

ART. VII.—*History of a Voyage to the China Sea.* By JOHN WHITE, *Lieutenant in the United States Navy.* Boston. Wells & Lilly. 1823. pp. 372.

THIS may safely be pronounced the most complete and authentic account which has been published, at least in our language, of the kingdom of Cochin China. That country, sometimes called Onam, was first discovered by Ptolemy, by whom it is barely noticed under the name of Sinæ, and is placed by D'Anville at the eastern extremity of the ancient habitable world. It is a narrow strip of land, resembling a crescent in its form, and projecting into the China Sea, immediately south of China Proper. According to our author, it extends in its present limits from latitude 8 deg. 40 m. to 17 deg. north, and from Cape Avarella in longitude 109 deg. 24 m. east, one hundred and fifty miles westward. Its average breadth, however, is about one hundred miles.

It is bounded on the northeast by the Gulf of Tun Quin, on the southwest by the Gulf of Siam, and on the west by the Birman Empire. Little or nothing was known of this country till the middle of the last century, when it was visited by M. Le Poivre in a diplomatic character, who described it in a work which we have not been able to procure, but which

has been liberally quoted by subsequent geographers. This is said to be a lively and interesting narrative, but whether it be entitled to the praise of strict accuracy, may be judged from the following remarks on the character of the Cochin Chinese, extracted from it by the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 'M. Le Poivre,' say they, 'represents the Cochin Chinese as gentle, frugal, hospitable, and industrious. There is not a beggar in the country, and robbery and murder are absolutely unknown. A stranger may wander through the kingdom from one end to the other, the capital excepted, without meeting the slightest insult. He will be received everywhere with the most eager curiosity, but at the same time, with the greatest benevolence. A Cochin Chinese traveller, who has not money to defray his expenses at an inn, enters the first house of the town or village he arrives at, and waiting the hour of dinner, takes part with the family, and goes away when he thinks proper, without speaking a word, or any person putting to him a single question.' It argues, we trust, no great want of charity to receive a description like this, with a little distrust, as bearing a much greater resemblance to the highly colored pictures of the purity and innocence of barbarous nations, so prevalent at this time, than to the sober sketches of an impartial historian. Indeed, the civilized communities of the world, if we may judge from some of their writers, seem disposed to compensate for their encroachments on the territory and comforts of their savage brethren, by extravagant eulogies on their virtues, thus illustrating a remark made in a sermon of Dr South, that 'when men ask for bread, we give them a compliment, a thing not quite so hard as a stone, but altogether as dry.'

In 1793, Cochin China was visited by Lord Macartney and his suite, but the English squadron merely touched at Turon, one of its northern ports, and Mr Jackson, the sailing master of the *Lion*, on penetrating a little way into this hospitable country, was seized by the officers of government, and very roughly handled both by them and by the populace. The account given of this visit by Sir George Stanton therefore, however impartial, is extremely scanty.

For the purpose of opening a trade with this unknown region, the brig *Franklin* was fitted out at Salem, in the year

1818, and placed under the command of Lieutenant White, then absent on a furlough from the naval service of the United States. He sailed January 2, 1819, and returned August 31, 1820. The motives which led to the publication of this work, are stated in the following brief and candid advertisement.

‘This volume was not originally intended for publication, but written as a Memoir to be deposited in the archives of the “East India Marine Society of Salem.” Some of the author’s friends, however, who had read the manuscript, (among whom was the Hon. John Pickering, who kindly assisted him with advice,) conceived it of sufficient general interest to be published, and it is accordingly submitted, “with all its imperfections upon its head.”

The very respectable and flattering list of subscribers obtained in his native place, when proposals were first issued, gave birth to hopes of more general patronage; but these hopes have been but very partially realized, and the proceeds of the subscription list will scarcely defray the expenses of publication. As a proof that no fault on his part has delayed the appearance of the work, the principal part of the manuscript was read by some of his friends two and a half years ago.

To his patrons, he deems it his duty to offer the above reason for its not appearing before; and it is only with a view of redeeming his pledge, and to meet expenses already incurred, that it is now published.—It would not otherwise have been committed to the press.

