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A New and Accurate
DESCRIPTION
Revised OF THE *History 191*
Coast of Guinea,
 Divided into the *Travels*
GOLD, the SLAVE,
 AND THE
IVORY COASTS.

CONTAINING
 A Geographical, Political and Natural History
 of the Kingdoms and Countries: With a Particular
 Account of the Rise, Progress and Present
 Condition of all the *European* Settlements
 upon that Coast; and the Just Measures for
 Improving the several Branches of the *Guinea* Trade.

Illustrated with several CUTTS.

*Written Originally in Dutch by William Bosman,
 Chief Factor for the Dutch at the Castle of St. George
 d'Elmina. And now faithfully done into English.*

To which is prefix'd, An Exact MAP of the whole
 Coast of *Guinea*, that was not in the Original.

London, Printed for James Knapton, at the Crown,
 and Dan. Midwinter, at the Rose and Crown, in
 St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1705.



The AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

TIS a common Custom among Authors to usher in their Writings with a Preface; which some look upon as a meer Ornament of no great Importance, and others as a necessary Appendage, both for setting forth the Subject, Method and Design of the Performance, and for giving the Reader an Opportunity to know the Qualifications of his Author: And 'tis the latter of these that I here join with.

The World is at present so over-stock'd with Books, that 'tis almost impossible to bring any new thing to Light, unless another new World were discovered; the Countries and People in all Parts of the World, being already described by various Authors. But 'twas an ancient Saying among the Romans, That Africa always produces something New; and to this Day the Saying is very just; for the Coast of Guinea, which is part of Africa, is for the most part unknown, not only to the Dutch, but to all Europeans, and no particular Description of it is yet come to Light; nor indeed any thing but a few Scraps scattered in Books written upon other Subjects, most of which are contrary to Truth, and afford but a sorry Sketch of Guinea.

Being a lover from my Youth of the Descriptions of Travels and Voyages, and Accounts of Foreign Countries, I quickly took a distaste at such Authors as paulm'd precarious Reports upon the World for certain Truths; and
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having never stirr'd out of their native Country, take all for Truth that's handed to 'em from Abroad, and recommend it as such to the World: In imitation of Aristotle, who being order'd by Alexander (as the Story goes) to write of the Nature of Animals, grownded and compleated his Performance upon the report of every Traveller he could meet with. In those Days, when the World was not so well known as 'tis now, that sort of Writing might go down: But now a-days a Man of Sense will scarce venture upon it, considering that his Advances will be canvass'd by a Variety of Travellers, and where he departs from what they find to be the real Truth, he'll be expos'd for a fabulous Author. In this Country of Holland, we have had particularly two such Writers in the last Century, who set forth many Books, and are now so well known by the bulkyness of their Writings, and the manner of their Performances, that 'tis needless to say more of them than this, that the World do's 'em Justice enough if they credit but one half of what they write upon Foreign Subjects, without derogating from what Credit is due to their Works that relate to our own Country; for which Subject they are very well qualified. I could not forbear opposing them upon some Heals, and publishing the Truth of what they have misrepresented: And in so doing I reckon I have done some Service. And if they are so touch'd with my Freedom as to take me to task (according to their Threats) I am well assur'd that at least they shall not fix any Falshood upon me. I had always a longing desire to go and see what I read of in Books; and during my fourteen Tears stay upon the Coast of Guinea, I had an opportunity of satisfying my desire, there being few or scarce any places upon the Coast, where I have not stay'd for some time, and can now speak of with experience.

And while I thus gratified my own Curiosity, I considered that Man was created not for himself alone, but likewise to serve his Neighbour; and that the finest things lose their greatest Splendor by being smother'd in the Breast

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Breast of one Man: Upon this Consideration, I reckon'd my self bound to impart to my Country-men, what I have beheld with Pleasure; and that the rather, that I was desired so to do by my very good Friend to whom the insuing Letters are address'd. Tho' my Friend's demand was contrary to my Inclination, yet I chearfully complied with it; only I had some wandring Reflections upon the Reasons alledged in my first Letter, particularly that of my unpolish'd way of expressing my self. But considering I do not publish this for a piece of Consummate Rhetorick, but only to satisfy those who are curious in this way, I hope to be excus'd. My sole design is to gratifie those who are moved with the same Curiosity that influenced me, or may hereafter have an opportunity of being concern'd on the Coast of Guinea; to gratifie 'em, I say, with a distinct account of the Disposition and Constitution of those Countries, and the various Opinions that prevail there. This is my aim, and I hope I shall in some measure compass it. In fine, if what I have here published, can be of the least use, I shall reckon my self richly rewarded for my Pains.

At first I had contriv'd this Work, so, as to divide it into five Books, treating of so many several Subjects. The first, of the Disposition of the Gold Coast; its Extent, Division, Fertility, and the Employment or Livelibood of the Inhabitants. The second, of the Inhabitants in general, their Genius, Customs, Manners, Religion, Government and Habitations; with what relates thereunto. The third, of the Trade of the Coast; how 'tis carried on by the Dutch Company and the other Europeans, and how the Negroes act their part in it. The fourth, of the Animals of the Country, whether Wild or Tame, as Quadrupedes, Reptiles, Insects and Fowl, besides the Fish, the Plants and the Fruits. The fifth, of the Kingdoms of Ladingcour, Coto, the two Popo's, and the charming Country of Fida: With a Conclusion describing a coasting Voyage perform'd by me in the Year 1698.

But

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But since, having the opportunity to send the whole Matter of the above-mentioned five Books, in several Letters to my very good Friend, I chose to alter the Division, and draw it all up in twenty Letters, including in each as much as the conveniency of time allow'd. To these twenty Letters, there are two more annex'd which were writ to me by two Persons in our Service, and relate to the Countries where they were employed, and where I had never been. This new Division, I hope, will not be unacceptable to the Reader, in regard that every Letter still presents him with something that's new. I must own it pleases me better than the first.

For some time after I began this Work, I was much troubled that there was not a Man on the Coast that could draw and design: But after I had gone a great way in it, there came one to the Coast that was vers'd in that Art; upon which I immediately set him to work, upon drawing all the Forts (Dutch, English and Danish) to the East of Elmina; and for his greater conveniency I made the Journey with him my self, being sent by our General upon Affairs relating to our Trade. The Animals, which upon my order were brought to us, he drew by the Life; and the Forts he drew with a just regard to Perspective. But Death, which spares no Man, visited my Draughts-Man, just when we were ready to take another Journey to the West of Elmina. In a few Days time he was well and dead; and so left me provided only with the half of what I design'd, there being no other Draughts-Man on the Coast.

I have purposely affected Brevity, otherwise I could have drove out to a bulky Volume: But considering that 'tis tedious and nauseous to dwell long upon one thing, I presume the Reader will be thereby gratified.

The

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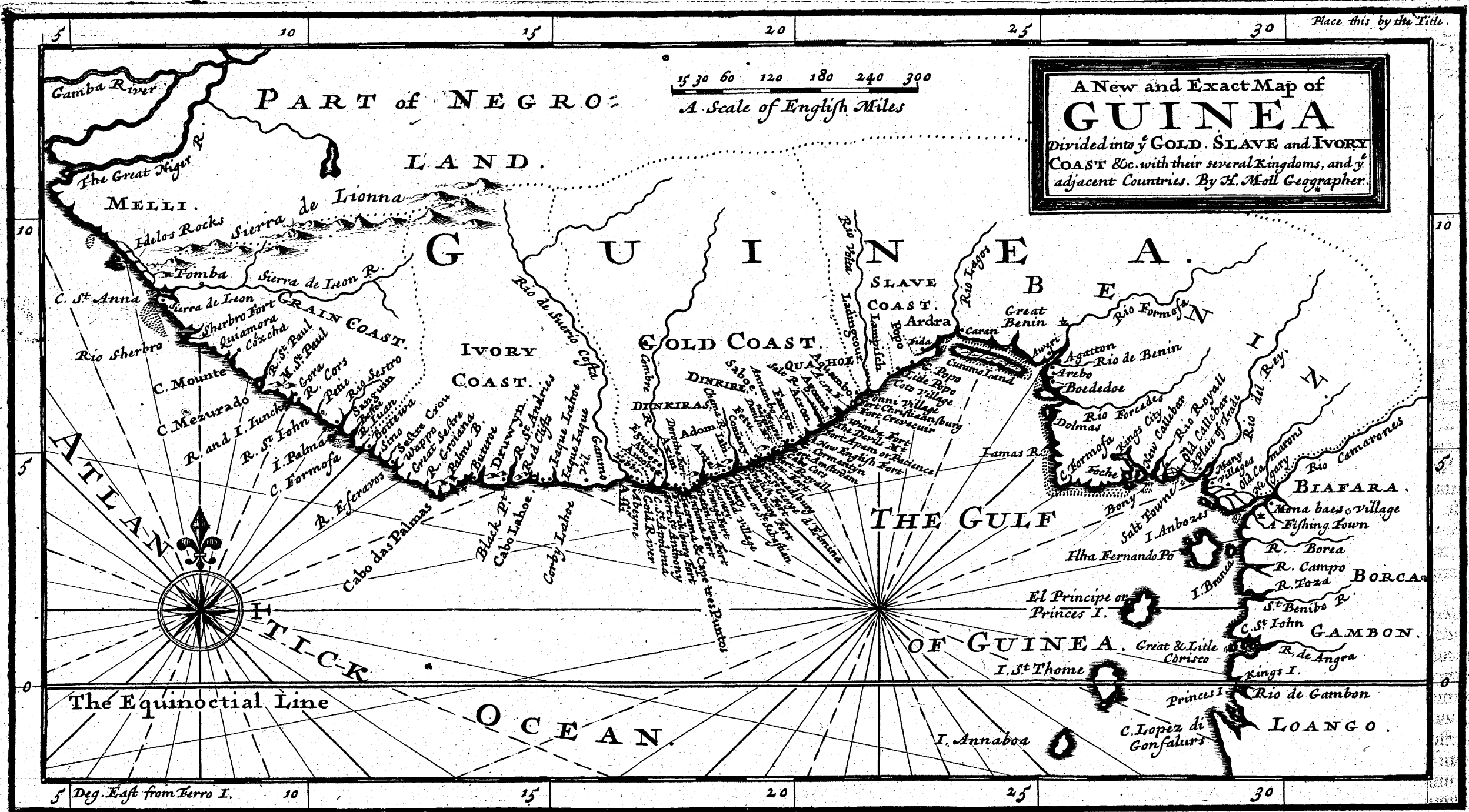
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- Let. 22. *Of the Tooth (or Ivory) and Grain Coast; with a particular Description of its several Countries; the Nature, Customs, &c. of the Inhabitants, and the Circumstances of the Trade upon that Coast.*

Place this by the Title

15 30 60 120 180 240 300
A Scale of English Miles

A New and Exact Map of
GUINEA
Divided into y^e GOLD. SLAVE and IVORY
COAST &c. with their several Kingdoms, and y^e
adjacent Countries. By H. Moll Geographer.



