remained in the Indies to fit out private armaments. He was, indeed, the first Frenchman who engaged in similar undertakings in these seas, in which he was so successful, as well as in his different voyages in every part of India, that he made a very ample fortune.

As he had acquired a consummate knowledge of India, and had gained the confidence of the nations with whom he had traded, he was thereby enabled to render some important services to the ships of the King of Portugal. He saved two of them; and was, besides, so fortunate as to conciliate the Arabs and the Portuguese, who were on the point of engaging in actual hostilities in the road of *Moka*: they were equally grateful to him for his beneficial interposition; and his conduct on this occasion induced the Viceroy of Goa to invite him to enter into the service of the King of Portugal, as captain of a ship; and, as an inducement to accept the proposition, that officer presented him with the *Order of Christ*, and letters patent of nobility, which were accompanied with the title of Agent of his Portuguese Majesty on the coast of Coromandel. M. de la Bourdonnais accepted these offers, in order to gain a more perfect acquaintance with the resources and extent of the commerce of India, and he remained during two years in the service of the crown of Portugal. He was more particularly induced to enter into this engagement from the confidential communication of the Viceroy of Goa, respecting a projected attack on Mombaze. M. de la Bourdonnais was entrusted, under the orders of the Viceroy, with the siege of this place, which the Portuguese were anxious to retake; and he was animated with the hope of acquiring honour in this expedition: but when the design failed, from an alteration in the plans of the Portuguese government, he returned into France in 1733. In the following year, after several conferences

with the ministers on the state of the colonies and the commerce of India, the king was pleased to appoint him Governor General of the Isles of France and Bourbon.

1735.—Thus furnished with every necessary power, both from the government and the India Company, he embarked in the beginning of the year 1735, and arrived at his government in the month of June. The object of the minister in appointing him to this important office, was the re-establishment of good order, in a country which was a scene of licentiousness, confusion, and anarchy.

To give an idea of the situation in which he found these islands when he arrived there, it must be observed, that the Isle of Bourbon was first peopled by certain Frenchmen who saved themselves from the massacre of *Fort Dauphin*, at *Madagascar*, and several handicraftsmen of different vessels, who were joined by other Europeans of various descriptions. With respect to the Isle of France, it was not inhabited till between the years 1712 and 1720, and even then the number of persons settled on it were so few that, till 1730, the India Company were doubtful whether they should keep, or abandon it. At length, however, these two islands have had their distinct destinations; the one to the culture of coffee, and the other to afford refreshment to ships employed in the India and China trade. The soil of the Isle of Bourbon being proper for plantations of coffee, they have succeeded there, and attracted a considerable number of inhabitants. The advantages of the Isle of France being of another kind, it became expedient to form a colony there, for the purpose of furnishing vessels with provisions and other necessary refreshments.

The most natural and efficacious means, therefore, was to make an advance of live and dead stock, necessary implements, and slaves, to the inhabitants; to put them in a condition to form a settlement with the views already mentioned: but the Company was disappointed in its expectations, from the injudicious manner in which these advances were made, to all kinds of people, without inquiring whether they had the industry or the talents necessary to ensure success. In short, till the arrival of M. de la Bourdonnais, the Isle of France had been very burthensome to the Company, who, exhausted by the continual supplies which it required, had given very precise orders to M. de la Bourdonnais, not only to withhold any future advances to the inhabitants, but also to exact reimbursements of all those which had been already made. It may be readily imagined, that the communication of these indispensable orders alienated the minds of the people; but this was not the only difficulty with which M. de la Bourdonnais had to contend, in the execution of his commission.

The administration of justice, of the police, and of commerce, as well as the military and marine departments, were a source of still more painful occupations. He found justice administered by two Councils, one of which depended on the other: the Superior Council was in the Isle of Bourbon. Since the arrival of M. de la Bourdonnais, his Majesty issued letters patent, which conferred an equal power on the Council in the Isle of France, in whatever concerned the criminal law. With respect to the general administration, the Council where the Governor resided, was to be the superior. As may be supposed, these alterations were attended with very beneficial effects: M. de la Bourdonnais may boast that, during the eleven years of his government, there was but one law-suit in the Isle of France, as he accommodated all disputes by his own amiable interposition. It might also be added, that after his arrival those disputes, which had so often interrupted the harmony of the two councils, no longer prevailed.

The police was also a very interesting object; more particularly as the Maroon Negroes carried disorder and desolation into the very heart of the Isle of France. M. de la Bourdonnais discovered the secret of destroying them, by arming blacks against blacks, and in forming a *marechaussée* of the Negroes of Madagascar, who at length purged the island of the greater part of these marauders. As for commerce, there was no idea of it when M. de la Bourdonnais arrived in the islands. He first planted the sugar-cane there, and established manufactures of cotton and indigo.* The one finds a vent at Surat, Moka, and in Persia, and the others in Europe.

Agriculture was equally neglected in these islands; and such was the indolence of the inhabitants, that they did not avail themselves of the advantages with which the surrounding soil was ready to reward their labour. M. de la Bourdonnais, however, gave a new turn to their character, awakened a spirit of activity, and brought them to cultivate all the grain necessary for the subsistence of the two islands, in order that they might be no longer subject to that state of dearth which had been so frequent in them, and which had annually compelled the inhabitants to apply to hunting and fishing, to the native fruits and roots of the country, for their subsistence. With this view also M. de la Bourdonnais introduced, though not without considerable difficulty, the cultivation of the *manioc*, which he at length obtained from the island of St. Jago and the Brazils. He was, indeed, obliged to

* The sugar-works which M. de la Bourdonnais had established in the Isle of France produced, at this time (1750) a clear annual revenue of sixty thousand livres to the India Company.

employ his authority to compel the people to cultivate this plant, though it was to prove an infallible resource against that scarcity which they had so often suffered. He published an ordinance, by which every inhabitant was obliged to plant five hundred feet of ground with manioc for every slave which he possessed. Nevertheless the greater part of them, attached to their old customs, and disposed to resist authority, spared no pains to discredit this branch of agriculture; and some of them even carried their aversion to it so far as to destroy the plantations, by secretly moistening them with boiling water. Sensible, at length, of the folly of their former prejudices, they now experience and acknowledge the utility of this plant, which secures the islands from the possibility of famine: when their harvests are laid waste by hurricanes, or destroyed by locusts, which frequently happens, the inhabitants find in the manioc the means of repairing their misfortunes.

Besides this root, which grows in great abundance, these islands produce at present from five to six hundred measures of corn; whereas, previous to the arrival of M. de la Bourdonnais, the quantity was very trifling, indeed, in the Isle of France, and still less in the Isle of Bourbon.

But it was not sufficient to provide for the subsistence of the inhabitants by the cultivation of the earth, it was also necessary to put the islands themselves in a state of security; for he found them without magazines, or fortifications, or hospitals; nor had they any workmen, or troops, or marine force. To attain these objects M. de la Bourdonnais spared no exertions; but they were attended with such difficulties and mortifications, from the actual state of things, as well as from the character of the inhabitants, that he had frequently determined to renounce the enterprize.

When he left France, he had been assured that he should find at the Isles several French engineers, not one of whom was there on his arrival; as there had been continual disputes between them and the members of the Council, and they were returned to France to complain of the treatment which they had received: so that he found the body of engineers reduced to a Mulatto, who superintended the construction of a small windmill, in an unfinished state: there was also a magazine, which had been building for four years, and was yet without a roof, and a very small house for the chief engineer. Such were the only public buildings which he found on his arrival in the Isle of France. The Isle of Bourbon could not boast a superior degree of preparation.

As he was without any engineer or architect, he was under the necessity of assuming both those characters; and being well acquainted with mathematics, and the science of fortification, he formed such plans as were approved by the Company. In order to carry them into execution, he produced workmen of every kind, by putting a large number of Negroes into a state of apprenticeship, under the very few master workmen which he had with him: nor is it easy to conceive the difficulty he had to compel the one to afford instruction, and the others to receive it. At length, however, he found himself in possession of a sufficient number of workmen to carry his designs into execution. But the obstacles to them did not end here: to collect a sufficient quantity of materials, was a very arduous operation; trees were to be felled in the wood, stone to be hewn from the quarry, and carriages were to be constructed to convey them to their destination. Besides, there were no roads along which they could pass, or horses to draw them. Roads were therefore to be formed, and bullocks were to be broken in to the yoke; and all these various preparations were to be made by people whose indolence resisted all labour, and whose minds were insensible to the general good and the public interest. M. de la Bourdonnais however contrived, by a wise application of gentle means, and rigorous severity, as different occasions and characters required, to erect very considerable works, whose utility and advantage are now universally acknowledged.

But it is not the Company alone which has derived advantage from these labours: the colony has experienced infinite advantages, since, by the establishment of roads, the employment of carriages, and, above all, by the emulation that M. de la Bourdonnais had awakened among the inhabitants, he reduced the greater part of the necessary materials, such as wood, chalk, &c. to a fifth part of their former value.

The only hospital in the Isle of France was a large hut, formed with stakes or pallisadoes, which would not contain more than thirty beds; when he ordered a commodious building to be erected for that purpose, in which from four to five hundred beds might be conveniently placed. The administration of the hospitals was attended with incredible trouble to M. de la Bourdonnais; and, for one entire year, he found it absolutely necessary to pay them a daily visit; but even this painful attention could not preserve them from the bad effects of negligence, incapacity, knavery, and ingratitude.

It would be needless to enter into a detail of all the various buildings and works which M. de la Bourdonnais had caused to be erected in the course of his admini-

nistration: it will be sufficient to observe, that they consisted not only of magazines, arsenals, batteries, fortifications, and barracks for the officers, &c. but also mills, quays, offices, shops, canals, and aqueducts. The aqueduct in the Isle of France, which conveys fresh water to the port and the hospitals, is six thousand yards in length. This accommodation is attended with inexpressible advantages, both to the inhabitants, and the ships which arrive there for refreshment.

It is well known that the Governor General exerted himself with the same indefatigable spirit, in every thing which related to the marine in the port of the Isle of France. Before his arrival, the inhabitants were so ignorant of every thing that related to ship-building, that they were not qualified to make the slightest repairs of their own fishing boats; but were obliged to have recourse to the carpenters of ships who put into their harbours. He therefore did not delay to avail himself of the numerous advantages which the island possessed, to acquire some degree of maritime importance. He encouraged the inhabitants to support him in this patriotic undertaking; and, by their efforts, so large a quantity of wood had been cut down, fetched from the woods, and worked up into preparatory forms, that, in the course of two years, he found himself possessed of materials sufficient to commence his naval works.

1737.—He began by making pontoons to careen ships, as well as to load them, and lighters to carry water; he also built canoes and large boats, for the transport of materials and other daily service. In 1737, he undertook to build a brig, which proved an excellent vessel. In the following year he built two other vessels; and put a ship of five hundred tons on the stocks. In short, from his persevering spirit and indefatigable skill, they now build and refit ships as well at the Isle of France, as in any port of the East: nay, in consequence of certain machines, invented by M. de la Bourdonnais, ships are accommodated, particularly in obtaining water, with unrivalled expedition.

Previous to his arrival, the captains of the Company's ships had assumed a degree of independence, which by no means accorded with the good order and advantage of the service; nor could they conceal their dissatisfaction at being commanded by a man who was so lately their comrade. They were jealous also of the *Croix de St. Louis*, with which he had been honoured by his majesty. The service was in danger of suffering from these discontents, and required all the resolution as well as conciliating powers which M. de la Bourdonnais possessed, to restore good order

and discipline in its different departments. But though the officers of the Company did not venture to oppose themselves to his regulations, as they could not with any degree of justice refuse their assent to the necessity of them, they continued to entertain a secret resentment against him. In the first years of his government, from the natural state of the island, and afterwards, from an unfortunate mortality among the horned cattle, he was not enabled to furnish the Company's ships with their full complement of meat; the captains, therefore, though they appeared perfectly satisfied with his endeavours, and left him with every exterior approbation of his conduct, were no sooner arrived in France, than they presented their complaints against him, for neglect in furnishing them with the necessary supplies for their homeward voyage: nor was it long before he was sensible that these representations had been received with a degree of credit which they did not deserve.