In regard to style, grammatical accuracy, and mode of arrangement, he requests his readers to bear in mind, that this is not a book written by a professed scholar, but the production of an unlettered seaman. In the course of the work, he has endeavored to account for the discrepancy between his own humble though faithful narrative and descriptions, and the vague and disjointed accounts of some former writers, by which the Cochin Chinese character is so differently represented.

He does not, however, pretend to make any invidious comparisons, but to show, that from our general non-intercourse with that remote and secluded country, few correct accounts of it have been published, and those at a period considerably remote from the present era; since which its national character has been debased by the increasing despotism of the government.

Deceived by the flattering accounts of this reputed *el dorado*, (however correct they may once have been,) several adventurers have been induced to risk voyages there; one of which was from

Salem, as early as the year 1803;* but they were all totally unsuccessful; and it is presumed, that no American ever prosecuted any important commercial speculation in the country, previous to the joint adventure of the brig Franklin and ship Marmion. At least it is very certain, that they were the first American ships that ever ascended the Donnai river, and displayed the stars and stripes before the city of Saigon.'

In his passage to Cochin China, Lieutenant White touched at St Salvador, the Island of Banca, and several other ports. His descriptions of these places are lively and entertaining. Want of room, however, obliges us to pass over most of them without farther notice, and we shall merely say a few words of Tristan d'Acunha, a spot rendered interesting to Americans, by a curious enterprise of one of our fellow citizens.

This is a little island in the South Atlantic Ocean, lying nearly in the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope. It is about fifteen miles in circumference, and with two others of inferior size, called Nightingale and Inaccessible, composes a small group, first discovered by the Portuguese in 1700. The whole cluster is described as bearing indisputable marks of the action of fire, and is consequently supposed to be of volcanic origin. These three islands are rugged and mountainous. Tristan d'Acunha, excepting a peak in its centre, is covered with verdure; the two others are quite barren. In the year 1811, Jonathan Lambert of Salem took possession of the whole group, and claimed the ownership and sovereignty of the soil by right of occupancy. These pretensions were set forth in a proclamation published shortly afterwards, which, both in sense and in style, was, to say the least, quite equal to some which have lately issued from far mightier thrones. He invited navigators of all nations to touch at his islands for refreshments, and for the purpose of fulfilling his engagements, carried out a colony of three or four adventurers, and cultivated the soil with great assiduity. How long Jonathan Lambert might have held his territory, without exciting the jealousy of the great monarchs of Europe, is a problem which it was not left for time to solve. The issue of his enterprise is thus described by Mr White.

'Lambert and his associates had resided here nearly two years, and already had their industry been crowned with great success;

* The Ship Fame, Captain Jeremiah Briggs.

they had collected a number of the skins of seals, sea lions, &c. and a considerable quantity of oil, from the same animals. The soil, congenial to the growth of the various kinds of plants, which they had naturalized there, had begun to reward their toils with a plentiful crop of roots, fruits, and pulse, and they were made happy in the fruition of their hopes, and in the flattering prospects of future independence, which were spread before them.

In the midst of the enlivening feelings which pervaded their minds on the success of their undertaking, a melancholy incident took place, which rent asunder the bonds of this little society, and spread desolation over their domains. This was no less than the death of Lambert, the soul of their enterprise; he is reported to have been drowned, while on a visit to one of the adjacent islands. Disheartened by this unfortunate occurrence, by which they were deprived of an intelligent leader, and distrusting their own powers to prosecute their original designs to a favorable issue, they shortly after this event quitted the island in a ship which touched there; and in 1814 their huts were found falling to the ground, their enclosures in ruins, and every part of this once flourishing establishment marked with the devastations of time and neglect.

On the 23d of July, the *Franklin* entered the straits of Banca, and on the following day was attacked by three Malay proas. A short engagement ensued.

The carriages of her guns became useless, after a few discharges, and Mr White determined to put into Mintow, a small Dutch settlement in the Island of Banca, where he arrived in the evening. From this place he sailed two days after, and on the morning of August 7th, he discovered Cape St James, the southern point of Cochin China, lying at the mouth of the great Donnai river. This cape he passed in the evening, and anchored just beyond it, in front of the village of Vungtau. On the following day, they were boarded by a Cochin Chinese boat, containing three mandarins with their suite. An amusing description of the first interview between these visitors and our countrymen, is contained in the fourth chapter of this work.