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DESCRIPTION
OF THE
Gold Coast
OF
GUINEA.

LETTER I.

Treating of the Gold Coast in General, and the Country of Axim in Particular, the Settling of the Dutch and Brandenburghers there, the imprudent Conduct of the latter upon this Coast; of Rio de Co-bre, and the unhappy Accident that happen'd to a Fort there.

S I R,

Your agreeable of September 1st 1700, was seasonably handed to me by Capt. N. N. by which I am perfectly satisfy'd that, through your Diligence and Conduct, my Affairs are brought to a happy issue: The least I

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can do, is to thank you, with Assurance, that I will slip no opportunity of making the best returns I am capable of in requital of such unusual Services. Indeed I am very unfit to do it in the way you oblige me to; you exact from me an accurate Description of this Country, and though by my long Residence here, I am, or at least ought to be in some measure acquainted with it, yet there are several Reasons which I might alledge in Excuse; among wick no small ones are, that my insufficiency and unpolish'd way of expressing my self, renders me uncapable to represent things in their just propriety and connexion; but what I have yet to offer requires my more serious Consideration, whether being actually in the Service of our West-India Company, it is consistent with my Duty to discover the state of their Affairs; being very dubious on this Head, I could have heartily wish'd you would have spar'd me this Heavy Task, fearing it was what might contribute to make you, as well as my self uneasy. But at last, reflecting on your Friendship, and the Obligation receiv'd, I soon stepp'd over these and all other Difficulties, and am resolv'd to endeavour your Satisfaction, upon promise that your usual good nature will excuse my incorrect Stile; and rest assured that howeve I succeed, a sincere intention to oblige you to the utmost, is never wanting.

Returning to yours, I find your Curiosity extends it self primarily to that Country where your Nephew was last placed by the General: in Answer to which, be pleas'd to take the following Account. This Country call'd Axim, is cultivated, and abounds with numerous Large and Beautiful Villages, all extraordi-

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ordinary Populous; some of which are situate on the Sea-shore, and others farther on the Main Land; the most Considerable amongst the former lie under the Brandenburgian and Dutch Forts, of which the latter is by much the best.

Our Fort here, is oblig'd for its present Name of St. Anthony to the Portuguese, who were its first Masters; but Anno. 1642. were driven from this and several other Places by our Countrymen: And indeed, formerly the Portuguese served for Setting Dogs to Spring the Game, which as soon as they had done, was seiz'd by others. But to return to our Fort, which was not great, but neatly and beautifully Built as well as strong and conveniently situated; 'tis provided with three good Batteries besides Breast-works, Out-Works, and high Walls on the Land side, as well as a sufficient quantity of Guns; and if it were well stored with Provisions, might hold out against a strong Army of the Natives: I am heartily sorry I cannot send you a Draught of it, because the main Artist, who was about it, died before it was half finished; for which Reason you are not to expect so much as a Sketch of any Fort West of Elmira, but the Drawings of those Eastward are at your Service.

You cannot be ignorant that your Nephew is made Principal Factor by Mr. N. N. who is entrusted by the Company as well as the General, with an absolute Power over that whole Country; the Inhabitants being reduced to that entire Subjection, that they dare not refuse, but are firmly bound to serve the Factor to the utmost with what the Country affords; nor dare they decide any Judiciary Case without his Cognizance, he being a sort of Chief Justice appointed to Punish even the chief of the Negroes, according to the Custom of the Country

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Country; But of their Laws I intend (if I live long enough) a more particular Account. But at present, before I proceed any farther, I shall present you with a small Sketch of the Guinea Coast, especially that call'd the Gold-Coast, and what is Possessed either by our own Country men, or other Europeans.

Guinea is a large Country, extended several Hundred Miles, abounding with innumerable Kingdoms, and several Commonwealths.

Several Authors have represented Guinea as a Mighty Kingdom, whose Prince, by his Victoriousness had subdued numerous Countries, and erected their whole extent of Land into one Mighty Kingdom, which he call'd Guinea: How great this mistake is, I hope to evince to you; since the very Name of Guinea, is not so much as known to the Natives here, nor the imaginary Guinea Monarchy yet to be found in the World.

The Gold-Coast being a part of Guinea, is extended about Sixty Miles, beginning with the Gold River three Miles West of Assine, or twelve above Axim, and ending with the Village Ponna seven or eight Miles East of Accra.

I am unwilling to detain you with a Description of the Tract of Land betwixt Assine and Rio, or the River Cobre, about a Mile above our Fort; since the Trade of that Place is at present so inconsiderable that it is very little frequented, tho' nine or ten Years ago its Commerce was in a Flourishing state; But since the Golden Country of Assine (from whence Gold was brought thither) was Conquer'd, and almost Devastated) the Dinckin-rase Traffick has run at a low Ebb, and the little Gold-Dust which is brought thither is either Sophisticated, or of very small Value: wherefore I shall steer my Course along

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along the Gold-Coast, and without considering the Rank of Precedence, take them fairly as they lie in my way, and describe them as well as the compass of a Letter will permit.

The Countries from the Ancovershan River to the Village Ponna, are Eleven in Number, viz. Axim, Anre, Adom, Jubi, Commani, Fetu, Saboe, Fantyn, Acron, Agonna, and Aquamboe; each containing one, two, or three Towns or Villages, lying upon the Sea-shore, as well under, as betwixt the Forts of the Europeans; their greatest and most Populous Towns being generally farther on Land. Seven of these are Kingdoms, Governed by their respective Kings; and the rest being Govern'd by some of the Principal Men amongst them, seem to approach nearer to Commonwealths: But I shall give you a more particular Account of them hereafter, and in order thereto at present begin with Axim; which, as the Notion of Power runs here, was formerly a Potent Monarchy, but the Arrival of the Brandenburgers divided the Inhabitants, one part of them putting themselves under the Protection of the New-comers, in expectation of an easier Government and looser Reins, in which they were not mistaken, as the Consequence evinced, but the other part, which were the most Honest and least Changeable, staid under our Government. But if we take a view of this Country before this time, we shall find it to be extended six Miles in length, computing from the mentioned Rio Cobre, (Ancober, or the Serpentine River, so called by the Portuguese, from its intricate winding and in-land Course of twenty Miles) to the Village Boeswa a Mile West of our Fort, near the Village of Bontry.

The Negro Inhabitants are generally very Rich, driving a great Trade with the Europeans for

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for Gold, which they chiefly Vend to the English and Zealand Interlopers, notwithstanding the severe Penalty they incur thereby; for if we catch them, their so bought Goods are not only Forfeited, but a heavy Fine is laid upon 'em: Not deterr'd I say by this, they all hope to escape; to effect which, they Bribe our Slaves, (who are set as Watches and Spies over them) to let them pass by Night; by which means we are hindred from having much above an Hundredth part of the Gold of this Land: And the plain Reason why the Natives run this Risque of Trading with the Interlopers, is, that their Goods are sometimes better than ours, and always to be had one third part cheaper; whereby they are encouraged against the danger, very well knowing, that a successful Correspondence will soon enrich them.

These Interlopers are several of them fitted out by private Merchants in Holland to drive this Trade; which is in Effect, to Rob the West-India Company of the advantage of their Placaat or Patent obtain'd from the States-General, which empowers them to Trade on this Coast, exclusive of all others; and of Punishing all Offenders against this Right with the loss of Life and Goods: all their Ships, in case they seize them, being free Prize: But tho' in my time we have taken several of them, the Law has not been rigorously put in Execution, but we generally content our selves with making Examples of some of the Ring-Leaders in terrorem; and when they are seiz'd, some one or other of the Company's Officers find it their Interest to let them slip through their Fingers, but not to accuse any body, since every one hath his Frailty, let us return to the Inhabitants of Axum, whom we find industriously employ'd either in Trade, Fishing, or

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or Agriculture, and that is chiefly exercis'd in the Culture of Rice, which grows here above all other places in an incredible abundance, and is Transported hence all the Gold-Coast over. The Inhabitants in lieu returning full Fraught with Millet, Fammes, Potatoes, and Palm Oyl; all which are very rare here, for the Soil is naturally moist, and tho' fit to produce Rice, and Fruit-Trees, doth not kindly yield other Fruits.

But having already hinted something relating to the Brandenburgers, 'twill not, I hope, be tedious, to particularize a little on their present State. Their Principal Fortress is not above three Miles East of our Fort St. Anthony, and is call'd Frederic's-burg; 'tis situate on the Hill Mamfro near the Village Pacquesoe, and is handsome and reasonably large, strengthned with four large Batteries furnished with forty six Pieces of Ordnance, but too light and small; The Gate of this Fort is the most Beautiful on all the Coast, but proportionably much too large for the Structure, so that the Garrison seems to have an equal right with the Burghers of Minde, to the Advice that they should keep their Gate close shut for fear the Fort should run away. On the East side it hath a beautiful Out-work, which deprives the Fortress of a great part of its Strength, wherefore it would be easily gain'd if attack'd on this side; besides which, the greatest fault in this Building is that the Breast-works are built no higher than a Man's knee, and the Men thereby are continually expos'd defenceless to the shot from without; which is no small Inconvenience in Wars with the Blacks, for no Person can come upon the Batteries but the Negroes easily reach him with a Musquet-shot: For the rest, the Building part is not to be objected against, and is

A Description of the

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provided with a great many fine Dwellings within. The Draught please to excuse for the Reason above.

The Commander in Chief of this Fort, and indeed of all the Possessions of the *Brandenburghers* on this Coast, consisting of two Forts and a Lodge, takes the Title of Director-General under his Electoral Highness of *Brandenburgh* and his *African* Company. For some time past their Commanders and Servants, except common Soldiers, have been most part *Dutch*, who in imitation of our Nation have always aimed at an absolute Dominion over the *Blacks*; but never could yet accomplish their End, being hitherto hindered by their Intestine Dissentions and Irregularities, or the villanous Nature of their *Negroes*, who having mostly fled from us on occasion of Crimes committed by them, have taken refuge under them.

