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\[ \text{Virisque acquirit mundo, \quad Virgil} \]

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THE
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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

Description of Calcutta.
By an American.

It is just an hundred and three years (1793) since the English merchants fixed themselves at this spot. Its convenience for commerce was, probably, the chief circumstance consulted in the choice. Health seems to have wholly escaped the attention of the European colonists, in their choice of settlements, both in the eastern and western hemispheres. If their situation were favourable to navigation, and trade, and defence, it answered their end. Whether it were such as to allow them to pursue their schemes and enjoy their gains by permitting them to live, was never thought of; and subsequent experience never induced them to correct their original error. Few or no persons come to India but with a view of leaving it. They regard it as a place of temporary sojourn, and they hope to elude the fatal effects of the climate by the shortness of their stay.

Batavia and Calcutta, by being placed in the midst of marshes and pools, were extremely unhealthy. Happily for the Portuguese adventurers, Goa and Macao were Islands which could be rendered insalubrious only by their own negligence.

The English owe their residence at Calcutta to the caprice of Job Channonck, the company's agent. They tell us that he was influenced in his choice by a grove of trees that grew here. Shade was no doubt delightful in this climate; but to be governed in the choice of an emporium, by the vicinity of a grove, is to be swayed by a strange motive. The easy and extensive navigation of this river, and the wealth of the adjacent provinces, might have fur-

* The unavoidable delay which has attended the publication of the last number, occasioned by the necessary removal of the Publishers from the city during the late epidemic, has induced them, to avoid unaesthetic, and the appearance of successive delays, to conclude the present year with the publication of the first volume. The first number of the second volume will commence in January, 1800, and will be continued, it is hoped, without any interruption.—As there is, at present, nothing in the nature of the work that demands a strict observance of particular divisions of time, we trust our readers will approve of the form which the present number has assumed.

Vol. I. No. 6.  A
Kitchen was dry beech wood; a cord of which, 5 English feet 8 3/4 inches long, 5 feet 8 3/4 inches high, and 3 feet 1 1/2 inches wide, and which weighed, at an average, about 2724 lbs. avoirdupois, cost, at an average, 2 dollars and 10 cents.

Of this wood, the daily consumption, when soup was provided for 1000 persons, was about 1/4, or more exactly 1/2, of a cord, which cost about 30 cents; and this gives 2/3 of a cent for the daily expense for fuel in cooking for each person.

To estimate the daily expense for fuel in cooking the same quantity of the same kind of soup in private kitchens, suppose these 1000 persons, who were fed from the public kitchen, to be separated into families of five persons each:

This would make 200 families; and the quantity of wood consumed in the public kitchen, daily, for feeding 1000 persons, (≈300 lbs.) being divided among 200 families, gives 1 1/2 lbs. of wood for the daily consumption of each family; and, according to this estimate, one cord of wood, weighing 2200 lbs., ought to suffice for cooking for such a family 1466 days, or four years and six days.

But upon inquiries relative to the consumption of fuel in private families, the author found that five Bavarian pounds of good peas-soup, could hardly be prepared at a less expense of fuel than 1 1/2 lbs. of dry beech-wood of the best quality; consequently, a cord of such wood, instead of preparing a soup daily for a family of five persons for four years, would hardly suffice five months.

Hence it appears that the consumption of fuel in the kitchens of private families, is to that consumed in the first kitchen of the House of Industry, in preparing the same quantity of the same kind of food (peas-soup) as ten to one.* However, this difference is not occasioned entirely by the difference between the two methods of managing the fire; for, exclusive of the effect produced by a given arrangement of the machinery, the greater the quantity of food prepared at once, or the larger the boiler (within certain limits), the less will be the quantity of fuel required; and the saving of fuel which arises from cooking upon a large scale, is very considerable.

(To be continued.)

* Afterwards, on altering the kitchen of the House of Industry, and fitting it up on better principles, the economy of fuel was carried still farther.

SELECTIONS.

Observations on the Conformation and Capacity of the Negroes. By Professor Blumenbach.

[From "Magazin für das neuüfe aus der Physik," vol. iv.]

During a tour which I made through Switzerland, I saw, in the picture-gallery at Pommersfeld, four negro heads, by Vandyke, two of which had features very little different from the European. As I had then had no opportunity of acquiring knowledge of the form of the negro head and cranium by studying nature, and as Mr. Camper, in a dissertation read in the Academy of Painting at Amsterdam, had mentioned that the most eminent painters, Rubens, Vandyke and Jordens, when they painted Moors, copied from Europeans, whose faces had been blackened for that purpose, I ascribed the European look of these negro heads to this common fault. Some months after, however, I had
an opportunity of knowing that
there are real negroes whose features
correspond very nearly with those
of Europeans, and that the heads
in the gallery of Pommersfeld
might be true representations of na-
ture.