Mr White had necessarily formed his opinion of the character of the Cochin Chinese, from the descriptions of those lively writers, to whom we have already referred. His erroneous impressions on this subject were speedily rectified.

‘The military chief was a withered, greyheaded old man, possessing however a great deal of vivacity, tinctured with a leaven of

savage childishness, which in spite of his affectation of great state and ceremony, would constantly break out, and afford us infinite amusement. He had several attendants, who were perfectly subservient and promptly obedient to all his orders, yet we observed that on all other occasions the greatest familiarity subsisted between them. One of the attendants carried a huge umbrella, with which he followed the old man to all parts of the ship, where his curiosity or caprice led him, and when invited into the cabin, he would not descend without the umbrella, so tenacious was he of every circumstance of state and appearance. Another attendant was a handsome boy of about fifteen years of age, who carried in two blue silk bags connected with a piece of cotton cloth, and thrown over his shoulder, the areka nut, the betel leaf, chunam and tobacco, of which they chew immense quantities; and so universal is this custom among them, that I never saw a man of any rank or respectability without one of these attendants. They also smoke segars made of cut tobacco, rolled in paper wrappers, like the Portuguese, from whom probably they adopted this custom. Another servant carried his fan; and our risibility was not a little excited on seeing the old fellow strutting about the deck, peeping into the cook's coppers, embracing the sailors on the fore-castle, dancing, grinning, and playing many other antic tricks, followed by the whole train of fanners, umbrella bearers, and chunam boys, (for the attendants of the other chiefs had joined in the procession) with the most grave deportment and solemn visages, performing their several functions.'

'In person the Cochin Chinese are perhaps somewhat smaller than their neighbors the Malays, and of the same color, though generally not so well formed; their constant habit of chewing areka imparts to their mouths a most disgusting appearance.'

'The habit of the higher classes, in permitting their nails to grow to an enormous length, cannot be supposed to conduce to cleanliness or comfort; and it is remarkable with what unwearied pains they cultivate them, as a person bearing this badge is supposed not to be obliged to perform any manual labor, and the longer the nails, the more respectability do they confer on the wearer. Their garments are seldom taken off by night or by day, after having been first assumed, excepting in cases of ceremony, when they are temporarily superseded by other dresses, till rotten by time and filth, when they are permitted to fall off of themselves. These dirty habits engender vast swarms of vermin, and render their bodies highly offensive to more than one sense; and the epithet *frowzy*, which has been applied to the Chinese, is exemplified in these people in the most emphatic sense.

'After having visited every part of the ship, the old mandarin began to court my favor, with the most unyielding pertinacity,

hugging me round the neck, attempting to thrust his dirty betel nut into my mouth from his own, and leaping upon me like a dog, by which I was nearly suffocated. I finally succeeded in extricating myself from the ardor of his caresses, and getting to the windward side of him, which I maintained, notwithstanding his reiterated efforts to dislodge me. At first we could not account for this sudden and violent fit of unsolicited friendship, but in a short time the mystery was completely unravelled.

‘Misled as we had been by the accounts which we had had of this country, and totally unacquainted with the real character of the people, we had taken no precaution to keep any articles out of their sight, which it would have been improper or inconvenient for us to part with; and on this occasion we suffered severely by our ignorance. One of the inferior chiefs intimated a wish to descend to the cabin, which was granted. No sooner had we entered it, than, pointing to the looking glass, he gave us to understand that he must have that for the old chief; being somewhat surprised at the demand, we smiled, and, endeavoring to divert his attention, presented him a bottle of brandy and a glass to help himself, which he did not hesitate to do most abundantly; and then, giving us to understand that he considered the vessels as a present, passed them to his attendants, who, after swallowing the liquor, deposited them under their robes. The mandarin then renewed his solicitations, nor was there a single article in sight that he did not demand, and in a manner to impress us with an idea that a refusal would give great umbrage to the chief on deck. Our curtains, glassware, wearing apparel, arms, ammunition, spyglasses, and cabin furniture, were successively the objects of his cupidity; we had, however, determined to be very limited in our donations, at the same time, keeping in view the importance of conciliating these people, and gaining their good will, on our first entrance into their country; he was therefore presented with a shirt, a handkerchief, and a pair of shoes for himself, with an intimation that nothing more would be bestowed, on which he went on deck, in a very ill mood. We followed him shortly, and found the aspect of affairs materially changed; from an excess of gaiety and good humor, old Heo, (for that we discovered was his name,) had fallen into very ill humor, and scarcely deigned to speak.’