1740.—The death of his wife rendered it necessary for him to return to France; and on his arrival there, he found an unaccountable prejudice prevailed against him, not only in the minds of the ministers and the Company, but of the public at large.

In this unmerited situation he made his complaints to Cardinal Fleury; stated in the strongest terms his fidelity to the king, and his zeal for the Company, and demanded permission to offer his justification against the secret charges which had been made against him; declaring, at the same time, that he was ready to render an hundred fold to any one, who could prove that he had received the least injustice from him. He made the same application to the Count de Maurepas, and M. Ourry, Comptroller-general; when he was informed, that the accusations against him should undergo a very scrupulous examination.

At this time a publication appeared against him, containing a long detail of charges respecting his conduct, as governor of the Isles of France and Bourbon. But, conscious of his own rectitude, and despising the author of these calumnies, he let them pass away without any particular answer. At length, however, he thought it necessary to check the course of public prejudice, which ran with so much violence against him; and he completely effected it by the justification which he published. For the public not only received him to their former good opinion, but the ministers also expressed their approbation of his conduct.

He found, however, new subjects of chagrin and discontent, from the secret enemies which he now discovered in the Company. This circumstance very sensibly affected him; he perceived the difficulties that would unavoidably arise from being

thwarted in his designs, which would inevitably happen, when, among those to whom he was accountable for the execution of his office, and who possessed the power to command the details, there were several who, from motives which they dared not to avow, were strongly disposed to trouble the repose, and disconcert the measures, of his government. He had, therefore, determined to resign his situation; but the ministers to whom he communicated this resolution, would not permit him to execute it.

The wish to retire, however, still occupied his mind; when the preparations that were making in the several ports of France, announced a rupture with Great Britain and Holland. He accordingly formed a plan, to arm a certain number of ships to attack the commerce of those two countries; and his friends formed such sanguine expectations of his project, that, in order to facilitate its completion, they proposed to advance five millions of livres, on condition that he would take a tenth share in the armament. This proposition was no sooner made, than he hastened to Fontainebleau, to communicate his plan of operations to the Count de Maurepas, and to demand his permission to carry it into immediate execution.

His plan was as follows: To equip six vessels and two frigates, and to set sail for India. If war should be declared, he would be ready to attack the commerce of Great Britain, and to undertake expeditions against its colonies. He then engaged to apply whatever money he should take, to the service of the Company, which would render it unnecessary for them to send any specie out of the kingdom; and, in order that he might not interfere with their privileges, he would dispose of the merchandize which he might possess himself, in the South Seas. His next object would be to return to China; and having exchanged the money for which he had sold his cargoes, into gold, to touch at the Isles of France and Bourbon, in order to supply the Company with whatever funds it might require, and to bring the rest to France. If, however, war should not be declared, he then engaged to freight his ships for the benefit of the Company.

This project was highly approved by the ministers; and M. de la Bourdonnais was informed, that the government would furnish him with two frigates, that the East India Company would add four vessels, and that the king would appoint him to the command of the squadron: at the same time he was ordered to execute for the Company, the plan he had formed for himself, with the assurance, that his Majesty would take care of him and his fortune.

But flattered as M. de la Bourdonnais may be supposed to have been by these marks of confidence and favour, he was well aware of the opposition he should find from the Company, who, piqued at not having been consulted in a project, in which they were so materially concerned, would manifest their discontent by delaying the operations of the armament: nor did the promise of the minister, to advance him to a distinguished rank in the naval service of France, and thereby secure him from any vexatious proceedings on the part of the Company, satisfy his mind, or remove his apprehensions.

In short, the Company represented the proposed expedition as injurious to their interests, and that it could not produce any advantage to the state. They, consequently, indisposed the public mind against it, and its supposed projector. Accordingly M. de la Bourdonnais intreated the minister to discharge him from the service, and to employ some other person, who was better qualified than himself, to conciliate the confidence of the Company. But his remonstrances were not heard, and he was ordered to obey the commands of his sovereign. M. Ourry, the Comptroller of the Marine, however, undertook to dissipate his alarm, by making the Directors of the Company declare to M. de la Bourdonnais, in his presence, that they would afford him every assistance and support in their power.

1741.—M. de la Bourdonnais, therefore, left Paris in the month of February 1741, with the general commission of captain of a frigate; and the particular commission to command the Mars, one of the king's ships of war.

He chose the Isle Grande, on the coast of Brazil, as a refreshing place, from its intermediate situation; and the Company's ships, from that time, followed his example. After passing twenty-two days there, to exercise and refresh his crews, he set sail from thence with the three largest vessels, and in fifty-six days he arrived at the Isle of France, August 14, 1741. He left one of his ships at the Isle Grande, to wait for another which had not appeared when he quitted it.

He now learned that the Mahrattas threatened Pondicherry; and to prevent a siege of that place, or to maintain it against a besieging enemy, the Isles of France and Bourbon had already transported their garrisons thither. This intelligence caused him no small disquietude; and he considered it to be of the last importance to proceed with all possible diligence to Pondicherry, after having put his islands in a state of security. To fulfil this two-fold object, he began by ordering a fort to be constructed upon one of the peninsulas which defends the port of

the Isle of France; he then directed that the inhabitants should, on Sundays, be trained to the use of arms; he marked out their posts and places of rendezvous, with orders to repair there on the first alarm: and, lastly, he gave directions that the first vessel which might arrive, should be sent to Goa to fetch provisions. Having settled these various, necessary, and wise regulations, in the Isle of Bourbon, he set sail from it on the 22d August, with the squadron, and arrived at Pondicherry the 30th September, which, to his great satisfaction, he found in a state of perfect tranquillity, from the excellent conduct of M. Dumas, the governor, who had found means to prevent the Mahrattas from undertaking the siege. The factory at Mahé, was, however, in great danger, having been blockaded for eighteen months by the people of the country; and, in consequence of the suggestions of the governor and council of Pondicherry, he set sail on the 22d of October to the relief of that place.

During his voyage thither, he employed his utmost attention to exercise his forces, which were raw and undisciplined; and, notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties which presented themselves, he contrived by diligence, skill, and a perfect knowledge of the country, to fit his people for the service wherein they were to be employed.

The enemy, with whom he had to contend, occupied a mountainous country, intersected by ditches of fifteen feet in depth, which might be considered as so many slaughter-houses to the Europeans who should be so rash as to venture among them. These people, which are called *Naires*, are of a large size, of a copper colour, and active and vigorous. Their sole profession is that of arms, and they would be excellent soldiers, if they were in a state of discipline. As they fight without order, they take to flight whenever they are attacked by superior force: but if they find themselves pressed with vigour, and that they are in actual danger, they re-engage with desperate fury, and an unyielding resolution to conquer or to die.

The *Naires* which were encamped before *Mabé*, had determined to make an attack on the following day, when M. de la Bourdonnais arrived with two ships; and the disembarkment of his troops checked their design. As there was no kind of proportion between the numbers of the enemy, and the handful of men which he commanded, he did not venture to risk a general engagement. His knowledge and experience suggested to him, that he could alone insure success by opposing order

and precaution, to men who knew no other rule of warfare but the impetuosity of the moment. He began, therefore, by opening a trench opposite one of the enemy's batteries which greatly annoyed the town; and the work was conducted with such expedition that, on the third day, it reached within thirty fathom of the outworks of that battery. Here, however, he met with a piece of marshy ground, which prevented him from advancing: he was therefore reduced to the necessity of making a parallel, to lodge a body of troops sufficient to sustain the head of the work, as it was his design to maintain that post till the arrival of the other ships, which he daily expected.

As soon as one of them arrived, he sent all the troops, as they landed, into the trenches, in order to accustom them to the fire of the enemy, which was incessant; and they soon acquired the resolution and habits of the military character.

In the night of the third of December, he ordered a battery to be constructed, which was attacked in the morning by the enemy. As he had foreseen this attack, he had the precaution to conduct eight hundred men thither, who repulsed the enemy with great bravery. He then made a general attack, which was supported with such spirit and activity, that the enemy, unable to sustain it, took to flight, and, having lost five hundred men, left the French masters of all their posts and intrenchments, with eight pieces of cannon.

He now proceeded to negotiate a peace for *Mahé* with the *Naires*, which was concluded in February, 1742, and he then returned to the Isles of France and Bourbon, where his presence was essentially necessary. Here he waited for the intelligence which he daily expected, that war was declared between France and Great Britain.

By a letter, dated the 1st of October, 1742, addressed to M. de la Bourdonnais, Cardinal Fleury communicated to him the high approbation of the King, and expressed his own eulogium of his services; at the same time he gave orders that letters of nobility should be expedited to him to the Isle of Bourbon.

As his ships arrived at the islands, he ordered them to be successively refitted; so that he had his fleet ready in the month of May, in a better state of equipment than when it left France. The hostilities of *Mahé* being terminated, and the islands not only cultivated, but sufficiently fortified to resist any attack, he waited for the information that war was declared, to engage in his premeditated expedition against the enemies of France in India.

But this project, on which his hopes had so long rested, was doomed to end in disappointment; for at the moment when he was looking to the fame he should acquire, and the service he should render to his country, he received positive orders from the Company to disarm his squadron; and, to quench all representations on his part, he was expressly commanded to send every ship home, and let them return empty, rather than keep one of them at the islands. In this unexpected and mortifying conjuncture, he had no alternative but obedience. The French government, however, soon repented of this measure; and M. de la Bourdonnais, being persuaded that, in the circumstances wherein he was placed, it would be impossible for him to exert himself to any purpose of distinction or public advantage, at least equal to his hopes, demanded permission of the ministers to return to France. This request however was refused; as it was thought absolutely necessary for the welfare of India, that a person of his talents, local knowledge, and integrity, should remain there, for the interests of his country in that part of the globe.

1744.—M. de la Bourdonnais finding himself obliged to remain in his government, and that he must no longer indulge himself in military speculations, gave himself up entirely to æconomical arrangements. He employed himself in establishing sugar, indigo, and cotton works, which he had begun at his own expence, and had answered his utmost expectations. In these occupations he was busily engaged, when, on the 11th of September, 1744, he received the intelligence from Europe, that war had been declared between France and England.

CHAPTER VII.

*The Letters of Baron Grant continued.—Interior State and Condition of the Island.
—Narrative of the Shipwreck of the St. Geran.—An Account of the Grenville
Family.—Interesting Circumstances relative to M. de Grenville Forval.*

LETTER III.

Isle of France, 1742.

I INFORMED you in my second letter, of the reception I met with from the Deputy Governor and the Council, who have expressed a desire to keep me in this country, where I may at the same time continue in the service. I accordingly received a grant of a certain quantity of uncultivated ground, in a state to be immediately cleared, as well as six slaves, consisting of two Negro men, two women, with a boy and girl; the men at three hundred livres each, the women at two hundred, and the two others at one hundred and fifty, amounting all together to thirteen hundred livres; to be repaid from the produce of the ground, when it shall be advanced into a state of cultivation. This little troop were for some time employed in a plantation, where they learned to work, and gain their immediate subsistence, which consists of maize; though we begin to grow manioc as food for the slaves. The Captain of the *Hercules*, the ship which brought me here, received the first orders to take in manioc at the Portuguese island of St. Jago, and we put in there for that purpose.

My allotment of ground is situated between two rivers, which form its limits. One of these rivers falls in a cascade of upwards of three hundred feet, at a small distance from my situation; which, you will consequently perceive, is in the vicinity of the mountains. I soon cleared the ground, which is effected by destroying the wood; as the whole of this country, which is not in a state of cultivation, is one continued forest; and in attending to this object, I employed the time which was not engaged in military duties. These, however, are not very important in time of peace. The trees are cut down breast high, and burned: the ground is then prepared for seed, and the work of cultivation commences. I received considerable

assistance in preparing my plantation, from the liberal and active kindness of my neighbours and their slaves; according to the usual custom of this island.