In the time of my Residence here I can remember Seven of their Directors; the first, *John Nyman* an *Embdemer*, a Man of sound Judgment, good Sense and great Experience, who discharged his Office with the greatest Fidelity and good Conduct, by which means he quitted this Country with a great deal of Honour and left a very good Name behind him: He was Succeeded by *John* and *Jacob Ten-Hooft*, the Father and Son, who both acquired a large share of Reputation, and kept their Subordinates in due Decorum; especially the Son, who by good Nature and a civil Address gain'd the Affection of the *Blacks*, and had every body at his devotion: By which means he Established the *Brandenburghian* Affairs in a much better Condition than any before him; and as they never had a better Governor, so 'tis very much to be doubted, they'll repent the time when

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when they removed him, and appointed *Gysbrecht van Hoogveldt* in his Place; who before had been Factor in our Service at *Axim*, where he treated those under him so ill, that General *Joel Smits* and the Council were obliged to discharge and send him from the Coast, as incapable of their Service. However, being now Commander in Chief, to Reconcile himself to the offended *Negroes* his old Enemies, he granted them several Franchises and Priviledges, which served not only to lessen the Power of the *Brandenburghers*, and lay the first Foundation of their Ruin, but after a short Government the *Europeans* and *Blacks* joyntly rose against him; and after Trying him, Discharged him once more the Government and Coast; Choosing in his Place one *John van Laar* an Anabaptist, who was found to have a much better Talent at drinking of *Brandy* than at Business; and took so little Care of the Publick, that all went to Ruin; and he himself was timely Removed by Death, to make way for *John Visser* his Successor, a Person, who wanting even Common Sense, was therefore incapable of that Trust. Shortly after his Elevation his Factor at *Acoda* was killed by the *Negroes*, which he having neither sufficient Conduct nor Power to Revenge, they continued their unbridled Outrages, at the Expence of the Lives of several of his *Europeans*; and lastly, seizing his Person they carry'd him into the Inland Country, and after miserably breaking almost all his Limbs, and fastening abundance of stones about his Body, drowned him in the Sea. This Barbarous Murder was variously talked of here: but all agree that the *Europeans* under his Command consented to, and abetted it; and some assert it was done by their Order; and *Adrian Grobbe* (Chosen by the *Negroes*) his Successor, is generally Charged with

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with the greatest share in this Crime; if he is Innocent I hope he will clear himself, but if guilty, may Heaven Avenge it on him and his Accomplices: for it hath very perniciously weakened the Power of all the Europeans on this Coast, and filled them with apprehensions not altogether groundless, that if this Bloody Fact escapes unpunished, no Body is here secure of Life. It hath already so Enslaved the Brandenburgers, that I very much doubt whether ever they will regain the Mastery, for the Negroes having once got the upper-hand will sufficiently Lord it over them.

I could not help imparting to you this event, equally Strange and Detestable; to which I was indeed the rather induced, because as you are perfectly acquainted with all the European Trade of the Embden Company; so you may take an opportunity of informing them how their Affairs have been managed here for some Years past. But taking leave of this Fort, let us take a step two Miles and a half Eastwards below Cape Trespuntos, where we find another Brandenburgian Fort at Acoda called Dorothea; which by order of our Superiors was amplified and delivered to them about eleven Years past; since which they have very considerably strengthened and improved it. It is a House covered with a flat Roof, on which are two small Batteries and half Curtains, upon which they have Planted several light Pieces of Cannon; it is indeed furnished with a sufficient number of Rooms and Conveniencies, tho' but slightly built and somewhat crowded.

Between Maufro and Acoda, the Brandenburgers in 1674. Built another Fort-House at the Village Tacrama in the middle of Cape Trespuntos. Their General's

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General's design was to build a Fort here to preserve and defend the adjacent Watering-place in their Power. Upon the whole, the keeping of this Lodge and the two former Forts hath been so very Expensive to them, that I am of Opinion they will not hastily augment their Charge by undertaking any new Building.

The Brandenburg Affairs having insensibly swelled this Letter to a larger bulk than I intended, and oblig'd me to defer my designed Account of the Vegetables of the Country of Axim to another Opportunity; and that I may not cloy you at once; I shall conclude only with a Description of the abovementioned Snake-River, or River of Ancober, which last Name it takes from the Country it runs through.

This River is too pleasant to be slightly passed over, and as I have already told you, is a Mile above our Fort St. Anthony; its Mouth is very wide, with so shallow Water, that I question whether 'tis passable with a Boat, but a little farther it grows deeper and narrower; after which, in several Miles no observable alteration appears. How far its inland Course extends I cannot inform you, tho' I have travelled above three small days Voyage upon it, and found it as pleasant as any part of the Guinea Coast, not excepting Fida it self: each of its Banks being adorned with fine lofty Trees, which afford the most agreeable shade in the World, defending the Traveller from the scorching Beams of the Sun. 'Tis also not unpleasant to observe the beautiful variegated Birds, and the sportive Apes, diverting themselves on the verdant Boughs all the way. To render it yet more Charming, having sailed about a Mile up, you are entertained with the view of a fine populous Village, extending about a quarter of a Mile on its Western Shore:

Of

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Of such Villages hereabouts are a great number, which together make up three several Countries, of which the First situate next the Sea is called *Ancober*; (whether the River be obliged to the Country or the Country to the River for its Name I shall not determine;) the Second next occurring Land is *Abocroe*, and the Last *Eguira*. The first I observed was a Monarchy, and the other two Common-wealths. Several Years past we had a Fort in the Country of *Eguira*, and drove a very considerable Trade there; for besides the Afflux of Gold thither from all foreign Parts, the Country it self affords some Gold Mines; and I remember when I had the Government of *Axim*, a very Rich one was discovered; but we lost our Footing there in a very Tragical manner: For the Commander in Chief of the *Negroes*, being closely Besieged by our Men, (as Fame Reports) shot Gold instead of Bullets, hinting by Signs that he was ready to Treat, and afterwards Trade with the Besiegers, but in the midst of their Negotiation he blew up himself and all his Enemies at once, as Unfortunately as Bravely, putting an end to our Siege and his Life, and like *Samson* revenging his Death upon his Enemies. To compass his Design, he had encouraged a Slave by promising him new Cloaths, to stand ready with a lighted Match, with which he was to touch the Powder when he saw him stamp with his Foot, which the silly Wretch but too punctually performed undiscovered by any any but one of our Companies Slaves, who observing it, withdrew as silently as timely, being only left alive to bring us the News; and since we could get no better Account, we were obliged to believe this, it being but too certain that our Fort to the cost of our Director and some of our Enemies was Blown up.

LET. II. Gold Coast of Guinea.

up. This being enough for the first time, be pleased to suspend your Curiosity till the next opportunity, when you shall not fail of a farther Account from, Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

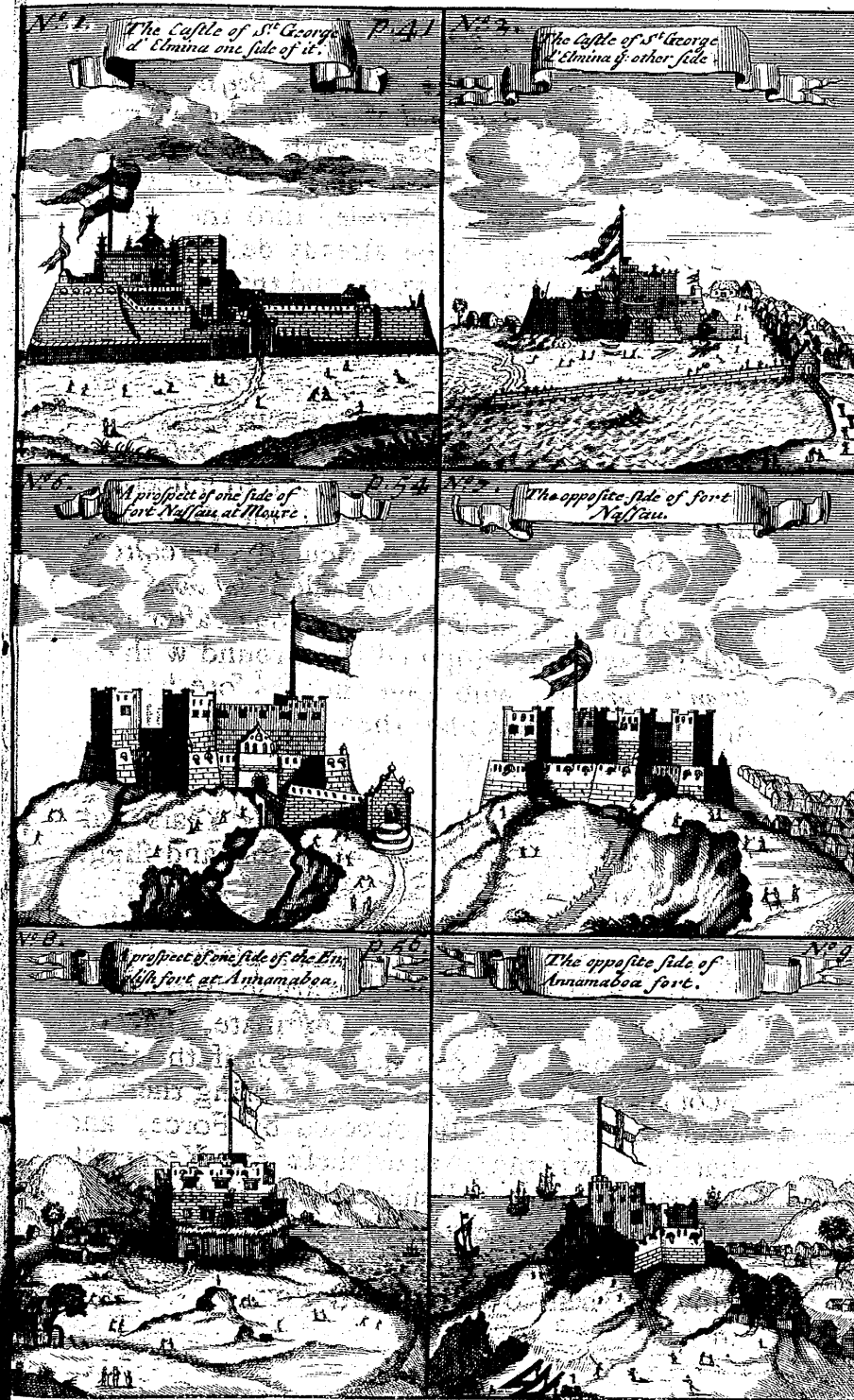
Describing the Antese Country about Boutry; the English and Dutch Forts there, and the English their fraudulent Vending false Gold; the Beauty of the Antese Country and the River Boutry, the Oysters which are there produced; the Dutch and English Forts at Zaconde and the Country adjacent; Of the Village Chama and the Dutch Fort there; together with the Jabise and Adomse-Land and the River Chama; With a Representation of the Cruelty of the Jabise General.