The old chief was appeased with great difficulty, and at the expense of several very costly presents. He was now

‘In high spirits again, and, in the *wantonness of his benevolence*, took off his old blue silk robe, with which he very graciously invested me; at the same time shrugging his shoulders, and intimating that he was cold. I took the hint, and sent for a white jacket.

which I assisted him in putting on; at this attention he appeared highly gratified. A demand was now made for some refreshments, and we spread before them some biscuit, cold beef, ham, brandy-fruits, and cheese; of the biscuit and cheese they ate voraciously, seasoning their repast with bumpers of raw spirit; the other viands they did not seem to relish; neither did the brandy-fruits suit their palates, till it was hinted to them, that they would produce the same effects as the rum, on which they swallowed them with great *gout*; nor were they disappointed in the effects, which we had promised them would be produced by their debauch, and by the time we had anchored opposite the village, they were in a state of great hilarity.'

Upon leaving the vessel, Heo invited Mr White to visit him on shore. The request was complied with, and after some formal delays, Mr White was ushered into the chief's house, of which he gives the following picture.

'The apartment, into which we were ushered, was about twenty five feet square, and this we found was the usual hall of audience; the floor was composed of a mixture of sand and clay, which, by constant attrition, had become very compact and solid; the walls were decorated with rusty swords, shields, match locks, gongs and spears. On each side of the entrance was an enormous bass drum, called in the East a *Tom-tom*, mounted on a clumsy wooden frame, and struck with a bamboo, at stated periods, by a soldier on guard; but what method they had of measuring their time we could not ascertain.

'On a raised platform, at the right hand, were seated two miserable looking objects, undergoing the punishment of the *caungue*, or yoke; this punishment is inflicted by placing over the culprit's neck, and resting on his shoulders, two pieces of large sized bamboo, about ten feet long each, and secured parallel to each other, by two strong wooden bars, which pass on each side of the neck, embracing it very closely, (not, however, so as to prevent its being turned round,) and give the criminal the appearance of carrying a ladder on his shoulders.

'Directly back of this platform was an entrance into another apartment, devoted to domestic purposes, before which hung a coarse screen, or blind, of split bamboo, resembling those used in Bengal, not, however, so thick and closely woven, as to hide from our view the women, children, and pigs behind it, who were amicably partaking together of the contents of a huge wooden tray, which was placed in the middle of a floor, composed of small sticks, or wattles, laid transversely over rough trunks of trees, and secured by small cords, made of a kind of flax. At the back part of the hall, in a recess, was placed a large wainscot of heavy wood work, on

which was carved, in high relief, a group of non-descript figures, which must have cost the wildest and most prolific imagination no small effort to invent. On each side of the recess, in guady water colors, were displayed several paintings of prodigious monsters, "chimeras dire," and many other heterogeneous productions; and in the centre stood a table, on which was placed a censer of brass, a bason of the same metal, filled nearly to the top with ashes, in which were stuck a great number of matches, (the ends of all which had been burnt,) and a little bronze Jos, or god. And, in front of the posts, or pillars, on each side, were suspended long narrow scrolls or columns of colored paper, with various characters of their language upon them, from top to bottom, painted in black.'

Mr White lost no time in informing the chief, that the main purpose of his voyage was to procure a cargo at the city of Saigon, and requested him to grant permission to go up the river at that place.* This the mandarin gave him to understand was beyond his power; and added, that should he comply with the request, both parties would be liable to capital punishment. Mr White then stated, that he should go up without permission, and was informed in return, that he would incur the same penalty. The mandarin, however, agreed to transmit to Saigon an account of the Franklin's arrival, and a request for a chop or pass to go up the river, and assured Mr White that he would receive an answer in two days.

When these had elapsed, the same promise was repeated. In short, after waiting several days longer, after receiving several more visits from Heo, and other mandarins with their followers, and vainly endeavoring to purchase their good offices by more and more costly presents, Mr White at length perceived, that it was entirely out of the power of these officers to facilitate his farther entrance into the country, and learned, that they had not even transmitted the news of his arrival to Saigon. He concluded, therefore, to leave Vung-tau and proceed to Hué, the usual residence of the king, a city which lies in the northern extremity of his territories.