The labour of my slaves soon produced sufficient to indemnify me for their purchase; and my activity and attentions have procured me the encouraging approbation of all around me. I first employed my Negroes to erect huts for themselves, and when that necessary object was accomplished, I contrived a cottage for myself. My new occupations prove a source of infinite amusement to me; though the Negroes require a continual attention, and I frequently rise in the night to see if they are in their huts. They are very fond of nocturnal excursions, either to gratify their gallantry, or to pilfer from their neighbours: indeed so strong is this disposition in them, that no severity seems equal to the correction of it.

The offices of religion are regularly performed to the Negroes morning and evening in every plantation, and they are married by a simple ceremony, suited to their understandings. We assort these matches in the best manner we are able, and endeavour to gratify their inclinations whenever it is in our power. The ceremony consists in nothing more than a short discourse, recommending mutual kindness and fidelity, accompanied with a menace of punishment to the party who shall be guilty of any misbehaviour or improper conduct. The whip is the instrument of justice employed on these occasions; and the person who is appointed to exercise it is called the Commander. This officer punishes the offences of the man; but if the wife should be guilty, the whip is consigned to the husband, who may correct her in the presence of the commander; though it often happens that he pardons her on the spot, and they depart perfectly reconciled. Notwithstanding their occasional disagreements, they are in general fond of each other, and discover the most tender affection for their children.

I sowed the ground which I had cleared, with rice and maize; but the rainy season was not yet commenced, it being the early part of January; and the latter grain was exposed to the devastation of the rats; so that I sowed another crop when the rains came on, which may be considered as the manure of this soil: indeed no other is necessary, as each year yields a two-fold harvest. The corn, which is excellent, though its grain is small, remains but four months in the earth; and French-beans are equally rapid in their progress to maturity: but our harvests are infested by those very destructive enemies, the locusts, which fly like birds, and come no one knows from whence, in such clouds as to darken the sky. They eat the plants down to the

very earth; they then lay their eggs, which are speedily hatched, and the ground is covered with them: they soon hop about, and would shortly rise upon the wing if they were not destroyed. The mode of attaining this very important object is as follows: small holes are made in the ground about the size and depth of the crown of an hat, into which the Negroes, with small brooms, sweep the young tribes, and having covered them with earth, they press it down with their feet. As the practice is universal over the island, this mischievous insect is at length destroyed.

The rats are very large, and issue from the woods during the night. In order to destroy them, the Negroes set traps along the border of the woods: they consist of wooden balls cut in half, the flat side being placed towards the ground; these are supported by three small pieces of wood, and some grains of maize are placed up them; so that when the rats seize on the bait, the semi-ball falls and crushes them.

The monkies, very fortunately for us, never quit their retreats but during the day. Negro boys are placed to make a noise about the woods, in order to frighten them; but these cunning animals will, if possible, discover some avenue which is not guarded, and carry off what they can find. Fowling-pieces and hounds are more effectual; but so great is their address and agility, that, though they are as large as a common spaniel, they contrive to hide themselves among the branches in such a manner, and leap from one tree to another with such rapidity, that it becomes a very difficult matter to destroy them. They have also a discipline, which I know not how to attribute to mere instinct; as, on their marauding parties, they have sentinels, who are placed in every necessary point, to give the signal of approaching danger. To these mischievous animals may be added, the hurricane and the dry seasons: the lightning is also very violent, and the thunder louder than is heard in other parts, from the position of the mountains. Torrents of rain and whirlwinds precede the hurricanes, which nothing can resist: but they are necessary evils, like our winters in France. We escaped them last year, and have been attacked by epidemical disorders. The small-pox still prevails. In China, that disease has been very fatal; and a ship coming from that country might readily infect our little Island. It is however worthy of observation, that the Isle of Bourbon has experienced the effects of four hurricanes, and we were not sensible of one of them.

This circumstance has been very favourable to the cultivation of the banana, which are in great abundance, as violent winds are fatal to them. The tree, or rather the plant that bears this fruit, is about ten feet in height, and it may be cut

through with the stroke of a sabre as easily as a cabbage stock. Eggs sell for a sous, and chicken at one livre ten sous.

We now make wheaten bread of our own growth: the corn is ground by a small hand-mill, which gives rather a coarse flour, but the bread is of a very agreeable taste. This will prove very advantageous to the island, as the flour brought from Europe is often spoiled in the course of the voyage, and bread then becomes extravagantly dear.

GRANT.

LETTER IV.

Isle of France, 1st of June, 1743.

I proceed to give you a detail of my present situation. You already know that the Council had granted me six slaves; but the strongest of them has already quitted me to join a party of runaway Negroes, who live on the fruits of nocturnal rapine. We consider them as obnoxious animals, and hunt them down in the same manner. My fugitive has accordingly suffered on one of his marauding expeditions, when he was shot. This black cost me three hundred livres; and since the return of the Governor, the slaves of his kind are sold for a thousand. This is a considerable loss in the first instance, besides the value of his labour; but I am consoled by the kind and ready assistance I receive from my friends and neighbours. I have since purchased a Negress, at a public auction, for three hundred and fifty livres, or an hundred piastres, which in France would amount to upwards of five hundred livres, to be paid in grain in the course of the year.

M. de la Bourdonnais has promised to let me have four blacks, on his return, at seven hundred and twenty livres each, one-third of which sum is to be paid in grain, on receiving them, and the rest in three years. He is now at the Isle of Bourbon; and as I have already delivered to the magazines, on his account, a quantity of maize, to the value of nine hundred and fifty livres of this country, I shall receive my slaves as soon as he returns.

We however experience difficulties of many kinds: besides the augmentation in their price, disease, death, and flight, deprive us of our Negroes. We are also subject to the caprice of those in power, who change even the price of grain, notwithstanding the difficulty in conveying it to the port, which is at the distance of three leagues. The price of maize was fifty livres the *millier*, and after the succeeding

harvest it was reduced to forty. We also raised beans, which were received at the magazines at an hundred livres the *millier*; but the cultivation of that grain is now entirely suppressed, and the growth of wheat ordered in its stead; which does not exceed it in price, is a much less certain crop, and requires a fourfold proportion of time and labour.

There are not more at present than an hundred and fifteen plantations, divided into four districts or quarters, at the distance of about six leagues from each other: nevertheless, there is a difference of upwards of six weeks in their respective seeding times and harvests. In the plains of Willems we are but a league from Moka, where they do not enjoy an equal degree of warmth with us. This circumstance is occasioned by the mountains that separate us; we are on the sunny side of them, while their shade chills the environs of Moka, and retards their harvests. The port is inclosed by the mountains in the form of an horse-shoe towards the sun, which produces an extreme heat to the month of July, when the air acquires some degree of freshness. Clouds of stinging flies, gnats, and fleas, are extremely troublesome in that situation. The air having more activity in the plantations, these tormenting insects cannot live among them. The confined air of the port occasions diseases; but as I am only obliged to go there once a month to attend the review, and never remain there more than twenty-four hours, I have been so fortunate as to escape them. Indeed, a longer absence might be attended with very serious consequences, as the Negroes demand the most attentive vigilance, or very severe punishment. I choose to adopt the former; and, to declare my real sentiments, I think the rural occupations and enjoyment of my plantation, infinitely preferable to the busy scene of the port.

This island, with all its charms, has its inconveniences, but they are of a nature to be soon forgotten, amid the various advantages and pleasing circumstances which are enjoyed; and, after all, who would not wish to be the inhabitant of a spot where there are neither taxes or law-suits? As for myself, I have a few slaves, and a tract of ground to occupy them, with grain to sow it. My harvests have been successful, as well as those fruit trees which form a part of my revenue. We have standard peaches and apple trees from Normandy. Their fruit is ripe in January, when the ships arrive; and as the seamen are famished for fruit and vegetables, they are ready to pay a handsome price for them. The other fruits are figs, bananas, both green and yellow, the anana, dates, &c. &c.

By the next arrivals from Europe, we shall be informed if it be peace or war. We are, at all events, making preparations to defend ourselves in case of an attack, and the Creoles are all soldiers. As for the rest of our population, it consists of an handful of people from every province in France; with whom, I must acknowledge, it would be indiscreet to form an intimate connection, without much preliminary precaution and experience.

GRANT.

LETTER V.

Isle of France, 28th of December, 1744.

It is now a year since we expected a large vessel, called the *St. Geran*, which was appointed to bring the necessary supplies to these islands, and it arrived only to be shipwrecked on this coast, off a small adjoining uninhabited island, called the *Isle d'Ambre*. The pilot, who had never been employed but in very small vessels, knew not how to guide so large a ship on this perilous coast; so that she was lost with all her cargo, and only seven of her crew escaped. We are destined to remain without those comforts and supplies with which this unfortunate vessel was laden, till the Company, on being informed of the loss we have sustained, can make the necessary preparation to dispatch another cargo for our relief.*

* The following description of this shipwreck, is taken from the Romance of Paul and Virginia, by M. de St. Pierre; and as it is an accurate relation of this misfortune, we shall make no apology for giving it in the words of that admired and interesting work.

"On the 24th of December, 1744, at break of day, Paul, when he arose, perceived a white flag on the mountain *De la Découverte*, which was the signal of a vessel descried at sea. He flew to the town, in order to learn if this vessel brought any tidings of Virginia, and waited till the return of the pilot, who was gone, as usual, to visit the ship. The pilot returned, with the information that the vessel was the *St. Geran*, of seven hundred tons, commanded by a captain of the name of Aubin; that the ship was four leagues out at sea, and would anchor at Port Louis the following afternoon, if the wind proved favourable; but it was then a calm. It was about ten at night, when, as I was about to extinguish my lamp and retire to rest, I perceived, through the palisadoes of my hut, a light in the woods. I arose, and had just dressed myself, when Paul, half wild and panting for breath, sprang on my neck, exclaiming, 'Come along, Virginia is arrived! Let us go to the port; the vessel will anchor at break of day.'

"We instantly departed; and as we traversed the woods of the sloping mountain, and were already on the road which leads from the Shaddock Grove to the Port, I heard some one walking

Since this unpropitious event, some small vessels have arrived, which however brought us little more than accounts of the state of public affairs. The last of them indeed gave us the satisfactory intelligence, that the Company had dispatched several

behind us. When this person, who was a Negro, had overtaken us, he informed us that he came from that part of the island called La Poudre d'Or, and was sent to the port to inform the Governor that a ship from France had anchored on the Isle of Ambre, and fired guns of distress, as the sea was very stormy. He then left us, and pursued his journey.—'Let us go,' said I to Paul, 'towards that part of the island, and meet Virginia.' Accordingly we bent our course thither. The heat was suffocating, and the moon which had risen, was encompassed by three large, black circles. A dismal darkness shrouded the sky; but the frequent flakes of lightning discovered long chains of thick, gloomy clouds, rolling with great rapidity from the ocean, though we felt not a breath of wind on the land. As we walked along, we thought that we heard peals of thunder; but after listening more attentively, we found they were the sound of distant cannon repeated by the echoes. These sounds, joined to the tempestuous aspect of the heavens, made me shudder, and I had little doubt that they were signals of distress from a ship in danger. In half an hour the firing ceased, and I felt the silence more appalling than the dismal sounds which had preceded.