SIR, I Hope that mine of the 15th will reach you in due time; but the Ship which carries it being bound for *Fida* to take in Slaves, and after that to touch at *Curacao* before it stands its Course homewards, I cannot expect it should reach *Holland* in less than a Year; and the Ship that brings this, steering directly to *Europa* will arrive much sooner; Wherefore, to take off the uneasiness of the delay, I here send you a transcript of my former, wishing the Contents may meet your favourable reception. Having described *Axim* in my first, I shall begin this with an Account of *Ante*, its next adjoining Neighbour, to which I shall add as much as Time and Convenience will permit of The Country of *Ante*, or as the Natives call it, *Hante*.

A Description of the LET. II.

Hante, begins with the Village *Boeswa*, two Miles below, or *Eastward* of *Acoda*; tho we may very well take in, and begin with *Acoda* it self, it being at present Subject thereto. For several Years this Country was divided into the Upper and Lower *Ante*; *Axim* already described being accounted the former, and that we are about to describe esteemed the latter. It was formerly very Potent and Populous, being Inhabited by a Martial and Prædatory People, who very much annoy'd us with frequent Onsets; but with continual Wars with those of *Adom* and their other Neighbours, they are so enfeebled, that no Footsteps of their pristine Glory are left. But of them more particularly hereafter.

At *Dikjeschofft*, properly called *Infuma*; the *English* built a small Fort, *Anno*. 1691. after they had several times disputed the Ground with the *Brandenburghers*, who some time before had set up their Elector's Flag there; tho at last, not finding it turn to any great Account they quietly yielded it to the *English*, who advanced so leisurely that it was but finished in Six Years: after all which it was so inconsiderable and slight, that it hardly deserv'd the Name of a Fort. I have often heard the *English* themselves complain of it; for besides that it is not a place of good Trade, the *Negroes* thereabouts are so Intractable, Fraudulent, Villanous and Obstinate, that the *English* cannot deal with them: For if they have recourse to Violence in order to bring them to Reason, they are also opposed by Force, and that so warmly, that these five Years past they adventured to Besiege them in their Forts and were very near taking it; at last, they oblig'd the *English* to their Terms, without allowing them to exercise any Power over them, and hence proceeded an Alliance so strict betwixt



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LET. II. Gold Coast of Guinea.

twixt them, that they jointly agreed to Cheat all the Ships that came to Trade there, by putting sophisticated Gold upon 'em, a Fraud which they have frequently practised; as they did about three Months past upon two small English Ships (one of which was laden to the value of 1700 l. Sterling) for all which, the Master received only false Gold, so that he lost his whole Voyage at once; nor did his Companion suffer much less; and what most surpriz'd them was, that they received it as well from the Whites as the Negroes. They apply'd themselves to the English Chief Governor on the Coast, desiring they might have their Goods return'd, or good Gold in exchange for the false: But to complain to him, was to go to the Devil to be Confess'd. For he participating of the Fraud, would by no means help them. This Cheat is become so common, that it daily happens; but that the Whites have always a hand in it I dare not affirm; however I am very sure, that this Place deserves the Name of the false Mint of Guinea; of which every Trader who comes to the Coast ought to be warned; for the making of false Gold is here so common, that it is publickly Sold, and become a perfect Trade; the price Currant being in my Time about a Crown in good Gold for two Pounds Sterling of false.

About a Mile and half from this knavish Place, at the Village *Boutry*, commonly called *Boutree*, is another small ill-shap'd Fort, situate on a very high Hill, built in an oblong Form, and divided into two parts; strengthened, (if I may so say) with two inoffensive Batteries, upon which are Planted eight small Guns. This is very improperly called *Batenstein*, for it much better deserves the Name of *Schadenstein*, (*Bate* signifying Profit, and *Schade* Loss), in regard we have for several Years lost much more than we got by it.

At

At the Foot of this Hill is the Village *Boutry*, which is indifferent large and Populous, Inhabited by a People who Trade very fair with us, as not participating of the villanous Nature of those of *Infuma*.

Exactly four Miles lower we meet with the Village *Zaconde*, where we have a small Fort called *Orange*. A Musquet shot from hence is the Remains of an *Englsh* Fort about as large as ours, of which more hereafter. Upon walking through the Country of *Ante*, reckoning from *Acoda* to a mile and half below *Zaconde* where it ends; I count it about eight or nine Miles long. Its pleasant situation is become so Famous by Mr. *Focquembourg's* Description, which adventures to compare it with the Country of *Cleve*, that leaving the truth of his Comparison to the decision of those that have seen both; I shall only in pursuance of my Design inform you, that this Country, as well as all the Gold-Coast, abounds in Hills, all enriched with extraordinary high and beautiful Trees; its Valleys betwixt the Hills are wide and extensive, proper for the Planting of all sort of Fruits, and if they were as well Cultivated as Watered, would supply half the Coast with Eatables. The Earth produceth, in great abundance, very good Rice, the Richest sort of *Miller* the grain of which is red, *Jams*, *Potatoes*, and other Fruits, all good in their kind; nor is the Soil in the least deficient in Fruit-Trees. The Sugar-Canes grow here more and larger than any where else; so that I am not without hopes that a Successful Plantation may in time be here set on Foot. For Wine and Oil, the Palm affords what excels in quantity as well as quality. In short, it is a Land which yields its Manurers as plentiful a Crop as they can wish, being besides very well furnished with

with all sorts of Tame, as well as Wild Beasts; but the last fatal War betwixt the *Anteans* and *Adomians* hath reduced it to a miserable condition and stript it of most of its Inhabitants: Besides which, the miserable few left behind are so dispirited, that they shelter themselves under our Fort near *Boutry*, leaving the greatest part of the Land Wild and Uncultivated. 'Tis indeed deplorable to see it at present, and reflect on its former flourishing Condition in the Years 1690, and 1691. Before the War, I being then an Assistant, had an Opportunity of walking to *Boutry* and through this Country, when it Regal'd the Eyes with the pleasant Prospect of numerous Villages well Peopled, a plentiful Harvest and abundance of Cattel; infomuch that a Soldier who could very hardly live on his Subsistence Money in other places could fare Deliciously here on the half: and if there be any difference in Places, with respect to their healthfulness, I should prefer *Boutry* before all the rest: For during my stay there, 'twas observable that fewer died there in proportion to the number of People and Time than any where: and I dare affirm, that if the same Care was taken upon the whole Coast as there, *Guinea* would soon lose its dreadful mortal Name.

I had almost passed over the most Charming Part of the whole *Antese*-Land, betwixt *Acoda* and *Boutry*, being Watered by a fresh River which runs by our Fort to the inner part of the Land, Planted with high Trees on both sides; which, wide as it is, is overshadowed by the Leaves. I have by frequent Experience found this River Navigable three Miles from the Sea-shore; but tho' it reacheth farther, the violent Water-Falls, which pour down from the Rocks into the River, render it unpassable beyond. It affords great plenty of

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of Fish, notwithstanding the incredible number of Crocodile, it is Pester'd with; which must necessarily devour vast quantities.

In my Description of Rio Cobre I mentioned the great multitude of Apes there; But this Country is so full of these unlucky Animals, whose only Talent is Milchief, that one would be apt to think that this were properly their Kingdom, or grand Rendezvous.

If my Memory doth not deceive me, you are a very great lover of River-Oysters; be pleas'd therefore to make a Trip hither, and I will engage you shall be satisfied with them at the expence only of the trouble of gathering them, and in less than an hour's time I will undertake to shew you 100000 growing on the Trees. Pray don't be surpriz'd; you have before now heard of *Saland-Geeze*, and *Chinese Fish* which change into Fowl; perhaps you will tell me you believe neither, and perhaps I am of your mind, yet all this shall not prevent my Account how Oysters grow here. On each side of the River grows a sort of Trees, great and small intermix'd, whose Branches shoot directly into the Water, (those which remain above its Surface being withered and dry,) while the former become immediately leav'd with small Oysters, at first about the bigness of Shell-Snails, but in a very short time grown to their mature size.

I remember to have mention'd the *English* and *Dutch* Forts at *Zaconde*: They were indeed about six Years past in being, but the Trade at so low an Ebb, and the Officers of each Fort so jealous of the other, that they both liv'd in miserable Poverty, at the Expence of both the *English* and *Dutch* Companies. Not long after, the *English* Fort was Burnt and Destroy'd by the *Antean-Negroes*; its chief Commander and some of the *English* being kill'd, and the rest being Plunder'd of all their

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their own and the Company's Goods; and at present the Out-walls only are left standing; by which, tho' very little to our Advantage, we are left the Masters of this Place. Indeed last Year we Traded considerably here for a large quantity of Gold, which the *English* understanding, made several Attempts to re-build their Fort, but were always obstructed by the *Antean-Negroes*.

Before the War betwixt *Adom* and *Ante*; this *Zaconde* was one of the finest and Richest Villages, as well in Money as People, upon the whole Coast: But the *Adomese* Conquerors entirely Burnt and Destroy'd it. The few slight Dwellings which are here at present were built since, and others are daily Building, so that ere-long, it may grow to be an indifferent Village; but to re-instate it in its Flourishing Condition requires several Years.

I have formerly mention'd the pleasantness of the *Antese* Country, but then came no farther than a little below *Boutry*. But the Land for two or three Miles round about these Forts is not less agreeable than the former; besides that, here and behind *Tocorary*, a Mile West of *Zaconde*, the Valleys are so much finer, that 'tis impossible for imagination to conceive any thing more charming. I have here seen a large Plain so plentifully and properly adorned with lofty Trees and Woods, as if Dame Nature had design'd to shew her Master-piece here; and between the Rows of Trees the Paths were all cover'd with white Sand, in which were observable the Foot steps of Thousands of *Harts*, *Elephants*, *Tygers*, *Wild-Cats* and other sorts of Beasts. In short, this Place is so very plentiful that it is impossible to walk here without Raptures.