From the extracts which we have made, our readers will be fully prepared to give credit to the following general view of the Cochin Chinese character.

* As Mr White and the chief were entire strangers to each other's language, they could converse only by signs, which mode of communication, however, they soon learned to employ with great facility.

‘On this our first interview with the natives of the country, we were much surprised to find their manners so different from what we had been led to expect from the accounts we had had of them, and could only reconcile the discordance by a supposition that the inhabitants of the coast, being remote from the example of the more polished residents of the cities, must of course be less civilized; but as we became more acquainted, and their characters were proportionably developed, we were convinced that the Cochin Chinese were in many respects but little removed from a state of deplorable barbarism.’

Mr White left Vungtau on the 13th of July, and after sailing along the coast, anchored on the 18th in Turon Bay. Here they were visited by three mandarins. One of these ‘signed for pen and ink, which being produced, and some paper handed him, he wrote in Latin, *Quid Interrogas?** Calling up the remains of our acquirements in that language while school-boys, we contrived to hold an intelligible conversation with them.’ They stated, that the king was then absent from Hué, and that it would be absolutely impossible to procure a good cargo in the northern provinces.

Disappointed in this second attempt, Mr White determined to sail to Manilla for the purpose of finding some person acquainted with the language of Cochin China, and of gaining such general information, as might lead him to the ultimate accomplishment of his design. In both these respects, his wishes were almost totally disappointed, as the inhabitants of Manilla were singularly ignorant of everything relating to Cochin China. He then determined to renounce his purpose altogether. He was diverted from this conclusion, by the arrival of the *Marmion*, of Boston, commanded by Captain Oliver Blanchard, who shortly after the departure of Mr White from Vungtau, had arrived at that place, and had also made an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate to Saigon. The commanders of these two vessels concluded upon sailing up the Donnai river in company, and after a short stay at Manilla, the *Marmion* and *Franklin* returned to Vungtau.†

*This language, as we are afterwards informed by our author, had been taught these mandarins by some French Missionaries.

†In consequence of the loss of Captain Blanchard, who was taken sick and died in the Donnai river, the command of his vessel had devolved on Mr Brown.

Here they were boarded by a mandarin, who prohibited their farther progress, with an evident view of repeating the same course of exactions, which had been formerly practised. His demands were strenuously resisted by the commanders of both vessels, who proceeded a short distance up the river to the village of Canjeo, where, after many threatening altercations with the authorities of that place, they were permitted to send one of their officers in a boat to Saigon. This person, Mr Putnam of the *Marmion*, succeeded in his enterprise, and soon returned with a pass, in company with an old Portuguese, called Joachim, who had resided several months in the country, and was thoroughly acquainted with the language. Another linguist was procured, a Cochin Chinese christian, named Marianno, who also acted as pilot, and the two vessels proceeded on their voyage up the *Donnai*. This stream varies in breadth from a mile to two furlongs, but its shores are so bold, that vessels can sail in the narrowest parts without inconvenience. Its banks, for the most part, are covered with a thick forest, and the prospect which they afford, though necessarily limited, is represented as very beautiful. The river is seldom less than eight fathoms in depth.

The progress of our voyagers was very slow, as the ebb tide often ran against them, at the rate of five or six miles an hour, and it was not till about a week after they began to ascend the river, that they came in sight of Saigon. The length of the *Donnai* from its mouth to this city, is about sixty miles.

‘At two o’clock on the morning of the seventh of October, we were again pursuing our course to the object of our destination, which was now not far distant, and the dawn soon arriving disclosed scattered cottages, patches of cultivated grounds, groves of cocoa and areka nut trees, herds of buffaloes, fishing boats, and a distant forest of masts, indicating our near approach to the city, below which at the distance of one mile, we dropped anchor at half past five. The appearance of several boats of light and airy construction, each in many cases managed by a single woman in picturesque costume, was novel and pleasing, while great numbers of the native vessels of different sizes, plying in various directions upon the stream, gave a busy and lively interest to the scene.’