"We hastened on without uttering a word, or daring to communicate our apprehensions. At midnight we arrived on the sea-shore. The billows broke against the beach with an horrible noise, covering the rocks and the strand with their white and dazzling foam, blended with sparks of fire. By their phosphoric gleams we distinguished, dark as it was, the canoes of the fishermen, which they had drawn far on the sand. Near the shore, at the entrance of a wood, we saw a fire, round which several of the inhabitants were assembled: thither we repaired, in order to repose ourselves till the morning. One of this circle related, that in the afternoon he had seen a vessel driven towards the island by the currents, that the night had obscured it from his view, and that two hours after sunset he had heard the firing of guns, as signals of distress; but the sea being so tempestuous, no boat could venture out: that a short time after he thought he perceived the glimmering of the watch-lights on board the ship, which he feared, by its having approached so near the coast, had steered between the main land and the small *Isle d'Ambre*, mistaking it for the *Coin de Mire*, near which the vessels pass, in order to gain Port Louis; and if that were so, the ship, he apprehended, was in great danger. Another islander then informed us, that he had frequently crossed the channel which separates the *Isle d'Ambre* from the coast, and as he had sounded it, he knew the anchorage was good, and that the ship would there be in as great security as if it were in the harbour. A third islander declared it was impossible for the ship to enter the channel, which was scarcely navigable for a boat; he asserted, that he had seen the vessel at anchor beyond the *Isle d'Ambre*, so that if the wind sprung up in the morning, it could either put to sea, or gain the harbour. At break of day the weather was too hazy to admit of our distinguishing any object at sea, which was covered with a fog. All we could descry was a dark cloud, which we were informed was the *Isle d'Ambre*, at the distance of a quarter of a league from the coast. We could only discern, on this gloomy morning, the point of the beach where we

vessels laden with every thing necessary for the welfare of the island: but, if they should delay their arrival, we must be content to go bare-foot, like the Negroes, and to clothe ourselves in the skins of deer; though that animal, which furnishes

stood, and the peaks of some mountains in the interior part of the island, rising occasionally from amidst the clouds which hung around them.

“ At seven in the morning we heard the drums beat in the woods, and soon after the Governor, M. de la Bourdonnais, appeared on horseback, followed by a detachment of soldiers armed with muskets, and a great number of islanders and blacks. He ranged his soldiers upon the beach, and ordered them to make a general discharge, which was no sooner done than we perceived a glimmering light upon the water, that was instantly succeeded by the report of a gun; we therefore judged that the ship was at no great distance, and hastened towards that part where we had seen the light. We had discerned through the fog, the hulk and tackling of a large vessel; and notwithstanding the noise of the waves, we were near enough to hear the whistle of the boatswain at the helm, and the shouts of the mariners. As soon as the *St. Geran* perceived that we were near enough to give her assistance, she continued to fire guns successively every three minutes. M. de la Bourdonnais caused great fires to be lighted at certain distances upon the strand, and sent to all the inhabitants of that neighbourhood in search of provisions, planks, cables, and empty barrels. A crowd of people soon arrived, accompanied by their Negroes, loaded with provisions and rigging. One of the oldest planters at this time informed the Governor, that they heard, during the whole night, hoarse noises in the mountain, and in the forests: that the leaves of the trees were shaken, though there was no wind, and that the sea-birds had sought refuge on the land; all of which he considered as certain signs of an approaching hurricane. Every thing, indeed, seemed to denote its speedy arrival. The centre of the clouds in the zenith was of a dismal black, while their skirts were fringed with a copper hue. The air resounded with the cry of the frigate bird, and a multitude of sea fowl; who, notwithstanding the obscurity of the atmosphere, hastened from all points of the horizon, to seek for shelter in the island. Towards nine in the morning we heard, on the side of the ocean, the most terrific noises, as if torrents of water, accompanied by thunder, were rolling down the steeps of the mountains. A general exclamation followed of, ‘ There is the hurricane!’ and, in one moment, a frightful whirlwind scattered the fog which had covered the *Isle d’Ambre* and its channel. The *St. Geran* then presented itself to our view; her gallery crowded with people, her yards and maintop-mast laid upon the deck, her flag shivered, with four cables at her head, and one, by which she was held, at the stern. She had anchored between the *Isle d’Ambre* and the main land, within that chain of breakers which encircles the island, and must have been driven over a bar that no vessel had ever passed before. She presented her head to the waves, which rolled from the open sea; and as each billow rushed into the straits, the ship heaved in such a manner that her keel was in the air, while at the same moment, her stern, plunging into the water, disappeared altogether, as if it were swallowed up by the billows. In this position, driven by the winds and waves towards the shore, it was equally impossible for her to return by the passage through which she had made her way, or, by cutting

us with such excellent meat, begins to be less common than formerly in the forests : nor do the goats increase, whom I sometimes follow into their most difficult recesses. We must, however, be content to stay at home for the present, as the few handicraftsmen we had, are departed for the war in India, &c.

GRANT.

LETTER VI.

Isle of France, 20th of December, 1745.

In this letter I shall change my former subject, and pass from the history of agriculture and the employments of a country life, to consider the occupations of the town. My uncle* has an house there, which we sometimes visit, particularly to enjoy the society of M. de Grenville and his interesting family. He has long been my uncle's intimate friend, and is become mine. It is from him and M. de la Bourdonnais, that I receive every information necessary for me to possess in this country.

her cables, to throw herself upon the beach, from which she was separated by sand-banks, mingled with breakers. Every billow which broke upon the coast advanced roaring to the bottom of the bay, and threw planks to the distance of fifty feet upon the land ; then, rushing back, laid bare its sandy bed, from which it rolled immense stones with an hoarse and dismal noise. The sea, swelled by the violence of the wind, rose higher every moment ; and the channel between this island and the *Isle d'Ambre*, was one vast sheet of white foam, with yawning chasms of black, deep billows. The foam boiling in the gulph was more than six feet in height, and the winds which swept its surface, bore it over the steep coast more than half a league upon the land. The innumerable white flakes, driven horizontally as far as the foot of the mountain, appeared like snow issuing from the ocean, which was now confounded with the sky. Thick clouds of an horrible form, swept along the zenith with the swiftness of birds, while others appeared motionless as rocks. Not a spot of azure could be discerned in the firmament ; only a pale yellow gleam displayed the view of earth, sea, and skies. From the violent efforts of the ship, what we dreaded, happened. The cables at the head of the vessel were torn away ; it was then held only by one anchor, and was instantly dashed upon the rocks at the distance of half a cable's length from the shore. A general cry of horror issued from the spectators. Sometimes the sea, in its irregular movements, had left the vessel almost dry, so that any one might have walked around it ; but suddenly the waves advancing, with renovated fury, shrowded it beneath mountains of water, which then lifted it upright on its keel. At last every part of it yawned asunder, from the violent strokes of the billows ; and the crew in despair threw themselves into the sea : of these, seven alone escaped ; and the unfortunate Virginia was one of the victims. Such was this scene of horror."

* Mr. Grant d'Anelle, mentioned in the Introduction.

M. de Grenville is of an ancient, noble, and illustrious family of Normandy, where there are several burghs and estates which bear his name; and a branch of which passed into England, with William the Conqueror, in 1066, where it now possesses very extensive possessions and high dignities.*

* Extracts relative to the House of Grainville, from the Peerage of England, and the histories of the noble families of France.

"Grenville, Grainville, Greinville, Greneville, Greneveile, Greenville, Granville, Greynville, Greinvill, Greinvyll, &c.

"Earl of Temple, Marquis of Buckingham, Earl Nuguent in Ireland, and ancient Lords of Grainville, &c. &c. &c. in Normandy.

"This name is written in all these various ways, both in Great Britain and Normandy, according to the British Peerage, by Collins, edit. 1756, Vol. IV. page 215, 216, 217; but the original way of writing this name in France is *Grainville*, as it is still written in Normandy, from whence *Richard de Grainville*, or *Granville*, passed with William the Conqueror, in 1066. This appears from the ancient deeds of the West, and those of Buckinghamshire.

"Robert de Grainville is one of the witnesses to the charter for building the Abbey of Nethe, which was begun by the aforesaid Richard de Grainville, anno 1129, 30 Henry I. and Ralph de Grainville, in the same reign, is among the witnesses to the charter of Roger Montgomery, Earl of Arundel and Salop, to the Abbey of Stephen (St. Etienne) at Caen, in Normandy; likewise in that reign, Gerard de Greinville, &c.

"The family of Grainville or Grenville, established several burghs or villages, which still retain their original name, in the environs of Caen and Rouen, in Normandy.

"The present representatives of this family in France are Messrs. M. de Grainville (the uncles, by the mother's side, of the Vicomte de Vaux), who were officers of rank in the service of the King of France.

"As to the difference between the arms of the French and English families of this name, they are very trifling; and it is well known to our antiquaries, that they were not generally settled till the reign of Edward I.

"The Grenvilles of England acknowledge that they descend from those of Normandy; while the latter consider it as an honour to proceed from the same root.

"The Grainvilles of Normandy have, at all times, maintained themselves with honour, and their present representatives have served in the East Indies with great distinction.

"In La Rocque's Treatise on Nobility, edit. 1734, the following notices appear, p. 74. *Ballivia de Caleto*. (The Bailiwick of Calais.)

"*Joannes de Graeniville*, miles, comparuit dicens dominum regem tenere, terram suam, et ad exercitum vadit; excusare se apud ipsum.

Idem. "*Joannes Mallet*, miles, comparuit se quintus de militibus nomina sunt hæc, *Gulielmus de Queneville*, *Joannes de Granvilla*, *Nicolaus de Sana*, *Gulielmus de Avenis*, et idem dominus, milites.

Idem. (p. 77.) "*Joannes de Grivellus*, miles, comparuit pro se.

This gentleman is an old officer, who has served with honour both in France and India; and may, with great truth, be represented as superior to the generality of mankind, from his understanding, his knowledge, and the qualities of his character. He is distinguished here by the title of *the Philosopher*, and he deserves it; for in the most elevating sense of the expression, he is a lover of wisdom. In the early part of his life, the vivacity of his temper, heightened by the military spirit of that period, engaged him in frequent affairs of honour; and the last having taken place with a nobleman in the service of the court, in the garden of Versailles, and under the very windows of the king's apartment, it threatened the most serious consequences. But M. de Maupou, then in high office, to whom he was related, persuaded him to quit the kingdom, and procured him a commission in India, where he served with distinction.

If it were consistent with the objects of this work, it would be a delightful circumstance to dwell on the virtues and extraordinary qualities of this family. I must, however, confine myself to one of them, M. de Grenville de Forval, the second son of M. de Grenville. Some events relative to him are so connected with the manners of these islands, and so remarkable in themselves, that they will at the same time heighten the interest, as well as add to the information of this work.

In these islands there is not a single example of a deformed or crooked shape, which must arise from the natural and unrestrained mode of education which prevails there. To these advantages, Forval united a martial air, blended with a slight appearance of severity, and an approved courage, to the most noble and generous sentiments that are found in the human breast.

The want of slaves in our colonies, renders expeditions necessary in order to procure them. Vessels, therefore, are equipped for the coasts of Africa and Madagascar, and a certain body of troops are sent with them, to favour or support the objects of these voyages.

Forval was ordered to command a detachment on a service of this nature, on the coast of Madagascar; and being arrived on the eastern side of it, he disembarked his people, and encamped them on the small island of St. Mary, called by the natives, Ibrahim, which is separated only from the principal island by a very narrow strait. Here the communications took place between the persons engaged in this expedition, and one of the petty princes of Madagascar, relative to the objects of the voyage.

Forval, however, was so entirely convinced of the good disposition of the people with whom he treated, that he yielded to the friendly solicitations of the king, to remain among them, and accordingly ordered some tents, and a small number of soldiers, to remove from the little island, to the opposite coast. The king, who was called Adrian Baba, loaded him with caresses; and having shewn him his herd of cattle, demanded, in the pride of his heart, if the King of France was so great as him.

Forval, therefore, considered himself as in a perfect state of security; and having entered into his tent, in order to pass the night, he received an unexpected visit from a most beautiful woman, a native of the island, who, after a short compliment of apology for her intrusion, expressed her concern that so fine a white man as himself should be massacred.