Going to pay a visit at Yverdon,
to the two brothers Treytorrens, one
of whom had been thirty-five years
in the French service, particularly
at St. Domingo; and the other had
a collection of natural curiosities
that contained many rare articles,
when I entered the court of their
elegant habituation, I saw no per-
son to show me into the house, ex-
cept a woman of an agreeable figure,
who was standing with her back
towards me. When she turned to
give me an answer, I was much
surprised to find that she was a fe-
male negro, whose face perfectly
corresponded with her figure, and
fully justified the fidelity of likeness
in Vandijk’s negro heads, which I
had seen at Pommersfeld. All the
features of her face, even the nose
and lips, the latter of which were
a little thick, though not so as to
be disagreeable, had they been co-
vered with a white skin, must have
excited universal admiration. At
the same time she possessed a sound
understanding; and, as I afterwards
learned, was extremely expert in
the obstetric art. The pretty ne-
gress of Yverdon is celebrated, far
and near, as the best midwife in
the Italian part of Switzerland. I
was informed by her master, who
has in his service also a negro man,
as elegantly formed as a statue, that
she was a creole from St. Domingo;
that both her parents were natives
of Congo, but not so black as the
negroes of Senegal.

Since that period I have had op-
portunity of seeing and conversing
with many negroes, and have proc-
cured, for my collection, a great
many anatomical preparations from
negro bodies, which, together with
what I have read in different voy-
ages, tend more and more to con-
vince me of the truth of the fol-
lowing propositions:

1. That, between one negro and
another, there is as much (if not
more) difference in the colour and
lineaments of the face, as between
many real negroes, and other va-
rieties of the human species.

2. That the negroes, in their
mental faculties, are not inferior to
the rest of the human race.

The three negro skulls, which I
have now before me, afford, by
the striking gradation with which
the lineaments pass from the one
to the other, an evident proof of
the first proposition. One of them,
which Mr. Michaelis was so good
to bring me from New-York, is
distinguished by such a projecting
upper jaw-bone, that, if the same
peculiarity belonged to all negroes,
one might be tempted to suppose
that they had another first parent
than Adam. On the other hand,
the lineaments of the third have so
little of the exotic form, and are so
different from the first, that if I
had not dissected the whole head
perfectly entire, and just as when
cut from the body, I should be in
doubt whether it actually belonged
to a negro. The second holds a
mean rank between both, and, in
its whole form, has a great likeness
to the head of the Abyssinian Abbas
Gregorius, a good engraving of
which, by Heins, in 1691, from a
painting by Von Sand, I have
now before me, and which not
only proves, in general, the close
affinity of the Abyssinians with the
negroes, but approaches much near-
er to the ugly negroes, to speak ac-
cording to the European ideas of
beauty, than the well-formed ne-
gress of Yverdon, or the handsome
young negro whose head I dissected
as before mentioned, or than thou-
sand others whose features are lit-
tle different from those of the Eu-
On the Conformation and Capacity of Negroes.

Europeans. What I have here said is, indeed, nothing else than a confirmation of a truth long known, which has been already remarked by unprejudiced travellers. Le Maire, in his voyage to Cape Verd, Senegal, and Gambia,* says:—

"Blackness excepted, there are female negroes as well made as our ladies in Europe." Leguat, in his well-known voyages,† tells us, that he found, at Batavia, several very pretty negroes, whose faces had the perfect European form. Adamson, in his Account of Senegal;§ speaking of the female negroes there, has the following passage: "The women are almost as tall as the men, and equally well made. Their skin is remarkably fine and soft; their eyes are black and open; the mouth and lips small, and the features are well proportioned. Some of them are perfect beauties. They are exceedingly lively, and have an easy, free air, that is highly agreeable." Ulloa, in his Narrativas Americanas,¶ observes, that some of the negroes have thick projecting lips, a flat nose, eyes deep sunk in the sockets, which, in general, are called getudos, and wool instead of hair. He then adds: "Others, whose colour is equally black, have features perfectly like those of the whites, particularly the nose and eyes, and smooth but thick hair."

The testimonies and examples which prove the truth of the second proposition, respecting the mental faculties of the negroes, are equally numerous and incontrovertible.—Their astonishing memories, their great activity, and their acuteness in trade, particularly with gold-dust, against which the most experienced European merchant cannot be too much on his guard, are all circumstances well known.¶ The great aptitude of the slaves for learning every kind of nice handicraft is equally well known; and the case is the same in regard to their musical talents, as we have instances of negroes playing the violin so masterly a manner, that they gained so much money as enabled them to purchase their liberty.**

Of the poetical genius of the negroes, instances are known among both sexes. A female negro, who was a poetess, is mentioned by Hal-