The treatment of the fair sex in Cochin China is directly the reverse of that, to which they are subjected in many oriental countries. Instead of an utter seclusion from public view, they constitute the most active portion of the community. Besides cultivating the earth, navigating the river craft, and performing manual labor, they conduct all the commercial operations of the kingdom, and are in fact the merchants and brokers of Cochin China. Of their skill in this capacity, Mr White soon received ample proofs. Immediately on his arrival, he was visited by a bevy of them, 'who, after asking and receiving a glass of brandy each, began to open their business.' Every article, which he proposed to purchase, had risen from eighty to a hundred per cent, since his arrival, and on the following days the price was increased by an advance of fifty per cent more. Mr White afterwards endeavored to procure a cargo, through the medium of a Cochin Chinese christian, named Domingo, but this encroachment on the rights of women was promptly resented. An appeal was made to the government of the city, and Domingo was ordered to permit the female merchants to transact their concerns in their own way. In short, after a stay of four months at Saigon, only an incomplete cargo could be procured, at a price much beyond its fair value. Constant vigilance was necessary to secure the property on board the two vessels from theft and robbery, and the lives of the captains, during their residence on shore, were more than once endangered by the cowardly attacks of the natives, who lay in ambush, and assaulted them with showers of large stones, and other dangerous missiles.

The behavior of the government of Cochin China towards our countrymen was marked by the same characteristics, which distinguished that of the populace. On arriving at Saigon, the two vessels were measured in due form, by persons appointed for that purpose. This ceremony was attended with no little inconvenience, as it was performed by a host of officers of various ranks, who, after concluding their business, indulged themselves in a drunken debauch on board the vessels. Yet the measuring fees for the brig Franklin alone amounted to nearly three thousand dollars. The duty exacted on her departure was of equal amount. A general spirit of extortion seemed to pervade, with very little exception, all

orders of the government, and every part of their conduct indicated an aversion to all commercial transactions with foreign nations, far exceeding that for which the Chinese are so remarkable.

To our merchants, especially, we recommend Mr White's comprehensive summary of his various difficulties and exertions.

‘It would be tedious to the reader, and painful to myself, to recapitulate the constant villany and turpitude, which we experienced from these people, during our residence in the country. Their total want of faith, constant eagerness to deceive and overreach us, and their pertinacity in trying to gain, by shuffling and manœuvring, what might have been better and easier gained by openness and fair dealing; the tedious forms and ceremonies in transacting all kinds of business, carried into the most trifling transactions; the uncertainty of the eventual ratification of any bargain, (the least hope of wearing the patience of the purchaser out, and inducing him to offer a little more, being sufficient to annul any verbal stipulation,) and there being no appeal, unless there is a written contract, which is never made till every art has been used, and every engine of extortion put in motion and exhausted to gain more; all these vexations, combined with the rapacious, faithless, despotic and anti-commercial character of the government, will, as long as these causes exist, render Cochin China the least desirable country for mercantile adventurers. These causes have made the Japanese relinquish the trade; they have driven the Portuguese of Macao from the country, and turned their commerce into other channels; and are yearly and rapidly lessening their intercourse with China and Siam. The philanthropist, the man of enterprise, and the civilized world generally, can see in the present miserable state of this naturally fine country, no other than a source of deep regret and commiseration.’

The natives of Cochin China seem, in short, to be a degenerate race of the true Chinese, resembling them in little except the worst parts of their character. This inferiority is very justly ascribed by our author to their government, which is a military despotism, administered with little regard either to justice or policy. Their monarchs are generally engaged in attempting to extend their territory, by encroachments on their neighbors, and their subjects are trained up to the use of arms, and in utter ignorance of all the arts of peace. These are carried on, as we have before observed.

by the women, assisted however in a great degree by the Chinese, who are scattered in abundance throughout the kingdom.

These industrious and enterprising people are the mechanics, confectioners, &c. of Cochin China, filling the same place in that country, which is occupied by many of our active New England adventurers in some of the southern cities of the United States. They are also bankers and money changers, and much of the circulating medium of the country passes through their hands. There can be little doubt, that the happiness of the Cochin Chinese might be materially increased, in a very short time, by a change of policy in their rulers. It is needless to say, that they could never merit by any exertions the high praise, which has been so gratuitously bestowed upon them by French writers, but it is not less incontestable, that they might be rendered quite equal in all respects to the Chinese.