The

The Village or Town of *Tocorary*, or rather the Fort which was there, hath from time to time had several *European* Masters: but 'tis now so Ruin'd, that no visible remnants of it are left. The *English*, *Dutch*, *Brandenburghers*, *Swedens* and *Danes* have all had their Turns in Possession of it. In 1665, The *English* were drove from thence by *De Ruyter*, they having before got Possession by Clandestine means: But of this you may be further informed in *Brand's* Life of *De Ruyter*. Since that time it hath yet once changed Masters, but fell at last into our Hands; and since I came hither, our Traffick was transacted in a *Negroes* House; but that not meeting with its desired Success, we absolutely quitted the Whole: and the Town was so destroy'd and burnt in the War by the *Adomese*, that it is at present Inhabited by a few inconsiderable People only. But taking Leave of the *Antese* Country for the present, let us turn towards the Town *Chama*, in the Way to which, is *Aboary* a Village, near which we had a Lodge for several Years; but it being found to conduce more to the Advantage of those who were placed there than the Company's, 'twas quitted as an unnecessary Charge. The Town *Chama* is moderately Large and well Peopled, but its Inhabitants so miserably poor, that I do not believe they have any like them on the Gold-Coast. Our Fort here is about the size of that of *Boutry*; very small, but a little longer: it hath four small Batteries, and just as many Guns as the fore-named Place, and was called (as it is at present) *St. Sebastian's* by the *Portuguese*, from whom we took it. In our Wars with *England* it was in a manner level'd with the Ground, being only encompassed with Pallisadoes, which the *English* percei-

perceiving, thought it would be no difficult matter to drive us from thence; and accordingly, in Conjunction with the *Fabishians* attack'd us: but found so vigorous and unexpected Resistance, that they were oblig'd to lose their Labour, and return to the place from whence they came, ever since which we have enjoyed it without the least Interruption.

A little behind our Fort the *Fabish* Land begins, and extends it self a few Miles towards the inland part of the Country: But I shall only describe that part situate on the Coast. It is at present but a small District, and not very Potent; tho' the first Kingdom which occurs in our descent from the higher Country. Its King is so great a Prince, that I should consider very seriously before I should give him Credit for the value of 10*l.* *Sterling* in Goods, for fear he should not be able to pay me; 'Tis indeed true, that he and his Subjects, if I may so call them, make so considerable an Advantage of the Planting and Selling of *Millet* Yearly, that they would soon become Rich if their too Potent Neighbours did not continually fleece and keep them under, which they are not able to prevent.

The *Chama* River, or *Rio de St. Juan*, called by the *Negroes* *Bossum Pra*, which they Adore as a God, (as the Word *Bossum* signifies,) takes its Course from our Fort, passing by the *Fabishian* and *Adomese* Country, as well as that of *Juffer*, and thence (if we may Credit the *Negroes*) extending it self about 100 Miles in Land. It is a small matter less than the River of *Ancobber*, but wide enough, and hath the advantage of being so laid, that loaden Boats may conveniently come into it from the Sea, if the Pilot be but so careful as to avoid a Rock

near its Mouth, which the Sailors call the *Sugar*; for else they are liable to be Split, as it hath several times hapened during my Residence there, and some have been lost, especially if the Sea happend to turn or was Rough. This River is very advantagious to us: for besides the fresh Water with which our Ships Store themselves, it furnishes the Castle with Fuel for the Kitchens and Ovens, as also with Wood necessary for small Shipping; so that indeed the River is really more useful to us than the Fort it self; and without the former I do not believe we should long keep the latter. For besides that the Commerce here is not considerable, and the keeping the Forts very Expensive: We are continually plag'd with a villainous sort of *Negroes*, amongst which those of *Adom* are none of the best; whose Country I have before told you stretcheth it self along by the River, and contains several Islands in the midst of the said River, adorned with fine Towns and Villages: And indeed, what hath surprized me most in this Country, is the wonderful situation of the *Adomese* Territories; for we find they are extended along both the Rivers *Chama* and *Ancober*, which are reckoned above 16 Miles distant from each other on the Strand; so that this Land must be very large, and seems to go up the River *Chama* in a straight Line, and then turns with a narrow Slip of Land to *Reo-Cobre*. But to proceed; It is Governed by five or six of the Principal Men, there being here no King. One of these is so Potent, that he can, as tis said, carry the King of *Jabi* upon his Horns. This Republick, or Common-wealth, or rather Common Plague to Man-kind, (as being an Assembly of Thieves and Villains,) if it could be Unanimous, would be

be able to raise a Powerful Army to the Terror of their Neighbours. Anno 1690. they joyntly began a War against the *Anrese*, which continued three or four Years, till they had almost Ruined the Country and People; who yet will not Submit to them, but continue to bid them Defiance.

They also were at War with the three Nations on the River of *Ancober* a few Years past; whom they oblig'd to buy a Peace at the price of a large Sum of Gold.

In these Expeditions they had a *Negro* for their General, who was of a Nature so Violent for War that he could not live in Peace; but as greedy of Wars as he was, no Engagement scarce happend with those of *Anre* and the River, in which he was not obliged to his Peels for his Safety; so that if his Companions had been no better Soldiers than himself, he had soon been stopp'd in his Carrier: and yet the other Governors dare not displease him, he being the Richest of them all in Money and Men.

This *Anqua*, for so he is call'd, is more Detestably Bloody and Barbarous than any *Negro* I have met with on the whole Coast; nor is his Name ever mentioned without Horror.

This Barbarous Monster having in an Engagement taken five of his principal *Anrese* Enemies, Anno 1691. he wounded them all over; after which, with a more than Brutal Fury, he Satiated tho' not Tired himself, by sucking their Blood at their gaping Wounds; but bearing a more than ordinary Grudge against one of them, and not contented with the mentioned Savage Cruelty, he caused him to be laid bound at his Feet, and his Body to be pierc'd with hot Irons, gathering the Blood that issued from him in a Vessel, one half of which he Drank, and

and Offer'd up the rest unto his God. In this Manner doth this Merciless Bloody Wretch treat his Conquer'd Enemies; and no Wonder, for if Opportunity be wanting to exercise his Cruelty on them, his own Subjects always supply their Place; for his insatiable thirst after Blood must one way or other be satisfied. In the Year 1692. When he took the Field the second time against the *Antese*, I went to give him a Visit in his Camp, near *Chama*; he receiv'd me very Civilly, and Treated me very well, according to the Custom of the Country: But whilst he and I were diverting our selves together, a fresh Opportunity offer'd it self for the Exercise of his Brutish Cruelty: which was only a Negroe observing that one of his Wives had a new Fashion'd Coral on, and taking a part of it in his Hand, to look on, without taking it off her Neck; which she not thinking any hurt, freely permitted him to do. I should here inform you by the way, that these Negroes allow their Wives all honest liberty of Conversation, even with their Slaves. But *Anqua* so relented this innocent Freedom, that as soon as I was out of the Camp, he caus'd both Wife and Slave to be put to Death, drinking their Blood, as he useth to do those of his Enemies. For such another trivial Game, a little before, he had caus'd the Hands of one of his Wives to be cut off; after which, in Derision, he us'd to command her to look his Head for Vermin, which being impossible with her Stumps, afforded him no small Diversion. I might indeed have spared this Account of his fell Brutality till I come to treat of the Nature of the Negroes; But his Inhumane Barbarity being unparallell'd among all the *Guineans*, and I being upon the Description of his Country, I thought this place as proper; and that the rather, be-

because I am not at present furnish'd with other Matter. But to return to our Description. The Natives here are very Powerful, and Rich; as being situate in the Pass which the Island-Dealers must come thro' in order to Traffick; by which means they have a very good Opportunity of Enriching themselves by Trade. Besides, they have several Gold Mines in their Country; One whereof was discovered about three Years past. The Riches of these Countries consisting in Gold, and the great Numbers of People, have so puff'd them up, that those who Deal with them ought to be endowed with a more than ordinary Discretion.

The Soils very good and fruitful in Corn and other productions of the Earth; which it affords in such Plenty, that besides what serves their own Necessities, they always expose large quantities to Sale. Here are competent Numbers of Cattle both Tame and Wild, and the River abundantly stores them with Fish, so that nothing is indeed here wanting that is necessary to humane subsistence.

This, Sir, is all I can inform you of relating to the Countries of *Fabi* and *Adom*, with which I shall conclude this Letter, and always remain with Respect, Yours, &c.

L E T T E R.

LETTER. III.

Containing a Description of the Country of Commany: of Our, and the English Fort there. A Relation of the War betwixt our Company and the Kingdom of Commany, and its Original Cause. A Description of the Castle of Elmina; and, to conclude this Letter, of the Town of that Name.

S I R,

OUR Description of the Gold-Coast leads us at present to the Kingdom of Commany, which Borders upon Adom and Jabi; but as I am just beginning according to my former Method, I reasonably recollect a Letter of yours, wherein you seem surprized at the War betwixt our Company and those of Commany. I find you are misinformed; you desire I should set you right. This part of your Letter I formerly purposely omitted; Answering, that at that time it was not convenient to reveal some secret Intrigues; and I am still so far of the same Mind, that I had much rather you would Excuse me, than oblige me to Disgust some Men whose good Name and Reputation I shall always handle very tenderly. But since you have my Word that I will conceal nothing from you, I shall represent the whole Affair, as it appears to me and others here upon the Spot, who I think ought to be well acquainted with it; if we have a wrong Notion of it, a proper time will discover it.

Before I begin my intended Relation I shall inform you, that the Country of Commany extends

tends its self five Miles long by the Sea-side, reckoning from the River of Chama to the Town Mina; and it is about as broad as long. In the middle of it, on the Strand, at little Commany, or Ekke-Tokki as the Negroes call it, we have an indifferent large Fort, Built by Mr. Swerts in the Year 1688, called Vreden-Burgh; and a Musquet-shot or two from thence the English have a very large Fort, of which more hereafter. Our Fort is a Square Building, Strengthened with good Batteries, on which 32 Guns may be conveniently placed, there being so many Ports in the Breast-Work for them. It is large enough for 60 Men to live in; tho' at present there are not near so many, and but 20 Guns; notwithstanding all which it is sufficient, not only to defend it self against, but to repulse a great Number of Negroes; as was found by experience, Anno 1695, when I Commanded there. Our Enemies attack'd us by Night; I had but a very sorry Garrison, not full 20 Men, half of which were not capable of Service; and yet I forc'd them to retire with Loss, after a Fight of five Hours. 'Twas Wonderful, and no small Sign of Divine Protection, that we lost but two Men in this Action; for we had no Doors to most of our Gun-holes, and the Negroes pour'd Small-shot on us as thick as Hail; insomuch that those few Doors which were left to some Gun-holes were become like a Target which had been shot at for a Mark, and the very Staff which our Flag was fastend on, tho' it took up so little room, did not escape shot-free. You may imagine what Cafe we were in when one of them began to hack our very doors with an Ax: but this Undertaker being kill'd, the rest sheer'd off. The General to whom I had represented my weak Condition, advised two Ships to Anchor

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chor before our Fort, in order to supply me with Men and Ammunition; Peter Hinken, the Captain of one of these Vessels, endeavouring to execute the General's Order (the day before I was attack'd) sent his Boat full of Men with Orders to come to me; but they were no sooner on Land than the Negroes fell upon them so furiously, even under our Cannon, that they kill'd several of them, which though I saw I could not prevent; for attempting to Fire upon the Enemy with our Cannon, I found them all Nailed: Of which Piece of Treacherous Villany, according to all appearance, my own Gunner was the Actor, whom I therefore sent in Chains to the General (at our chief Place of Residence), who Swore that he would Punish him Exemplarily; but instead of that, he soon after not only set him at Liberty, but preferred him to a Gunner's Place of greater Importance.