Forval, who was astonished at the visit, could not help taking notice of the danger which seemed to have produced it. The sooty lady, who appeared to interest herself so much in his welfare, was the daughter of a king, and known by the title of Princess Betsy. On being questioned as to the cause of this visit, she asked him in her turn, if he would wish to sacrifice her life to save his own. "By no means," exclaimed Forval: "then," replied she, "I will inform you of a plot formed against your life, if you will promise to take me with you, and make me your wife. I will sacrifice for you the throne of my father, which is my inheritance; I will abandon my country, my friends, my customs, and that liberty which is so dear to me. My relations, who will consider me as dishonoured, will detest me; and if you leave me to their vengeance, I shall be reduced to slavery, which, to me, would be a thousand times worse than death. Promise to grant what I have demanded; swear that your soldiers shall do no injury to my relations, and I will reveal what it is of the utmost importance for you to know?" Forval immediately engaged to grant her request, if the intelligence she announced, proved to be of the importance she had attached to it.

"Well then," said she, "at break of day my father will come here, under the pretext of a friendly visit; and if he breaks a stick which he will hold in his hand, that will be the signal of thy death: his guard will then enter with their hatchets, and will kill thee, and all thy people will be massacred with thee!"

Forval immediately conducted her to a place of safety. Nevertheless he was determined to wait till the morning, and ascertain the truth of her information.

The princess had also added, that the signal the king would give for his attendants to retire, would be to throw his hat towards them.

He accordingly ordered his soldiers to remain under arms during the night, and to keep within their tents. As for himself, he got his arms in readiness, placed a couple of pistols under the covering of his table, and dosed by the side of it, with his hand on the pistols.

At length the king arrived, and soon after, having broke his stick, the guard was advancing to the front of the tent ; but the king, terrified at the pistol which Forval held to his throat, cast his hat towards his attendants, who immediately departed. The small party of soldiers which Forval had with him, were now drawn up in order of battle. All the Negroes had disappeared ; the king alone remained as a prisoner ; nor was he enlarged, till the princess was embarked with all the equipage, and Forval felt himself happy in departing from this perfidious coast. Nor was he ungrateful : he solemnly espoused the Princess Betsy, in spite of all the remonstrances of his friends, and he lives happily with her. Her colour was certainly displeasing to the white people, and her education did not qualify her to be a companion to such a man as her husband ; but her figure was fine, her air noble, and all her actions partook of the dignity of one who was born to command.

She was a real Amazon, and the dress she chose was that which has since received a similar name. She never walked out but she was followed by a slave, and armed with a small fowling-piece, which she knew how to employ with great dexterity, and would defend herself with equal courage if she were attacked. She was nimble as a deer, though stately in her demeanour ; but with her husband as gentle and submissive as the most affectionate of his slaves. She behaved to her inferiors with equal dignity and kindness ; and she never went to the most distant part of the island, to pay visits to her family, but on foot ; she nevertheless adopted the elegancies of behaviour with great facility, and her society is very pleasant and full of vivacity.

Some years after her marriage, the Princess Betsy, for she was seldom called Madame de Forval, gave her husband a new proof of her affection.

Her father at length died, the kingdom descended to her, and her people, who were ardently attached to the blood of their kings, anxiously wished to see her on the throne of her ancestors. As soon as she was informed of this event, she requested permission of her husband to visit her country.

Though such an unexpected request astonished Forval, he did not hesitate to

comply with it; and as she did not unfold the reason of such a desire on her part, he felt his pride mortified at her conduct, though he kept his chagrin to his own bosom, of which it was a painful inmate.

The first sentiments of Forval, respecting his princess, had been instigated by honour and gratitude: but her demeanour towards him, her conduct towards others, and her personal charms, in which her colour was forgotten, had awakened in his heart the most faithful and tender affection.

The Queen Betsy, however, departed for her kingdom as soon as she had received the permission of her own sovereign; while Forval was totally unable to reconcile the step she had taken to her former sentiments and past conduct. He accordingly waited with the utmost impatience for the return of the vessel which had taken her away; when, to his great astonishment, his faithful wife returned in it, with an hundred and fifty slaves which she had brought him. "You had the generosity," she cried, on throwing herself into his arms, "to marry me, in opposition to the wishes of your friends, and the prejudices of your country, when I had nothing to offer you but my person, whose charms, whatever they might have been considered in my own country, were calculated rather to disgust, than to please you. You will therefore add another proof of your kindness, by assuring me of your pardon, for having raised a single doubt in your mind respecting the affection and duty you so entirely deserve from me: but it was my wish to avoid informing you of the project I had conceived on my father's death, till it was executed. It was not the little kingdom which that event transferred to me, nor even the largest empire, that would separate me from you; my sole design, in the step I have just taken, was to make you an offer of a small number of my subjects, which is the only part of my inheritance that I can bestow. I have, at the same time, complied with the wishes of my people, in resigning my little sovereignty to the most worthy of my relations."

Such a scene may be more easily conceived than described. Thus Forval found his wife worthy of all his affection; and the present she made him, is a sort of fortune in this country.

GRANT.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Letters of Baron Grant continued; containing a further Account of the Operations of M. de la Bourdonnais.

LETTER VII.

Isle of France, 20th of November, 1746.

IF M. de la Bourdonnais had not thought proper to entrust me with the defence of this island, I should have accompanied him on his expedition. His squadron was in danger of being lost in getting out of port. When it had refitted, it met with the English fleet in India: they cannonaded each other; and it is said that the English ships could not sustain our fire, and quitted the engagement as ill treated at least as we were, although one of our ships blew up, and eighty men perished.

Our squadron continued its course to Madras, a place of great importance to the English, two of whose ships lay at anchor at the entrance of the road. Our commander sent several vessels to engage them, when they defended themselves with great courage. The cannonade was very violent on both sides; but our ships being more shattered than those of the enemy, were obliged to retire.

Our brave warriors made a descent at six leagues from Madras, and carried the place, which was submitted to pillage; though the commander confined it to the country houses. He afterwards entered the place, where, for his courteous conduct, he received very rich presents and large quantities of gold. It is said that the capture was worth eleven millions of livres. The Governor of Pondicherry (M. Dupleix) opposed this undertaking, and the two commanders became so enraged at each other, that our troops were on the point of engaging those of Pondicherry. M. Dupleix claimed the superiority, as Governor General of India; and that, as such, he had a right to command. In short, this dispute continued so long, as to cause great loss and distress to the French fleet.*

* The future detail of the operations of M. de la Bourdonnais, which will be offered to the attention of the reader, will give a very correct description of these expeditions.

During six months of the year it is impossible to approach this coast, on account of the hurricanes, which torment these seas, and destroy every thing. The remains of our brave troops and sailors are arrived under jury masts, having sustained a loss of eight hundred men, who were drowned.

Many of the inhabitants of this island are anxious to dispose of their plantations, being persuaded, that the change which has taken place in our government, will be attended with inevitable disadvantages to them. It will indeed be very difficult to find such a Governor as M. de la Bourdonnais. Nevertheless, from the manner in which M. David, our new Governor, speaks and acts, we shall derive considerable advantages from his administration. He says that the India Company, being now assured that the island produces plenty of provisions and refreshments for their ships, will order them all to stop at this port, which will be considered as a principal magazine for their commerce; at the same time every possible encouragement will be given to promote industry and advance cultivation.

The different undertakings for raising cotton and indigo have failed. One sugar plantation has, in some degree, succeeded, whose produce resembles the coarser honey of Europe: time and industry, however, will bring it to perfection. The more wealthy adventurers are absolutely starving, by being compelled to purchase the provisions necessary for themselves and their people. They have had the inconsiderate ambition to burthen themselves with large bodies of slaves, before they had provided the means to maintain them.

Our late Governor, M. de la Bourdonnais, will leave this island to return to France, in the month of March next: I shall avail myself of that opportunity to send you this letter, in which I shall inclose a continuation of his operations.

GRANT.

A further Account of the Operations of M. de la Bourdonnais.

1744.—The intelligence that war was declared between France and England, greatly distressed M. de la Bourdonnais, as it was accompanied with precise orders from the Company, dated 14th of April, 1744, which, on the idea of a neutrality between the Companies of the two kingdoms, forbade him to engage in any act of hostility whatever against the English. At the same time he was instructed to defend himself in case the English should commence hostilities; and he was authorised to keep one or two vessels with him: but what could M. de la Bourdonnais do with these merchant ships against four men of war, which had been dispatched from Great Britain for the Indies? Besides, since the Company thought proper to recall the squadron which had left France under the command of M. de la Bourdonnais, the incalculable advantage of arriving first with an armed force in India, was lost, all the projects of M. de la Bourdonnais were overturned, the superiority of the enemy was decided, and all his apprehensions that we should be beat and taken, in every part, confirmed.

In this mortifying conjuncture, he could do nothing more than send off a vessel to inform M. Dupleix, the Governor of Pondicherry, that war was declared between France and England, and to dispatch the *Fiere* to France, with letters for the Company; in which he repeated his efforts to undeceive them in their hopes of a neutrality. In the mean time, till he should receive fresh orders, he was obliged to let the enemy command in these seas. He did not, however, suffer any vessel to go out of port; he redoubled his efforts to finish a ship which he had laid on the stocks, and completely repaired the *Bourbon*, that had arrived from the Indies.

In the mean time, M. Dupleix, in obedience to the orders of the Company, negotiated with the governments of the English East India Company to conclude a treaty of neutrality. The Council of Madras, however, would not render itself responsible for the conduct of his Britannic Majesty's ships of war, as M. de la Bourdonnais had foreseen; for it could not be imagined that any agreement made between the trading companies of two hostile nations, would influence the conduct of the ships of war of their respective sovereigns.

To prove that the French risked every thing, and that the English hazarded nothing, in these treaties, it is sufficient to observe, that the latter had ships of war as well as merchantmen in the Indian seas, while the former had only commercial vessels:

it is evident, therefore, that the French ships belonging to the Company would be taken by the English men of war, who are not to be influenced by any engagement made by the respective companies, to maintain a neutrality between them, as individual trading establishments.

At length the error, which had been committed by the French India Company, was discovered, but, like many other errors, when it is too late; and they acknowledged the misfortune of having despised the reiterated representations of M. de la Bourdonnais. On the 5th of April they were informed by the *Fleury*, which arrived from India, of the capture of the *Favori*. That vessel was at anchor in the road of *Achem*, with an English vessel, which it would have taken, if it had not received orders to the contrary from the company. Captain Peyton, who commanded the British vessel, did not act on the same principles, but seized an opportunity, on the following day, to board and take her. This French ship, the *Fleury*, which had been fitted out to attack some pirates, had also found herself before *Cochin* with four English vessels, laden for *Moka* and *Gedda*; all of which she might have taken, had she not been restrained by the command of her superiors. At the same time all our merchantmen were taken, except that which was commanded by M. de la Villebague, who, suspecting the consequences of a declaration of war, changed his course, and arrived at Pondicherry. I shall not enter into a further detail of our losses, but content myself with relating a singular circumstance, the truth of which is too well known. When Captain Barnet, who commanded an English ship of war, captured our merchant ships, he observed, that he only executed against the French trade, the design which M. de la Bourdonnais had projected against that of Great Britain.

Though M. de la Bourdonnais was extremely mortified, that the decisive stroke which he had so long meditated against the enemies of France should have been rendered abortive, he was not altogether discouraged; nor did he relax in his efforts, as will hereafter appear, to repair the misfortunes of his country: on the contrary, he made the same exertions, as if he had been the cause of them.

The letters, which he received by the *Fleury*, not only informed him of the arrival of the English ships of war in India, but made him acquainted also with the actual situation of Pondicherry: that settlement was represented as in a state of alarm; and the council communicated to him, in very strong terms, the dangers to which their commerce was exposed in the Indian seas. They entreated him to

afford them all the assistance in his power; informing him, at the same time, that they could do nothing more, on their part, than send him by the first opportunity the crew of the *Favori*.