Much was effected by the influence of the celebrated Bishop Adran, who was, in 1802, the oracle and guide of the reigning monarch.

‘ And during a short peace, previous to the final termination of the war, he established a manufactory of salt petre, opened roads, cut canals, held out rewards for the propagation of the silk worm, caused large tracts of land to be cleared for the cultivation of the sugar cane, established manufactories for the preparation of pitch, tar, rosin, &c. opened mines of iron, constructed smelting furnaces, and foundries for cannon. Adran translated into the Onam language a system of European military tactics, for the use of the army. Naval arsenals were established, and a large navy, principally consisting of gun boats, galleys, &c. was built and equipped. Under his direction a reformation was effected in the system of jurisprudence; he abolished several species of punishments, that were disproportionate to the crimes to which they were annexed; he established public schools, and compelled parents to send their children to them at the age of four years; he drew up commercial regulations, built bridges, caused buoys and sea marks to be laid down in all the dangerous parts of the coast, and surveys to be made of the principal bays and harbors. The officers of the navy were instructed in naval tactics by Frenchmen; his army was divided into regular regiments; military schools were established, and the officers taught the science of gunnery. Unfortunately for the country, the death of Adran occurred shortly after this; and

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with him expired many of the wholesome laws, institutions, and regulations established by him.'

Mr White frequently visited the principal naval arsenal at Saigon, where he saw timber and planks far exceeding in size any employed in the British and American navy yards. 'I measured one plank,' he observes, 'whose dimensions were one hundred and nine feet long, more than five inches thick, and perfectly square to the top, where it was two feet wide. It was sawed out of the trunk of a teak tree, and I believe there is no part of the world where these gigantic sires of the forest arrive at such magnitude as in Cochin China. I have seen in the country a tree, that would make a natural mainmast for a line of battle ship, clear of knots; and this I learned is not unusual.' The whole establishment was on a most extensive scale, and in the finest order. Just after the arrival of the vessel, a work had been completed bearing the features of true Roman magnificence, but at a lamentable expense of human life. This was a river, or canal, twenty three English miles long, connecting the city of Saigon with a branch of Cambodia river. This canal was 'twelve feet deep throughout, about eighty feet wide, and was cut through immense forests and morasses, in the short space of six weeks. Twenty six thousand men were employed night and day by turns in this stupendous undertaking, and seven thousand lives sacrificed by fatigue and consequent disease.'

The prevailing religion of the Cochin Chinese is polytheism, but they treat their temples and idols with very little respect, and seem to view the whole subject with utter indifference. The Roman Catholic faith was, however, tolerated in the country, and, according to the statements of the priests, professed by no less than seventy thousand people. There was a christian church in the very centre of Saigon, under the care of two Italian missionaries. To the principal of these, who was styled Father Joseph, Mr White was materially indebted for several important good offices, and much useful information.

The following anecdote contains an instance of true apostolic disinterestedness, which is above all comment.

'A few days previous to our quitting Saigon, Father Joseph begged of us some wine and flour, for a particular purpose, as he

said. Knowing his abstemious habits, our curiosity induced us to ask him, to what use he intended to apply those articles? He informed us, that as the king had frequently been indisposed of late, and in the event of his death, an extermination of the christians was feared, the wine and flour were designed as elements to be used at the celebration of the Eucharist; of which he intended to partake with his converts, at their last extremity. No persuasions could induce this worthy, conscientious, and intrepid man, to quit the country with us; he answered, that it would be disgraceful for him to desert his post in the hour of danger, and leave his flock to the mercy of the wolves; that now was the time to evince his zeal and sincerity in the service of his master; and though an obscure individual, his sphere of action small, and fate had placed him in this remote part of the globe, his conduct would be the same as if he were in the most exalted station, and the eyes of the whole world upon him.'

We have devoted so much room to extracts, that we must refer to the work itself, for many curious accounts of the police of the Cochin Chinese, of their medicine and surgery, their domestic habits, their food and dress, their public and private buildings, their language, their climate and soil, their natural productions, both vegetable and animal.