For this Reason I was forc'd to be an Idle Spectator of the miserable Slaughter of our Men, not being able to lend them the least Assistance; and if the Negroes had at that Instant Storm'd us, we were in no posture of Resistance. But they going to Eat, gave me time to prepare for the Entertainment I gave them, as I have before told you. Here I cannot help relating a Comical Accident which happen'd. Going to visit the Posts of our Fort, to see whether every Body was at their Duty, one of the Soldiers quitting his Post told me, that the Negroes well-knowing he had but one Hat in the World, had Maliciously shot away the Crown, which he would Revenge if I would give him a few Grenadoes. I had no sooner order'd him two, than he called out to the Negroes from the Breast-Work in their own Language, telling 'em he

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he would present them with something to eat; and kindling his Grenadoes, immediately threw them down amongst them; they observing them to burn, crowded about them, and were at first very agreeably diverted; but when they burst they so gall'd them, that they had no great Stomach to such another Meal.

But now to come to the *Commanian-War*, upon which since our whole welfare seems to depend, you must not think me tedious if I am very particular; it being impossible for you to comprehend or form any Notion of it without you are throughly informed of its Original Source. Wherefore I shall look back as far as the Government of your very good Friend (desiring you not to be displeas'd, if I mention some disagreeable Particulars: for I assure you that I will not transgress the least Tittle beyond the Naked Truth.) He found this Place in a Flourishing Condition and in Peace, though not firmly Established therein. But long-sighted Observers could easily discern the Coals of Discord kindling amongst the *Commanians*, which was ready to burst out into an open War upon the least Occasion, as indeed they had done in Mr. ~~_____~~'s time, if not prevented by his Servant, who was Brother to the King of *Commany*. But Mr. ~~_____~~ being gone, and the mentioned Servant not only excluded out of all Negotiations, but ill treated besides; the *Commanians* only wanted a Pretext of Breaking with us to put their Designs in Execution. The Year 1694 afforded them their wish'd Opportunity; For some Miners being sent to us from *Europe*, they were Order'd to make an Essay at a Hill situate in *Commany*, about half a Mile above our Fort *Vreden-Burgh*, that Mountain seem-

seeming to be well placed for their Purpose, and withal promising to reward their Pains. This Hill was at that Time Dedicated to one of their Gods, tho' there was scarce ever any Talk of any such thing before; but this was really only a Pretence that they made use of to Declare War against us. The Miners began their Work, but in few days, apprehending nothing, they were Assaulted, miserably Abused, Robbed of all they had, and those who were not nimble enough, kept Prisoners for some time. We immediately complained of this ill usage to the King of *Commany*, who was Villainous enough to remove the Blame from his own Door, and fix it upon one *John Kabes* a Negroe, who lived near our Fort, and with whom we always Traded very considerably; urging that he had done it in Revenge for the ill Treatment he had met with from our former Governour or Chief Commander. That this was only a feigned Excuse was very evident; For the mentioned Negroe was so arrant a Coward, that he durst not have ventur'd on an Attempt so Dangerous without the King's express Command. But the King was resolv'd to Break with us, and because he could find no better Excuse made use of this.

Mr. — without any farther enquiry resolv'd to go to *Commany* in Person, in order to take Satisfaction of *John Kabes* for the Injury; to which purpose he took some of the Forces of *Elmina* along with him; and being come to *Commany*, he immediaty detach'd a Party to *John Kabes's* Village, who came out to meet them, leading a Sheep to present to Mr. — and clear himself of what he was accused; but seeing the *Elmina* Forces fall upon his Goods without giving him any Warning, and begin to Plunder,

Plunder, as great a Coward as he was he put himself into a Posture of Defence, and our People finding he was resolv'd to sell his Effects as dear as he could, the Skirmish began, and some on both sides were very well beaten.

After this all our Affairs run at random! It shew'd the King of *Commany* our private, and *John Kabes* our professed Enemy; who to revenge the Injury done him, invited the *English* into *Commany*, giving them a Dwelling-place about a Mile from our Fort in one of his Salt-Villages; resolving to settle them with the first Opportunity in the old ruin'd Fort that they formerly Possessed, which soon after succeeded according to his Wish. For the *English* are so well Fortify'd there, that 'twill be impossible to remove them unless in time of War: for their Fort is as large, and hath four Batteries as well as ours; besides which, it hath also a Turret fit to be planted with Guns, from which they may extremely incommode us, considering that they have more, and larger Cannon than ours; in short, we are there likely to have a nice Bone to pick. What Injury this Neighbourhood hath already done our Trade, every one knows who is acquainted with this Coast; as also how easily it might have been prevented. But Mr. — was too Fiery to think Sedately, or hearken to Wise Counsels; and contrary to all Reason, he desired nothing so much as War, and the Honour he hoped to get thereby, vainly promising himself that he should succeed as well as Mr. *Sweerts* in 1687. who intirely Conquer'd and Subjected the *Commanians*, after they had in the War lost their King and several of the greatest Men in their Kingdom. The Gentleman I am speaking of design'd the same, not considering the difference between the Fortune and Success of the one and the

the other: notwithstanding all which I dare aver that he might have succeeded if he had not been deluded by the too great Opinion he had conceived of himself and his followers, and his too contemptible thoughts of his Enemies; for he hired an Army of *Jufferians* and *Cabestrians* for less than 5000*l.* Sterling, which were twice as strong as that of *Commany*, and consequently might have subdued them. But he was ready enough to imagine, that with this Force he could easily Conquer not only *Commany*, but all the Coast; and accordingly, very impudently threatened the *Fantynese* and *Saboesse*, that after he had Corrected the *Commanians*, he would give them a disagreeable Visit. These two Nations vvell knowing how considerably they vvere indebted to us, vvhich if they endeavoured to pay othervvise than by their continual Villanies, was not ovving to their vvant of Will, but Power; they soon embraced this favourable Opportunity in joyning their Forces vvith those of *Commany*; to support which, they believ'd it their unquestionable Interest; and by this means they became stronger than our Auxiliaries. A sufficient proof of this is our first unfortunate Battel, in which we lost all our Auxiliaries, and the Money they cost us. This Fight was much more Bloody than the Wars of the Natives usually are; for the greatest part of the Men we missed were kill'd, and the rest taken Prisoners, by which we were reduced to a miserable Estate, not knowing what Measures to take, as having made the most Potent Nations of the Country our Enemies. And indeed we should never have been able to have made any fresh Attempt, if the Enemies themselves had not seasonably plaid an Opportunity into our Hands by their Intestine Divisions. The King's Brother,

Tekki-

Tecki-Ankan (the present King of *Commany*) came over to our Side, and was in a short time strengthened by the *Adomians* and other Auxiliaries; which occasioned a second Engagement, so warm on both sides, that the Victory was long dubious, till at last it seemed to encline on our side so far that our Army fell greedily to plunder; which being observed by *Abe-Tecky* the *Commanian* King, (who excell'd all his Contemporary Negroes in Valour and Conduct and had hitherto kept himself out of the Fight and laid us this Bait) he unexpectedly Marched towards us with fresh Forces, who had their Musquets turned the wrong way in order to deceive us; which took so good effect, that we taking them for our Friends, continued our greedy course of Plunder, till the King came upon us, and his Men turning their Musquets fired so briskly at us, that they diverted us from the Prey, and obliged every Body to save his Life as well as he could: Thus leaving the *Commanians* a second compleat Victory, those who could escape, made the best of their Way to our Fort.

These were two pernicious Losses, the greatest part of which undoubtedly ought to be Charged on Mr. ——— For had he been so Prudent, as to conceal his Resentment against the *Fantyneans* and *Saboeans*; and instead of irritating them, gain'd them by a Bribe, as he afterwards was obliged to do, though in vain; I do not believe they would have concern'd themselves for the *Commanians*; by which Means after he had (which was very feasible.) Extirpated the *Commanians*, he might with the same Force have Reduc'd the *Fantyneans* and *Saboeans* to Reason.

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Our Affairs continued in this Posture till Mr. ——— Expiring left the Government to his Successor, Mr. ———, who, as New Lords generally Occasion New Laws, finding we lost by the War, by Advice of those whom the Company had entrusted, prudently resolved, if possible, to put an end to the War; and accordingly, brought the *Commanians* to so good a Temper, that we soon became Friends; they not only obliging themselves to make good the Damage we had sustained, but becoming as zealously engaged in our Interest as the Posture of Affairs could encourage us to hope: and it was very much to be wished for the Advantage of our Company, that the Peace could have continued; which would have considerably advanced our Trade, and spared the large Summs we were obliged to Disburse in the following War. But the *English* here envying our happy Conclusion of the War, and fearing it would not much conduce to their Advantage, contriv'd methods to break the Peace. The Means which they chiefly hit upon, and practised, were to possess the King, that considering his two Victories, he ought rather to ask than give Satisfaction, which they reinforced by inculcating our weak Condition and his Strength; urging, that we were not in a Posture to Act Offensively again, but would be obliged, not only to entreat, but to buy a Peace of him, which would furnish him with an Opportunity of forcing his own Conditions upon us.