The necessity of affording some assistance to Pondicherry, determined M. de la Bourdonnais to keep the *Neptune*, of forty guns, which was ready to sail for Europe, and to dispatch the *Charmante* thither: he also retained the *Bourbon*, of forty-four guns, the *Insulaire*, of thirty, the *Favourite*, of twenty-six, the *Renommée*, of twenty-six, and the *Decouverte*, of eighteen guns.

At the moment when M. de la Bourdonnais had determined, if possible, to equip these vessels for actual service, he was almost destitute of every thing necessary to carry his design into execution. An extraordinary drought had occasioned an alarming scarcity in the preceding year; the harvest of the current year had been ravaged by the locusts; the *St. Geran*, with a large cargo of stores and provisions from Europe, had been wrecked; and another vessel, which had been dispatched to India for rice, had returned without being able to execute its commission; in short, to complete the scene of distress, there was not more than five or six months provisions in the island: nor did he find a general disposition in the inhabitants to assist him at this critical moment. But notwithstanding all these discouraging obstacles, he employed his utmost activity and exertions in forwarding an armament, which appeared to him as the only means of protecting the ships which the Company must send from France to maintain its annual commerce.

M. de la Bourdonnais exhausted all his resources to collect men to form the crews of his ships, and procure stores for their support: but his endeavours were thwarted in every quarter. The inhabitants of the Isle of Bourbon were so alarmed at the shipwreck of the *St. Geran*, that those who had requested to be employed on board the armed ships, now refused to expose themselves to the dangers of the sea; at the same time, that island was also in such a state of dearth, as to require every assistance which he could afford it: he was, besides, under the necessity of victualling the *Trilon* and the *Heron*, which were laden with merchandize for Europe, as well as to procure subsistence for their crews till their departure: he was also obliged to furnish daily supplies for the troops, the sailors in harbour, with the workmen, and, in general, for all those who did not possess plantations.

In this difficult situation he addressed himself to the Council; and proposed, that a strict account should be taken of the provisions in the possession of the inhabitants;

and that, after leaving sufficient for their subsistence, they should be obliged to furnish the rest, at a fixed price, for the public service. It will be readily believed such propositions excited an universal discontent: they were, however, unanimously approved, and confirmed by the Council on the 8th of January, 1745.

1745.—In order to procure men, he required every twentieth Negro in the Isle of Bourbon, on condition of paying his master thirteen livres per month for his service, and to return two hundred piastres for every one that might die in the expedition. He also urged the necessity of employing the authority of government against those who should refuse to accede to it. This measure was also approved by the Council, and increased the number of his enemies. He was, however, very fortunately relieved from the necessity of carrying it into execution, by the arrival of a vessel, freighted with Negroes, from the coast of Senegal, by certain merchants of France. As M. de la Bourdonnais had been permitted by the India Company to have a share in this adventure, and had full power to act for his commercial associates, he proposed to the Council to purchase two or three hundred of these Negroes for the service of the Company. This proposition was also accepted by the Council.

At length, by his activity and persevering resolution, he had the extreme satisfaction to see his armament complete, and in May, 1745, it was in a state to receive his orders. It was, nevertheless, a point of some difficulty to settle the manner in which it should be employed: and it was matter of serious consideration, whether he should set sail immediately with a view to make prizes, which appeared to be very practicable, as the English squadron remained in the Straits; or whether he should wait for the arrival of the Company's ships from France, in order to conduct them to India. After much deliberation he determined to adopt the latter; as it would be the wisest measure to secure the commerce of the Company, before he employed any active means to annoy its enemies.

He had no sooner formed this plan, than a frigate arrived from France, which brought him the following orders, from the Minister of Marine, dated the 29th of January, 1745.

"The Company has dispatched you a frigate, named the Expedition, which will be followed by the ships hereafter mentioned.

"The Achilles, of seventy guns, and four hundred and fifty men.

"The St. Louis, of fifty guns, and two hundred and fifty men.

“ The Lys, of forty guns, and two hundred and fifty men.

“ The Phénix, of forty-four guns, and two hundred and fifty men.

“ The Duc D’Orleans, of thirty-six guns, and an hundred and fifty men.

“ These five vessels cannot depart for the East before the end of February ; they are to proceed in company to Cadiz, and from thence to the Isle of France, where it is not supposed that they will arrive before the end of August.

“ The king’s intention is, that you take the command of these ships, as soon as they shall arrive at your island.

“ The armament of these ships has two objects ;—the first, to remit the funds with which they are charged, to the treasury of Pondicherry ; and the second, to cruize against the enemies of the state in those parts of the Indian sea which shall, in your opinion, promise the greatest probability of success.

“ The Company has assigned an hundred thousand *marcs de piastres*, which it has sent, this year to the Indies, to pay, in preference, the debts which the Councils of Pondicherry and Bengal have contracted, as it has very much at heart to satisfy all its engagements. Besides, as the vessels which will be charged with this money will not be able to leave Cadiz before the end of March or the beginning of April, they will not arrive at Pondicherry before October,* when the season will be too much advanced to employ these funds in consignments of merchandize for France, both from Bengal and Pondicherry, for the year 1746. The Company, therefore, has confined itself to the exportation of such merchandize as the Council of Pondicherry alone will have been able to collect, since the departure of the vessels which had been expedited for Europe in the beginning of the present year.

“ In order to employ to the greatest possible advantage the ships which you are appointed to command, you must make immediate preparations to embark, with any reinforcement of soldiers and sailors which it is in your power to collect : and if any ship belonging to the India Company should be at the Isle of France, which may prove serviceable to your expedition, you will employ it in your squadron : you may also receive on board any number of your islanders, who may offer their services on the occasion.

“ It is suggested to you to set sail about the latter end of September, and that two of your ships should proceed to the Coast of Malabar, and come to an anchor off

* They did not arrive at the Isle of France till the month of January, 1746.

Mabé, to obtain intelligence from the Coast of Coromandel, and receive answers to the letters which you had forwarded to M. Dupleix, by the Expedition frigate. These vessels must not remain at Mahé a moment longer than is absolutely necessary; and I am of opinion, that it would be right for you to embark in one of them, and the rest of your squadron should receive orders to wait for you at Achem. It certainly would be impolitic for you to appear with your whole squadron off the Coast of Malabar, as that would spread an alarm throughout India; so that you would not meet a single vessel on the seas.

“Your rendezvous, therefore, will then be at Achem, according to the plan already proposed. You must accordingly repair thither towards the end of October, or the beginning of November, to take in water, wood, and refreshments: from thence you will get up to the East, in order to cruize off the mouth of the Ganges before the eighteenth of December. You may remain there, with all your ships, till the fifteenth of January; you will then detach two of your vessels, to carry to Pondicherry the two hundred thousand *marcs de piastres*, that you will have on board the squadron. They will exercise all possible diligence in taking in their cargoes, in order to proceed to the Isle of France; they will then complete their lading of coffee at the Isle of Bourbon, to be enabled to double the Cape of Good Hope at a favourable season, in Company with the three vessels from China, which will, I trust, be arrived there before them. The expedition to Pondicherry cannot take place, unless you have received intelligence that there are no English ships of war on the Coast of Coromandel. You may, however, continue to cruize off the mouth of the Ganges till you shall think it right to return to Pondicherry, stretching close in shore, in order to capture such of the enemy's ships which may be at Madras, or elsewhere. You will afterwards quit Pondicherry to cruize, for some time, either in the Straits of Malacca or Sunda, and any other part of the Indian seas which will, in your opinion, promote the objects of your expedition; ordering your course, nevertheless, in such a manner, that you may return to the Isle of France in June, to careen your ships there, that they may be in a state to return to France at the end of 1746, or the beginning of 1747.

“But though this plan appears to me well adapted to attain the object of the expedition, I have nevertheless that confidence in your zeal and abilities, which engages me to authorize you, to make any alteration which you may think conducive to the

general good and the interests of the Company. You will communicate to M. Dupleix the plan which you shall adopt, as I have given him strict orders to support you by every exertion in his power.

"If two of your ships touch at *Mabé*, you will there receive the necessary intelligence from the Coast of Coromandel; but if you should think it more suitable to your designs to repair at once to *Achem*, without suffering any of your squadron to appear on the Malabar coast, M. Dupleix may dispatch the Expedition frigate to *Achem*, to convey the necessary communications to you, and to settle the time when you should arrive at Pondicherry.

"If, during your cruize off the mouth of the Ganges, in the month of January, you should make any prizes laden with merchandize suited to the European market, you will dispatch them at once to the Isle of France, and give the necessary orders, either to send the prizes to France, if they should be capable of making the voyage, or to transfer their most valuable part of their cargoes on board the vessels which shall be on their return from Pondicherry.

"By the next dispatches you shall be informed of the rendezvous, which I shall arrange with M. de *Maurepas*, that the vessels which shall sail from the the Isle of France in April, 1746, may return to France under the convoy of the King's ships, which shall be ordered thither for that purpose.

"If, on your return from this Expedition, you are of opinion that your presence is no longer necessary in the islands, I authorize you to embark on board any vessel that may be on its voyage to France in the beginning of the year 1747; and you will nominate, *per interim*, as Governor and Commandant in the Isles of France and Bourbon, those whom you shall consider as the most capable of rendering service to the Company."

Signed,

"ORRY."

1745.—M. de la Bourdonnais now submitted his plan of operations to the consideration of the Council, and when it had received their official confirmation, he prepared to carry it into execution. As the dearth, which had for some time threatened the island, began to be very sensibly felt, he dispatched his ships to take in provisions at Madagascar, with orders to wait for him there; at the same time he kept the *Bourbon*, on board which he resolved to embark on the first of August, to join his squadron, in order to proceed to India, if the ships promised him from

France did not arrive. On the 28th of July, the Expedition frigate brought him intelligence, that the *Achilles*, the *St. Louis*, the *Phénix*, the *Lys*, and *Duc d'Orleans*, would arrive at the Island in the month of October.

In consequence of these advices, M. de la Bourdonnais delayed his departure for India till the month of November; and, as the monsoon would not then permit him to pass by Madagascar, where he had determined to join the ships which he had sent there to victual, he dispatched orders for them to return to the Islands, that he might avail himself of the monsoon, to conduct them to Pondicherry. But, unfortunately, the ships which he expected from France in September or October, 1745, did not arrive till January, 1746. This delay was attended with circumstances of extreme discouragement and difficulty.

In the first place, it left him too short a space of time to complete the repairs of his ships: nor was this the greatest obstacle. An epidemical disease had carried off the greatest part of his naval artisans: he was, therefore, compelled to form a new set of workmen to supply their place, from among those whose occupations had no connection whatever with the dock-yard. He accordingly employed house-carpenters to shape the ship-timbers, locksmiths to forge nails, and tailors to make sails. Nor would it have been possible for him to have succeeded, if he had not possessed a perfect acquaintance with the science of ship-building, and made a practical application of it to the necessities of the moment: he accordingly furnished models, regulated the admeasurements, and superintended every class of workmen, with unceasing activity and attention: he sometimes even assisted them in their manual operations. In short, his knowledge and activity supplied all his wants; and at length he surmounted those difficulties, which appeared to all but himself as altogether insurmountable.

But another, and still more alarming obstacle presented itself, in a general deficiency of provisions and equipments.

The ships which composed the first armament, had consumed their provisions in waiting for the arrival of those which were expected from Europe; and the latter, having been victualled only for fourteen months, had, after their long voyage, no more than four months provisions. It was therefore absolutely necessary to revictual both squadrons.

The crews, on their arrival, were also in a very bad state; and the *Achilles* alone was equipped as a ship of war: the others were armed only as merchantmen.