Upon the last of these topics, however, we shall venture to mention one or two incidents. The elephants of Cochin China, which are the largest in the world, besides performing the various warlike services, required of that class of animals in other countries, are made to answer the purpose of a hook and ladder company. In case of fire, they are driven head foremost against the adjacent buildings, and the efforts of one, or at most two of them, are amply sufficient to level with the ground any of the slight dwellings of the Cochin Chinese. This country abounds also in royal tigers of uncommon size and ferocity. A female of this species was presented in a cage by the Viceroy of Donnai to Mr White. She was generally fed by throwing live puppies into the cage. One day the following remarkable incident occurred, which shews, in a striking light, the effect of first impressions on the brute creation.

'A puppy, not at all remarkable, or distinguishable in appearance, from the common herd, was thrown in, who immediately, on perceiving his situation, set up a dismal yell and attacked the tigress with great fury, snapping at her nose, from which he drew

some blood. The tigress appeared to be amused with the puny rage of the puppy, and with as good-humored an expression of countenance, as so ferocious an animal could be supposed to assume, she affected to treat it all as play; and sometimes spreading herself at full length on her side, at others, crouching in the manner of the fabled sphynx, she would ward off with her paw, the incensed little animal, till he was finally exhausted. She then proceeded to caress him, endeavoring by many little arts to inspire him with confidence, in which she finally succeeded, and in a short time they laid down together and slept. From this time they were inseparable; the tigress appearing to feel for the puppy all the solicitude of a mother, and the dog, in return, treating her with the greatest affection; and a small aperture was left open in the cage, by which he had free ingress and egress. Experiments were subsequently made, by presenting a strange dog at the bars of the cage, when the tigress would manifest great eagerness to get at it; her adopted child was then thrown in, on which she would eagerly pounce; but immediately discovering the cheat, she would caress it with great tenderness.²

Upon the whole, we have seldom seen so many new and valuable facts in the same compass, as are comprised in the work before us. However unfortunate in a commercial point of view, Mr White's voyage may have been to himself and his employers, he has rendered it productive of a large accession to the intellectual wealth of his fellow citizens. Besides the general information, which it affords us, of the state of a country hitherto little known and greatly misrepresented, his book abounds in accurate geographical and nautical remarks respecting the seas that he traversed, and the ports he visited, which must be of no ordinary use to our seafaring brethren. It affords one of the most striking, though by no means the only instance, of the important information, which has been diffused through our community by the laborious and judicious exertions of our intelligent shipmasters, of whom it is but scanty justice to say, that in cultivation, whether of mind or manners, they are not surpassed by those of any other country.

Independent of all that it contains, this work possesses a negative merit of no very common kind in books of travels—its freedom not only from everything indelicate, but from all which is tedious or irrelevant. The style is spirited and easy. The author's fear of falling into a coarse and uncouth

mode of writing, an apprehension in our opinion quite groundless, has sometimes led him, especially in his first chapters, to construct his sentences in rather an ambitious manner. This fault, which is the only one worth noticing, will be viewed with indulgence by those, who remember the circumstances under which the work was composed, who place a just value on its numerous and solid merits, and who consider the high credit, which the industry and research of Mr White reflect both on himself and on his country.

ART. VIII.—*A Discourse concerning the Influence of America on the Mind, being the Annual Oration delivered before the American Philosophical Society, at the University in Philadelphia, October 18, 1823.* By C. J. INGERSOLL. Philadelphia. A. Small. 8vo. pp. 67.

SEVEN or eight years ago the plan of the American Philosophical Society was enlarged, by instituting a committee of history, moral science, and literature. Its objects before that period were confined chiefly to the natural sciences, to mathematics, astronomy, physical philosophy, medicine, natural history, chemistry, trade and commerce, mechanics, architecture, and husbandry. This new arrangement has given a much wider scope to the exertions of the Society, and enabled it to enlist a greater amount of active talent in promoting its liberal purposes. Our stock of historical knowledge has already been enriched by the curious and valuable papers, which the committee has published, concerning the manners, characteristics, and languages of the Indians. We are glad to learn, that, through the zeal and vigilance of this branch of the Society, several manuscripts of early date have been brought to light, some of which are now preparing to meet the public eye.

On a former occasion we presented to our readers a notice of the eloquent and interesting anniversary discourse, delivered by the corresponding secretary of the historical and literary committee.* The one now before us by Mr Ingersoll

* See a review of Mr Duponceau's Discourse in our Number for April, 1822, Art. XXIIG