The King being not only a *Commanian* by Birth, and consequently, of their Turbulent Humour, but sufficiently Elevated by his past Victories, soon listen'd to the *English* Advice of Breaking with us. To which he was encouraged

ged by their Assurance, that they would make his Cause their own, and accordingly supply him with all proper Necessaries: Upon which, he renewed his old Course, and did us as much Mischief as ever. This we patiently suffered for some time, vainly expecting Relief from fair means; but the longer we depended on them, they served only to augment his Outrages, and oblige us to have recourse to Forcible Means, which were now become absolutely necessary to preserve our Character amongst the rest of the Nations of this Country; and accordingly we began to think of warmer Measures. And in Conjunction with other persons proper to be consulted, it was resolved to bring a considerable Force into the Field which should, to make short work at once, be able to Chastise the *Commanians*; for this end we were of Opinion, that as the *Fantymeans* lived now in Amity with us, 'twould be very easie to gain them to our side, and by that means inable our selves to tame the King of *Commany* on Occasion. We treated with them accordingly, and at last, in consideration of the Value of 900 *l. Sterling* to be paid to them, they obliged themselves to Fight the *Commanians* till they had utterly Extirpated them. We now thought our selves very secure, daily expecting the *Fantymeans* to take the Field; but here the *English* quash'd our Design, and in Order to keep their Word with the King of *Commany*, or at least to throw an Obstacle in our way, one of their Governors went from *Cabo-cors* to *Fantyn*, and prevailed with that People, for exactly the same Summ as we had before given them, to stand Neuter; which being only opposed by the *Braffo*, they soon dispatch'd him out of the vway, substituting immediately another in his Room. To one vwho knowveth hovv

common and trivial a Crime Perjury is amongst the Negroes; 'twill not appear Incredible, that they should rather stand still for 1800 l. than fight for 900 l. Thus our hopeful Negotiation ended with the irrecoverable loss of our Money.

The *Commanians* for this Reason growing more Arrogant, began to Insult us more than ever: to remedy which, we agree'd with the *Adomians* to Assist us for less than 500 l. but they falling out about the division of the Money, as well as the *Acanistians* and *Cabeferchians*, (who were also by Contract Obliged to our Assistance) agreed only, not to stir one foot from home. Being thus disappointed we cast our last Anchor, and agree'd with the *Dinkiraschians* for the Summ of 800 l. to take our Side, but were herein so unhappy, that they falling into a War with their near Neighbours were obliged to neglect our Cause to defend their own Country; they indeed were yet so honest as to return our Money, except only a small quantity which stuck to the Fingers of their Messengers; we also got back the greatest part of what we had given to the *Adomians*, but could not recover the least part of what the *Fantyneans* had got of us. Being in this desperate Condition, we left no means unattempted to redress our selves, though in vain, for we were Cheated on all sides. We thought of making an honourable end with the King of *Commany*, but how to compass that we could not imagine; fearing, as the *English* promised, we should be obliged to beg a Peace, which had certainly happen'd, if at this critical juncture a better and more honourable way had not offer'd it self. The before-mentioned Brother of the King of *Commany*, who, for some piece of Villany (as 'tis reported) had, together

ther with his Wife and Children been sent as Slaves to *Suriname* by Mr. ——— but declared Free by the Company, were brought hither again. Upon his arrival, we employ'd him to sound whether his Brother was most inclined to War or Peace, by which means we found, that he being tired with the former, would be very willing to accept the latter: making use of this Opportunity to our intire Satisfaction, we concluded a Peace upon very Honourable and good Terms; neither side desiring more than a settled and lasting Peace, as it had undoubtedly been, if an Accident as unexpected had not interrupted it: For we had but just begun to relish the Pleasure of our new Tranquility, and learned to prefer a Prosperous Ease before a Pernitious War; when the *English* here being disgusted at it, or growing Jealous that the King would adhere too close to us, we being his old Friends, and shake them off, or for some other unknown Reason; they Murder'd him, in a Manner esteemed Barbarous by all *Europeans*, when he came to divert himself amongst them, and make Merry with them; thus ungratefully rewarding the several Years Service he had done them.

This Barbarous Action occasioned a great Alteration on the Coast; The *Commanians*, hitherto so strictly Allied to the *English*, became their most inveterate Enemies, resolving at any Rate to Revenge their King's Death: *Tecki Ankan*, on the contrary, became their greatest Friend; and having a hand in his Brother's Murder, he fled from us and shelter'd himself amongst the *English*, and agreed with them to fall upon the *Commanians* with the first Opportunity: they invited us to joyn with them, but that was refused, we not being obliged to

enter into a War on their Account, and having but too long found how Fatal a War is to our Commerce. They however went on with their Design, hiring the Negroes of *Saboe-Acany*, and *Cabes-Terra*, with which Auxiliaries *Tecki-Ankan* came into the Field, and Engaged the *Commanians* with such ill Success, that notwithstanding the Number of his Men was Quadruple to theirs yet he was totally Routed. The *Commanians* ow'd this Signal Victory to their General, *Amo-Tecki*, a Negroe, who in Valour equall'd, if not exceeded their Murther'd King.

Notwithstanding we had been hitherto perfectly Neuter, The Negroe-General sent a civil Message to our Governor, together with several of the Skulls of his Vanquished Enemies, in Token that he had resolv'd to live and die in the Service of the *Hollanders*; his Messenger was civilly received, and after Thanks, and Presents to the General, dismissed. Were I oblig'd to determine concerning this Action, I must own that we had then the fairest Opportunity in the World to obstruct the *English*, and resent their former Injuries; if we had quitted *Tecki-Ankan* as he deserted us, and joyn'd with the *Commanians* against them. But here was a Remora in the way: For one of the greatest Villains of this Country being then Broker to the Company here, had so gain'd the Ear of Mr. — our Governor, that he look'd upon all other Advice as Pernicious. This Favourite, whether encouraged thereto by Interest, or prompted by an inveterate Hatred, is uncertain, was continually buzzing Stories in the Governors Ears, in order to irritate him against the *Commanians*. They in the mean time discerning his Carriage where it was likely to end, were

were not afraid to offer us some injuries: By which means *Akim* (so the Broker was call'd) gained his End; so he had now some Arguments to offer for beginning a War against them, and succeeded so well with Mr. — that without Consulting or Imparting it to the Council, he resolv'd upon an Action equally Perfidious and Detestable: which was to Attack the *Fetueans*, a People Subject to the *Commanians*, contrary to the Common Faith of Nations, when they came under our Protection to Market with their Goods: Accordngly this was Barbarously put in Execution, and they Robb'd of all they brought, some of them kill'd, and so made Prisoners. Pray, Sir, be pleas'd to judge impartially; was not the Law of Nations herein Violated in the highest Degree? I cannot help believing it was; and that his Excellency cannot Answer his Acting in this Manner, without the Advice or knowledge of the Council; had they indeed consented to this base Action, he might as a pretext, have alledg'd that these of *Fetu* were justly punish'd, because they murther'd some Women of *Elmina* as they were passing by them; tho' 'tis very improbable, because the *Fetueans* protested themselves innocent of this Fact, and kept up a good Correnspondence with us; nor is it to be imagin'd they durst so far Injure us or offer such a piece of Villany; or that after that they should Fearless, and Defenceless come to our Market to vend their Commodities, is what can never be believed by unprejudiced Persons. But several boldly affirmed that the above-mention'd Murther of the Women was committed by the Contrivance and Command of *Akim* himself, and *Tecky-Ankan*; designedly to lay it to the Charge of the *Commanians*, in order to serve as a specious Pretext to justify our breaking, and interrupting all Commerce with them. Whether

this be true or false Heaven only can determine; But it is certain that the Gentlemen of the Council, though they resented it as an Abominable Action, were not willing to discover their Sentiments when past, because the Blame must necessarily fall upon *Akim*, who they knew to be Villain enough to Revenge himself at the expence of their Lives; for which Reason they passed it over in Silence.

By these unwarrantable Practices our Trade at *Elmina* was immediately stifled, and the *Commanians* and *Fetuans* were become our professed Enemies; which so animated the *English*, that instead of making Peace with the *Saboeans* the strongest of the two, they strengthened themselves to the utmost, and once more Engaged the *Commanians*; who with their small Force behaved themselves so well, that they had certainly got the Day if their General had not been obliged to retire out of the Army by a Wound he received; which so confounded them that after they had began to put their Enemies to Flight, upon missing their Commander, they betook themselves to their Heels in the utmost Disorder; leaving *Tecki Ankan* and his Followers an intire Victory; their General and several of the most Considerable amongst them being kill'd and taken Prisoners. By this Success *Tecki-Ankan* became King of *Commany*; and we as well as the *English* had a share of Advantage by it; though we might if other Measures had been taken have done our selves much more considerable Services; but not to lay down uncertainties for undeniable Truths, All Men whilst they are Men are liable to Frailties, and the Managers of this Affair had their frailties as well as others. Thus I have said enough of the

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Commanian War, and its true Source, by which you may be the better enabled to speak of it on Occasion, and though I have left Blanks for the Names of our Governors you cannot be ignorant who is there intended; I have also handled the whole as tenderly as was possible without prejudice to Truth; and what is said to the disadvantage of Mr. ——— ought rather to be ascribed to his mistaken Opinion of his Favourite *Akim*, than to any ill intention; but if you ask how he became so fond of him, 'tis Reported that before he was Preferred to the Government, this Wrech served him with a Fidelity uncommon amongst the *Negroes*, which tinctur'd him with such a settled good Opinion of him, that he never could believe any thing against him. However it was, 'tis certain that his fond Affection to this Villain, was by him abused only to enrich himself and render his Masters Government Odious to all People; and thus he is liable to be injured who repose too much Confidence in any one Man and despiseth the good intentions of others to serve him.

I shall submit this Relation to your impartial Judgment and return to the end of *Commany*. Three little Miles below our Fort *Vredenburg* at the Village or Town of *Mina* is situate the Castle of *St. George d'Elmina*, so Famous throughout the World; it takes its Name from the Town, but why the *Portuguese* who were its Baptizers, gave it this Name, I cannot determine; for no Gold Mines are found for several Miles about it; but if I may guess, I am apt to think it was because here they found a great affluence of Gold from all Parts; which seeming just as if it came immediately from the

the Mines, might probably induce them to give it this Name, which it hath ever since kept. I cannot pretend to inform you exactly when they began to build the Castle, but can only tell you that we took it from them in 1638, and it is indeed justly become Famous; for to speak but the bare Truth of it, for Beauty and Strength, it hath not its Equal upon the whole Coast. It is Built square with very high Walls, Four good Batteries within and another on the Out-work of the Castle; on the side towards the Land it is Adorn'd with two Canals cut in the Rock on which it stands, which are always furnished with Rain or fresh Water sufficient for the use of our Garrison and Ships: Besides which we have within the Castle three very fine Cisterns, holding several hundred Tuns, to preserve Rain-water, so that we are in no great danger of wanting that necessary Element. Upon the Castle are plac'd—heavie Brass-Guns; besides, the lower Battery is fill'd wit Iron Pieces, which are daily fir'd by way of Salutation to Ships and on such like Occasions. There is room for a Garrison of above 200 Men in this Castle as well as for several Officers besides, all which may be so conveniently Lodg'd that they would have no Reason to complain. I shall begin the Drawings of the Forts, with this Castle, of which I send a View of each Side Marked Numb. 1, and 2. but the Drawer running away from his Master somewhat too soon, hath committed some small Error, which yet can only be discovered by very skilful Observers.