It was requisite, therefore, to add to their force, and augment their crews; and this difficult task M. de la Bourdonnais contrived to accomplish. He formed soldiers by dividing the crews into companies, and incorporating Negroes and workmen with them: he taught them the use of arms, and the practice of military evolutions. He, himself, instructed them how to scale a wall, and to use a petard. He exercised them in firing at a target; and qualified the most dexterous among them to manage a machine, which he had himself invented, to throw fire grapnel to the distance of an hundred and eighty feet, by the means of mortars. Thus he formed soldiers capable of active service; though his success would have been more complete, if the officers of his squadron had seconded his zealous and indefatigable activity: but too many of them made his conduct the subject of murmur and disapprobation. Their personal interest, indeed, was the principal cause of their discontent; as, in order to change the merchantmen into ships of war, it was absolutely necessary to disburthen them of the packages which contained the ventures allowed by the Company to the officers; so that they risked the loss of those advantages which they had expected to derive from the sale of them in India. They loudly complained of the deceit practised by the Company respecting them, and the injury they should sustain by being deprived of those privileges, which could alone remunerate them for the hazards of such a long and dangerous voyage.

These complaints, which were made in the most public manner, caused no small uneasiness and mortification to M. de la Bourdonnais; who could not but remark, that they tended to discourage the crews, more particularly as they were now reduced to half-allowance, and in a state of continual and laborious discipline. To assuage these discontents, he employed every ingratiating attention, and urged every persuasive argument; but while he gained several to enter into his views, there still remained those who did every thing in their power to thwart his designs.

As the vessels were successively equipped, he sent them to Madagascar to subsist and collect provisions, till he could join them. At the same time, as the ships which arrived from Europe would be subject to his orders, he directed M. de St. Martin, who remained in the isles as Deputy Governor, to detain a part of these vessels in port, and to employ their equipments to arm the others. These were destined to cruize off Bombay, to take such English ships as might be returning from *Gedda*, *Moka*, and *Persia*; and they were further ordered, after their cruize, to make the best of their way to *Mabé*, in the beginning of September, where they would receive

further directions. In short, after having done every thing that depended on him for the good of the service, he prepared to depart for the coast of Malabar, where he reckoned upon meeting, some time in May, the English ships coming from Surat. Previous to his departure, he gave the following account of his situation and designs to the Company.

Letter of M. de la Bourdonnais to the Directors of the East India Company.

Gentlemen,

Isle of France, 1st March, 1746.

"I have the honour to address this letter to you, dated the 1st of March, because, it being my design to leave the islands at the end of this month, it is necessary for me to prepare my communications to you at this time: whatever may happen subsequent to this date, I will add hereafter. I have given directions to the Council and M. de St. Martin, to transmit to you the current detail of the colony; it is enough for me to give you an history of the armaments; and as my former dispatches have been lost, I shall state to you every occurrence that has taken place, since the first intelligence that war had been declared between France and Great Britain.

"On the 11th of September, 1744, arrived the *Fiere*: but though the monsoon for India was over, I dispatched a small vessel on the following day, to forward your letters and orders, which fortunately arrived at *Mabé*.

"The shipwreck of the *St. Geran* being attended with great distress to this colony, I sent back the *Fiere* to Europe, with the hope that she would arrive there in time for you to replace, in the following year, all those effects of which we were deprived by the loss of that vessel.

"You, in a very particular manner, instructed me by your letter of the 14th April, 1744, not to commit any act of hostility against the English in India, in the hope that a neutrality would be observed there. If, however, that should not be the case, you authorized me to fall upon them wherever they may be found, as well as to keep one or two of your ships from Europe, which might appear to be the best adapted to such an object. I had already done myself the honour to communicate to you my opinion of this pretended neutrality; that it had not taken place but within the Ganges; and that the English in Europe, who were independent of their India Company, would not observe a treaty of neutrality, whenever they had an opportunity to violate it with advantage. I was still more confirmed in my opinion, by

the arrival of a small vessel from Surat, which brought me the intelligence that four British ships of war had sailed for India. I did not doubt but we should feel the ill consequences of such an event ; and felt, more than ever, the necessity of possessing that squadron with which I left France. If I had been permitted to retain it, I should have gained all those advantages over the English, which they have obtained over us.

“ As I foresaw the necessity of arming, I hastened the construction of the ship called the *Insulaire*, and made every possible preparation in the harbour, to receive the ships that might arrive. The first that appeared was the *Bourbon*, which we thought fit to unload, and to arm as a ship of war ; though her captain gave us some trouble on the occasion, of which you have been already informed by the letters transmitted you by the council, as well as by those which I had the honour to address you. We transferred the cargo of this ship to the *Heron* and the *Triton*.

“ In the month of February following, the *Charmante* arrived with dispatches from M. Dupleix, by which I was informed that he had agreed upon a neutrality with Madras, and, as he hoped, with Calcutta and Bombay. We accordingly discharged this vessel also of its cargo, with which we completed those of the *Heron* and the *Triton* ; but prepared a loading of coffee for it, in case we should receive an authentic assurance that the neutrality was confirmed between the two nations.

“ At the end of March arrived the *Neptune* from Bengal, commanded by M. de la Porte-Barré, who was to quit this port on the 6th of April, to return to France ; when, on the 3d of the same month, the *Fleury* appeared, which had been dispatched from *Mabé*, to acquaint me that one of the Company's ships, called the *Favori*, had been taken by two English men of war in the road of *Achem*. The Council of Pondicherry, at the same time, pressed me to afford them all possible assistance ; and requested also, that I would not suffer any India ships to quit the islands without convoy.

“ This was the first moment when I had a determined object before me. As we were now in that precise situation which, according to your orders, would justify hostilities on my part, we kept the *Neptune*, and embarked her cargo on board the *Charmante*, who set sail for France the 10th of April, and by which I had the honour to transmit you the necessary details of these islands. We proceeded to complete, with

all possible activity, the armament of the following vessels: the *Neptune*, the *Bourbon*, the *Insulaire*, the *Renommée*, and the *Elizabeth*, a small vessel from Surat, which appeared to be an excellent sailer, and was retained on that account, as she might prove very useful on the look-out service. I shall not trouble you with a description of all the various expedients which we were compelled to employ, in order to arm those vessels, at a moment when the loss of the *St. Geran* had left us, in a great measure, without resource; and an epidemical disorder had deprived us of almost every workman or artisan in our dock-yard. Nevertheless, I exerted all my diligence and activity in some degree to supply these wants: and our armament was considerably advanced when the *Favourite* arrived; and by your letter, dated the 22d September, which I received by that vessel, I gained no other intelligence, than that you proposed to answer my advices by the ships which you intended to send out, with no more than the usual preparations. I understood, also, that you had permitted M. Dupleix to expedite the homeward bound ships from Pondicherry and Bengal in the same manner.

“It appeared therefore to me, that the Company had an entire reliance on a neutrality, between the two belligerent powers, in India; and I found myself in a perplexing state of incertitude: but no sooner was I informed that the English had declared open war in India, than I determined to stop all the ships belonging to the Company, in order to reinforce their respective equipments, and to convoy, with my squadron, the merchantmen bound to Pondicherry. It was now the month of June, and we were ready to set sail; but as your ships did not arrive from France, and the crews of the squadron were consuming the provisions of the island, I ordered the whole of them, except the *Bourbon* and the *Elizabeth*, to depart for Madagascar, and wait my arrival there. The month of July was now begun; and as the season was advancing, and no ships from France had yet appeared, I felt the absolute necessity of proceeding to the Indies: I accordingly fixed my departure for the 1st of August; when, on the 28th of July, the Expedition frigate arrived, by which I received advices from the Comptroller-general of Marine, who announced to me the five vessels that you had dispatched, which he ordered me to fit out as armed ships, and to add them to my squadron. He also informed me, that the object of this armament was to carry an hundred thousand *marcs de piastres* to Pondicherry; and, having executed that service, to annoy the enemy in those seas which were distinctly specified. The Minister, also, sent out an order

from the King, which enjoined all the captains and officers of your ships to submit themselves to my command.

“ On taking a view of the existing circumstances, I determined that the squadron should sail about the end of October, which would be a proper time to visit the coast of Malabar ; where, as we should not be expected, we might make some prizes : but as the monsoon would not allow of our passing to India by way of Madagascar, I dispatched the *Elizabeth*, to order the ships stationed there to return to this island, and then to continue its course to Mahé to remit your *pacquets*, from whence she was to return hither. On the arrival of the vessels from Madagascar, I immediately furnished them with what they wanted, and sent them to Bourbon to take in provisions, with orders to remain there till the 10th of October ; they were then to proceed to Achem ; and if I did not join them there by the 10th of January, they were to continue their course to Pondicherry by the road of Madras, in the hope that a part of the English squadron was gone to convoy the English China ships to Europe, when they would not encounter a superior force : and, in order that they might receive an account of the state of affairs in India, I dispatched the Expedition frigate to Mahé, to obtain it there, and proceed to Achem, and if no French ship was at the latter place, to continue its course to Pondicherry.

“ These dispositions being made, on the 7th of October the *Neptune* arrived from India, laden with Moka coffee, and came to seek the protection of our port, as the whole English squadron, reinforced by the *Favori*, which had been taken, was cruising from St. David's to Pondicherry. As I had every reason to suppose that this squadron was infinitely superior to the force which I had been able to collect, I gave orders to the vessels which I sent to Bourbon, to remain there till news arrived from Europe. The extraordinary delay of the squadron from France, made me apprehend that it had met with some accident ; and I perceived, with extreme regret, that the provisions destined for our voyage to India, were consuming in a state of inaction ; besides, if we did not receive some assistance, every one of our ships would soon be disabled from setting a sail : I therefore assembled the Council to consider our situation ; when it was resolved to send a vessel to Pondicherry, to fetch provisions, cordage, tar, &c. and to dispatch the *Favourite* frigate to France, to inform you of the distressing circumstances in which we were involved.

"As the month of December is the critical situation for ships at the Isle of Bourbon, I sent out orders for those which were stationed there, to return hither; and they accordingly arrived at the end of that month, with a stock of provisions that would not last beyond the latter part of March: nor could we indulge any sanguine hopes of procuring a further supply; for we had no great dependance on the *St. Pierre*, which we had sent to Madagascar for that purpose, and was not yet returned. Besides, we had no article but powder, with which we could traffic with the inhabitants of that island; and the dry season in our own, had occasioned a considerable diminution in our corn harvest. In short, our utmost efforts did not promise the necessary subsistence for our people beyond the month of March. Such was our melancholy situation, when the first ship of the squadron from France appeared on the 28th of January; and, on the 1st of February, the whole of them arrived safe at anchor in this harbour.

"The first thing which naturally recurred to my reflection on this occasion, was the use I should make of this force, conformably to the season, the monsoons, and the orders which I had received. I had two courses to pursue; that of quitting the isles on the 1st of March, and proceeding to India, so that I might reach Ceylon at the end of April or the beginning of May, where I might meet the English merchant ships from Surat; though it appeared to me to be impossible to unload and arm this squadron, as it required for this voyage, in the space of a month. Besides, I was fearful of remaining at sea for three months, with ships and crews who were just arrived from a voyage of nine months and upwards. The other course was, to pass to India by the north of Madagascar, which is one half shorter, with the advantage of taking in live stock, &c. and the monsoon changes in March. All these reasons determined me to pursue the second; and I perceived it to be indispensable, the moment I reflected on the small quantity of provisions which was brought by these vessels from Europe, and which they were obliged to share with those they found here. In this distressed situation I issued orders, that the ships' companies should not touch the stock of their respective vessels; and I undertook, in some way or other, to subsist them from the island. But it was not the enemies of my country that I feared; nor the obstacles which were threatened by a scarcity of provisions, that alarmed me. I trusted that we might be able to contend with the one, and remedy the other: but I did not perceive a zeal for the service so prevalent as I could wish, and had a right to expect, from men, who were bound by every tie of

honour, gratitude, and duty, to the Company. At length, I thought it necessary to explain the powers with which I was invested; and after having employed all the means of mild, but urgent persuasions, I found myself obliged to threaten the employment of force, to such as still continued to thwart the plans which had been formed for the protection and defence of your commerce in India.