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* Voyages aux Cap Verd, Senegal et Gambie, page 161.
†† The following observations of an intelligent Danish traveller, may serve still farther to confirm the truth of Professor Blumenbach's proposition: "Almost all the negroes are of a good stature, and the Akra negroes have remarkably fine features. The contour of the face, indeed, among the generality of these people, is different from that of the Europeans; but, at the same time, faces are found among them which, excepting the black colour, would, in Europe, be considered as beautiful. In common, however, they have something apish. The cheek-bones and chin project very much; and the bones of the nose are smaller than among the Europeans. This last circumstance has probably given rise to the affection, that the negro women flatten the noses of their children as soon as they are born. But notes may be seen among some of them, as much elevated and as regular as those of the Europeans. Their hair is woollly, curled, and black, but sometimes red. When continually combed, it may be brought to the length of half a yard; but it never can be kept smooth. See P. E. Hert Rels na Guinea. Dordrecht 1790. page 172. Entr.
¶ Barbot, in his description of the coasts of North and South Guinea, to be found in the fifth volume of Churchill's collection, relates many interesting things on this subject. Thus he says, page 235. "The blacks are, for the most part, men of sense and wit enough. of a sharp ready apprehension, and an excellent memory beyond what is easily to imagine; for, though they can neither read nor write, they are always regular in the greatest hurry of business and trade, and seldom in confusion."
** See Ulleperger's Americanische Ackerwerk Gotten, page 351.
On the Winter Sleep of Animals and Plants.

...and a specimen of the Latin poetry of Francis Williams, a negro, may be found in the history of Jamaica. The letters of Ignatius Sancho, a negro, are well known: and the following instances will serve as farther proofs of the talents of our black brethren. The protestant clergyman J. J. Eliza Capitain was a negro; a man of considerable learning, and a great orator. I have in my possession, an excellent print of him, engraved by Tanjet, after P. Vanck. Our worthy professor Hollman, when he was at Wittenberg, conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on a negro who had shewn himself to advantage; not only as a writer, but as a teacher, and who afterwards came to Berlin as a counselor of state to his Prussian majesty. I have now before me two treatises written by him, one of which, in particular, displays extensive and well-digested reading of the best physiological works of the time. Of the uncommon knowledge which many negroes have in the practice of medicine, very favourable testimony has been given by Boerhaave and De Haen, who were certainly competent judges; and the sound skill and delicate expertness of the Verdun accouchist are celebrated through the neighbourhood.

To conclude, the Academy of Sciences at Paris had, among the number of its correspondents, M. Lislet, a negro, in the Isle of France, who excelled in making accurate meteorological observations. On the other hand, whole provinces of Europe might, in my opinion, be named, from which it would be difficult to produce, at present, virtuosos, poets, philosophers, and correspondents of a learned Academy.

Observations on the Winter Sleep of Animals and Plants. By Professor Fabricius.

[From "Magazin für das Neueste aus der Physik," vol. II.]

The winter sleep, or hibernation, is a very singular property of animals and plants; and though it occur daily, we are not able to explain the phenomena with which it is attended. In cold countries, many animals, on the approach of winter, retire to their subterranean abodes, in which they bury themselves under the snow, where they remain five or six

* One of them is entitled, Difert. inaue. philosophica de lumina mentis animae, gestis prudentiis ac facultatis in mentis hominis albus, et arum in corportus nifrei organo ac ovium praelustis quse. Præf. D. Mart. Goth. Loscher. publ. defendit auctor Ant. Guel. Amo, Guinea-Afri, Phil. et A.A. L. L. Mag. et J. V. C. Wittenberg 1734, m. Apq. The title of the other is, Difpr. philosophica, continens ideam diffinitorum eorum, quæ compactum vel moti vel corporis nifrei ovium et organici, quæ praestant M. Ant. Guel. Amo, Guinea-Afri, d. 19. Maii 1734, defendit Io. Theodos, Meiner Rochlin-Mehin. Philos. et J. V. C. Clutor. In an account of Amo's life, printed on this occasion in name of the Academic Council, it is said, among other things respecting his talents, "Honorem, meritum ingenii partum, insigni probabilis, industria, eruditionis, quæ publicis privatique exercitationibus declaravit, laude ausit—Compluribus philosophiam domi tradidit excelsa virorum, quam norum, placitum, optima quæque fidelegit, selecta enucleat ac dilucide interpretatus est." And the president, in defending the first mentioned treatise, says expressly, in the annexed congratulation to Amo, "Tuum potissimum eminat ingenium fecillimum—usque qui illius felicitatem ac praestionem, eruditionis ac doctrinae soliditatem ac elegiam, multis spectimibus haestens in nostris etiam academia magni cum applaudi omnibus bonis, et in praestisdifferentiatione erupit comprensibili. Redde tibi illum praeemio, prae melius gentibus ac eruditum elaboratam, integrum adhibit et planum immutatam, ut via ingenii tui co magis caede elucidaret."