“Such is my situation, which will prevent me from undertaking any cruize; as the utmost I can perform, will be to go directly for Pondicherry. Nor can I be insensible to the expectations which will be formed from my apparent force, and the impossibility, from its real state, of being able to gratify them. Besides, the anxiety I have suffered, the labour I have undergone, and the privations I have sustained, have greatly injured my health, and I have been a victim to the scurvy. But neither the ill state of my health, nor the discouragements which have so long vexed and still continue to harass me, shall cause my zeal to slacken in the service of the Company, or lessen my sense of the honour which has been conferred upon me, by the appointment of the King, to command the naval service in the Indian seas. I well know the enemies which this confidence has procured me, and am aware of the animosity which will be exercised against me. I am not ignorant that my administration in the islands has been the subject of severe animadversion: but that intelligence does not disturb my tranquillity. I am ready to meet my foes, and shall present myself to their accusations without fear: and with respect to the fortune I possess, I have no cause to blush at the means I employed to attain it. I am ready to deliver up my books, examined as they have been by the Council, year after year, into the hands of my enemies, and subject them to their malicious scrutiny. They will find in them an honest detail of my commercial concerns, and the origin of my fortune; but they will never be able to discover that the interests of the Company have been sacrificed to my own. I depart, therefore, under all the disadvantages which surround me, with the ardent hope, that I shall revenge myself of my enemies by some signal service to my country, which will impose silence on them; and it will not be my fault if that hope is not gratified.

“In truth, the crews which you have sent me, are very unfit for the requisite service, and it is dire necessity alone that compels me to employ them. All the vessels which I command here, except the *Achilles*, are incapable of carrying a lower tier of guns; and I must content myself with placing twelve pounders on their decks.

“ The strength of the enemy, not including a ship of seventy guns, which is now on its way to join them, is as follows :

Two ships of sixty guns.

One ditto of fifty.

One ditto of twenty-four.

One ditto of thirty-six.

Two privateers of fifty guns, which took the St. Benoit.

Two ditto, which have certainly been dispatched from England to carry supplies of provisions and seamen.—In all, ten vessels.

“ These, according to every appearance, will prove much stronger than us ; but what does that signify ? hunger will compel us to fight them with eight such ships, and so indifferently equipped, as ours. It is not arms or powder that we want, but men. I have therefore been obliged to augment the ships' crews with blacks, half of which belong to the Company, and the other I have been compelled to hire. I have also distributed the employments necessary for the good order, discipline, and accomodation of the squadron, to those whom I believe to be the most capable of executing them with honour to themselves, and advantage to the service.

“ I have made my arrangements to set sail about the end of March. After a short stay at Bourbon, I shall join the greater part of my squadron at the island of St. Mary, where I have sent them, in order to get fresh meat, as well as to relieve the colony, which is in a very deplorable state. If I had not received authentic information of the force of the enemy, and consequently felt the necessity of making every possible exertion to augment our own, I should not have stripped it as I have done. I may surely deserve credit in this assertion, since I abandon my wife and my children : but there is no alternative. I have indeed every reason to believe that ships will soon arrive from Europe, and I have left orders to detain them for the safety and supply of the island.

“ My plan on leaving the Isle of France, is as follows :

“ I shall use every effort to arrive off the coast of *Malabar* towards the tenth of May, in order to intercept the English vessels coming from Surat ; which is the only success I have any reason to expect during the course of the present campaign. I propose to touch at *Mabé*, in order to obtain intelligence of the enemy, who, as there was no French ship in India, in the course of last year, will naturally conjecture that some will be sent out from France, for the service of the present

season, and we shall certainly meet them between *Karikal* and *Fort St. David*. We shall then see who will remain masters of the coast. As I am in hope that I shall beat them, I shall then distribute our ships on various cruising services off *Fort St. David*, *Madras*, and the *Point des Palmiers*, to the entrance of the *Ganges*; and on the presumption that we shall prove victorious, I have left orders here to dispatch, in July, all the ships which shall have arrived from Europe, to cruise off Bombay: we shall thus embrace the whole coast, make an advantageous voyage, and, at the same time, be furnished with plenty of provisions from *Pondicherry*. If fortune favours us, I shall return with all speed to the *Isle of France*, with what I may have taken in the Indies, and, having loaded our ships with coffee, return to give an account of my conduct; which, whatever may be the event of it, will not, I am confident, produce either shame or dishonour to me.

"I should rejoice at the arrival of the China ships before my departure for India. If I had a sufficient stock of provisions, I would fit out the *Duc d'Orleans* to go with them, but I shall now take her with me, in order to send her back as soon as possible, laden with supplies for the islands.

Signed, "MAHE' DE LA BOURDONNAIS."

Isle of France, 2d March, 1746.

"P. S. An express vessel from Bengal has just arrived in this port, by which I am informed, that the ship *Charles*, belonging to my brother, the *Dupleix*, and the *Heureux*, have been taken by the English squadron, which is very ill manned; and that notwithstanding its situation, the English have sent twenty merchantmen from Bengal. This intelligence has quickened my operations, and I propose to set sail the 23d of this month. As I have not time to complete all my dispatches, I shall transmit to the Comptroller-general, a copy of my instructions to M. de St. Martin, and request him to communicate them to you. With the blessing of God, I shall soon repair the losses which we have sustained.

Signed, "DE LA BOURDONNAIS."

M. de la Bourdonnais set sail from the Isle of France on the 24th of March, 1746, his squadron being victualled only for sixty-five days.

On his arrival at Madagascar, he wrote to M. de St. Martin, Deputy Governor of the Isle of France, the following letter.

" Sir,

Isle Marotte, on the Coast of Madagascar, 5th May, 1746.

" On my departure from the *Isle of France*, I proceeded to *Bourbon*, which I left on the 29th of March. On the 4th of April I arrived at *Foule-pointe*, in *Madagascar*, where the *Parfaite* waited for me. I was immediately informed that she had purchased about eighty *milliers* of rice, but no bullocks. M. Brusse came on board to acquaint me that the *St. Pierre* was lost on the coast, with five hundred *milliers* of rice, and eighty Negroes; and that the captain and a very few of the ships' company were the only persons who were saved. As the whole crew of the *Parfaite* were either sick or dead, I sent some people on board her to bring her up to us; and at the same time I ordered the *Sieur le Riche* to pass to *Manivoul*, to tell the *Renommée*, who was engaged in traffic there, to join us. As I had come to an anchor in a very critical moment, I ordered all the ships of the squadron to get under way at two o'clock, and to set every sail. The wind now increased, and the sea had a most terrible appearance, so that at eight o'clock we were under our courses, and doubtful whether we should be able to weather the *Isle of Saint Mary*. At ten o'clock, the *Lys* made a signal of distress: its fore mast was split as well as its bowsprit. In half an hour afterwards, our ship pitched in such a manner, that our fore mast broke off about twenty feet above the deck: soon after the main-top-mast fell; in a short time after, our mizen mast shared the same fate; and the bowsprit was broken: in short, the ship rolled so violently, and there was so much water in the hold, that towards eleven o'clock I gave up every thing for lost. However, by throwing over whatever could be moved, the vessel was consequently lightened, and towards the morning the water appeared to diminish in the hold; the storm also began to subside, and in a few hours we were out of danger. The only ship that remained in company with us was the *Lys*; but we saw the *Neptune* to leeward, with only two masts.

" In this deplorable state, we sometimes put to windward to endeavour to reach land, which was the *Island of St. Mary*, but we were at a great distance: and on the following day we found ourselves fortunately at the entrance of the Bay of Antongil, from whence I dispatched a pirogue, which I had taken at *Bourbon*, to go to *St. Mary's*, to tell the vessels which were there to join me at the *Isle Marotte*, where I anchored at ten at night, with the *Lys*. The *Duc d'Orleans*, which had not anchored at *Foule-pointe*, no more than the ship *Neptune* from France, arrived on the 11th, with its bowsprit broken, and the other ships in succession.

“ I must now revert to the 9th of April, the day when I landed on the Isle Marotte, to give you a brief detail of the circumstances connected with it.

“ My first care was to prepare a place to receive the troops, a workshop of a sufficient size for shaping masts, and a rope yard. I therefore dispatched M. de Rostaing, with M. M. Sornay, Cere, and la Baume, to the main island, in search of wood fit for masts and yards. Their report was, that they had not been able to discover any pieces of wood from more than forty-five to fifty feet in length, but that the natives had assured them, that in advancing further up the country, they would find them from eighty to ninety feet, and upwards. With this expectation they returned up the river on the 12th, with a body of carpenters and Negroes, in search of these trees, which they at length found and felled. I departed on the 19th with five hundred men to join the party, and to see myself the pieces which could be obtained. In effect, they appeared to be very fine trees; but I observed at the same time, with great concern, the almost insuperable difficulty of making roads in such deep marshes. It was however absolutely necessary to make the trial; and with wood and reeds this extraordinary labour was so far accomplished, that, on the 24th, we drew along the first piece of fifty feet. When this experiment had been made, I left a sufficient number of workmen with M. de Rostaing, to cut wood necessary for yards, with one large piece to mend the bowsprit, and returned on board.

“ On my arrival I assembled a council, and after having received the opinion of every member of it in writing, I determined to take the principal masts, &c. of the *Bourbon*, with one of the *Lys*, which I should leave here to be re-masted, with such pieces as we could procure from the country; or, after all, with the masts of the *Neptune* from India, if she were brought back, and immediately return to the Isle of France.

“ When I had determined on this measure, I gave orders to all the vessels to advance as much as possible the changes that were to take place in the masts. I pushed forward this work with such vigour, that, in spite of all the obstacles I had to encounter, in the discontent of some, and the indifference of others, I at length attained my object. Here, as in the Isle of France, I had, at each moment, new difficulties, and was obliged to attend night and day to the different workmen and artisans employed in the various operations; but heaven afforded me strength to bear it all; and amidst the fatigues I underwent, both in body and mind, I was so fortunate as to preserve my health without interruption.

"The *Insulaire* arrived from the Point de Laré on the 28th, with no more than fourscore bullocks; but as this provision was not by any means sufficient, I ordered her instantly to return and renew her traffic. On the 2d of May she set sail, when the *Parfaite* returned with all the masts, rigging, and furniture of the *Neptune*, as well as the crew and passengers. I was also informed by M. Desjardins, that Bétandre* had offered to provide us, at Manahar, with any quantity of bullocks and rice we might require. I made a signal therefore to the *Insulaire* to come to an anchor, and then ordered her to change her course for Manahar.

"It is a frequent and very just observation, that misfortune is sometimes a blessing in disguise; for it is certain, if the *Neptune* had not been lost, we should have been detained here for a long time, notwithstanding all my exertions. I should have been compelled to leave the *Lys* here, and to abandon the only ship which had remained with us in our distress; but the wreck of the *Neptune* has furnished us with the means of refitting her with masts and rigging, and putting her in a condition to follow the squadron. The surplus of cordage was serviceable to the *Achilles*, as well as that which was made here by our ropemakers. At length I succeeded, by various means, and unremitting efforts, in putting the ships in as good condition as they were before the storm; and I hope in a few days to weigh anchor and proceed to the Indies. I propose to sail from hence on the 20th, without fail.

"I dispatch the *Parfaite* to inform you of all these circumstances, and to acquaint you at the same time with the loss of two ships from India, the *St. Pierre* and the *Neptune*, in order that you may make such arrangements as you may judge necessary to remedy that misfortune.

"That which I have sustained, has made me lose the advantage which I should otherwise have had over the English ships, on their return from Surat to Europe, if I had arrived in India at the time I proposed; but I trust that I shall yet be in time to meet the ships of war of that nation.

"It is necessary also to inform you, that I was very much alarmed lest our blacks should desert during our stay at Madagascar. The manner of treating them on board the squadron is by no means harsh, so that we have lost but thirty by desertion; and by a bribe of gunpowder to the chief of Manahar, several of them have been restored to us.

"I must beg of you not to make any change in the arrangements I settled with

* One of the petty sovereigns of the country.