Under, or before this Castle, is the Town of *Mina*, called by the Natives *Oddena*; it is very long and indifferent broad; The Houses are built

built with Rock-Stone in which it differs from all other Places, they being usually only composed of Clay, and Wood. About 15 or 16 Years past it was very Populous, and eight times as strong as at present, the Inhabitants being then very Terrible to all the Negroes on the Coast, and such as could under a good General succeed in great Undertakings; but about 15 Years past the Small-Pox swept away so many, and since by the *Commanian* Wars, together with the Tyrannical Government of some of their Generals, they have been so miserably Depopulated and Impoverished, that 'tis hardly to be believed how weak it is at present; it not being able to Furnish out Fifty Armed Men without the help of the Servants of the *Europeans*; and there is no Place upon the whole Gold-Coast without some of the Negroes of *Elmina*, for some of them who were Friends to the *Commanians* fled to them, but most of them from the Tyranny of their Governors and our above-mentioned *Akim*, who only kept them as Sheep for Slaughter. When I first came upon the Coast, I have frequently told Five or Six Hundred Canoes which went a Fishing every Morning; whereas now scarce One Hundred appear, and all the People so Poor, that their miserable Case is very Deplorable, especially if we reflect upon their former Condition: So that indeed it is highly necessary that a Governor should quickly be set over them; who by Mild Usage would soon recall the Deserters, especially if he were so Prudent as to Banish, or at least cramp *Akim* so that he should not be able to go far in-land, where he hath at our Cost made himself so many Friends that he would certainly do more Mischief.

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A Description of the **LET. III.**
chief. This is what I am of Opinion would Succeed well if put in Practice, and I heartily wish it for the Good of our Company, and all the poor People of the Village; in which Hope and Expectation I conclude, &c.

The End of the Third Letter.

LETTER III.

LETTER. IV.

Containing a Description of Fetu, and our Fort, together with the Chief Place of Residence of the English, and another Fort there Situated: A Description of Saboe and Fort Nassaw there; of Fantyn and the Places possessed by us and the English: The great Power and Perverse Nature of the Fantynean Negroes, by which we as well as the English suffer very much.

S I R,

I Wrote to you—my Last, which though it met with a tedious Passage I hope did not prove disagreeable when it reach'd your hands, and since I sent that I am honoured with yours of the 24th. brought to the Coast by a Zeeland Interloper. I cannot help observing, that push'd on by a very inquisitive Genius, you not only make use of all Opportunities of Writing to me, continually urging me to pursue my Description of the Coast: But are always putting me in Mind of Answering by the same Ship. But my very good Friend, don't you know that I am forbidden the receiving of any Letters from, or delivery of any to such Ships. I dare say you think there is no difference what Ship brings the Letter if it be right delivered; well, to tell you the Truth, I don't think the difference very great, and provided our Company be not Injured I cannot see any Crime in it; wherefore you may be assured that I shall slip no Opportunity, and if you please to continue the same Care, the opportunities here, and in Europe, are so Frequent that we may be enabled

A Description of the LET. IV.

enabled by the continual interchange of Letters to be always informed of each others welfare.

From my former three, which in all probability you have received before now, you found that I am free enough and consequently need not be ask'd twice: But to gratify your desire as effectually as I can, I shall begin where I broke off my last at the Castle of *Elmina*, and so continue my Description.

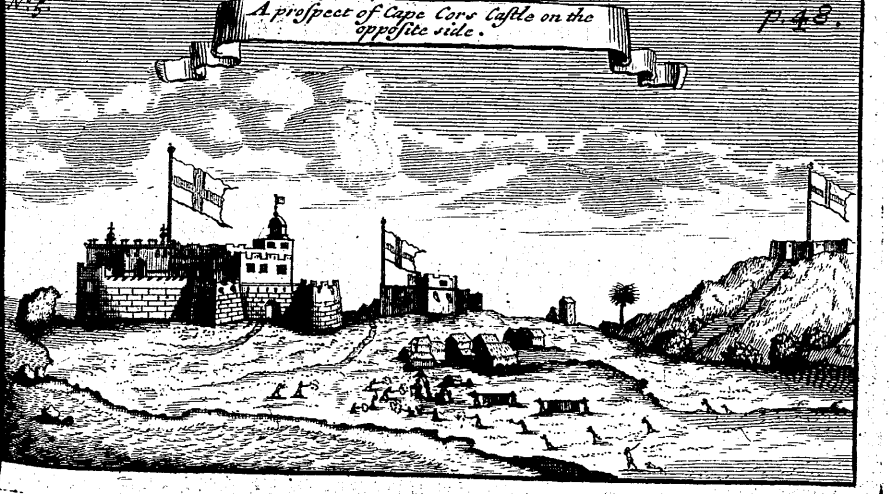
Below, or next our Castle, and by the Village *Mina*, runs a small River inwards towards the Country for about half a Mile, the Water of which according to Monsieur *Foquenbrog*, is ten times Salter than the saltest Brine or Pickle: Though I have in the Months of *May* and *June* found it as fresh as Rain-water: perhaps because in these Months the Rains are so great, and the Waters fall off the circumjacent Hills into this River as swiftly as a Tyde from the Sea, so that this Place is very convenient for Water-Mills, the Stream so running that it would easily turn a Mill. But what Mr. *Foquenbrog* affirms of the Saltness of this River must be understood in very dry Seasons: For the Soil hereabouts being very Nitrous and the River very Shallow, 'tis probable enough that the Sea-Water in this River may be sooner congeal'd into Salt by the Sun than in the Main-Sea; which the Inhabitants have also observed: For they boil this Water into Salt by which they gain considerably. This River separates the Country of *Commany* from that of *Fetu*. Near this and in *Fetu* is situate upon a high Hill called *St. Jago* our Fortrefs of *Comraadsburg*, which is a Beautiful Quadrangular Fort, strenghtned as most of ours are with four good Batteries, besides four lesser which it hath in the Out-Wall that encompasses it. In short, here



Fort Comraadsburg at St. Jago. P. 46.



Cape Cor Castle, the prospect of it on one side. P. 48.



A prospect of Cape Cor Castle on the opposite side. P. 48.

LET. IV. *Gold-Coast of Guinea.*

47

is Cannon enough, and the Fort is so strong, that if it were well Stored with Provisions, and well Garrison'd, it would do very good Service. The Drawing of it Numb. 3. shews you an indifferent high Tower in the Middle, which only Adorns the Building, but from the Top affords a most Beautiful Prospect of the circumjacent Land and Ocean, as well as usefully serves to discover Ships seven or eight Miles distant at Sea.

Before any Fort was built upon *St. Jago*, that Hill was of great Service; 'twas from thence we chiefly obliged the Castle of *St. George* to Surrender, for our Cannon Planted there perfectly Commanded the Castle; wherefore we ought to be nearly concern'd for the Defence and Preservation of this Fort and Hill, for these once lost, the Castle of *St. George* could not hold out long; and accordingly therefore as much Care is always taken of this as the Castle it self, there being always an Ensign left there with a good Garrison under his Command. *St. Jago* being in *Fetu*, I shall here acquaint you that that Land is Forty Miles long and about as broad: It begins, as I have told you above with the Hill *St. Jago*, or the Salt River, and ends below the *Danish* Mount, passing by *Cabo-cors*. This Country was formerly so powerful and Populous that it struck Terror into all its Neighbour-Nations, especially that of *Commany* which it Subjected to its Government. But 'tis at present so drained by continual Wars, that it is intirely Ruin'd, and almost owns the *Commanians* its Masters; The King of *Fetu* nor his Nobles not daring to stir without the permission of the King of *Commany*; The greatest Cause of which is, that in
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the *Commanian* Wars *Fetu* was divided, part of it adhered to the *Commanians* and part to our Side, and some of each being killed, they suffered a double Loss, and were very much diminished in the last Battle, so that you may very well conjecture they cannot be very Numerous; nor indeed are there enough to give this fine Country its proper Tillage, though it is so fruitful and pleasant that it may be compared to *Ante*. Frequently upon walking through it, before the last War, I have seen it abound with fine well-built and populous Towns so agreeably enrich'd with vast quantities of Corn and Cattle, Palm-Wine, and Oyl, that it was not a little pleasant to observe; but what was most Charming was that it was so covered with smooth streight Paths, and Trees standing so thick together from *Elmina* to *Simbe* (a Village about a Mile and half up the *Fetuan* Country) that I have been sheltered both from Sun and Rain. The Beautiful Lofty Trees on the Hills and Fresh Rivers in this Country do not a little Adorn it. In short, this Land very well deserves its situation so near our chief place of Residence.

The Inhabitants all apply themselves without any distinction to Agriculture, some sow Corn, others press Oyl and draw Wine from the Palm-Tree, with both which it is plentifully Stored. About three Miles on Foot, or two long ones by Sea from this Place, at the Town of *Ooegwa*, or according to others, *Cabocors*, which is a Cape bearing out at Sea, is the *English* Chief Fort, which next to that of *St. George d'Elmina* is the Largest and most Beautifull on the whole Coast; within it is well furnished with fine and well-built Dwelling-places; before it they have also built a High

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high Turret to secure the Lives of the People of the Town, in case of an Invasion of Hostile *Negroes*. The Fort is strengthened with four very large Batteries, besides a fifth; on which are planted thirteen Pieces of heavy Cannon; and these being pointed at the Water Passage, can easily prevent any Ships of their Enemies anchoring in that Road: besides which a great Rock lies just before the Fort; so that it is impossible to shoot at it from the Sea.

The worst of all is, that here is generally but a very weak Garrison; one part of which, I mean of the Soldiers, consists of such miserable poor Wretches, that the very sight of them excites Pity. They look as awkward and wrisled as an old Company of *Spaniards*; the Reason of which is partly that they greedily entertain those who quit or desert our Service: Which they will never deliver over to us out of a mistaken Mercy, thereby freeing them from their deserved Punishment. And though by firm Promises and mutual Agreement, we have frequently and interchangeably obliged our selves not to countenance or entertain any Deserters from each other. but on the contrary to send them home in Irons, yet they have once more broken the Articles: And notwithstanding, that those who run away from us are chiefly sottish Wretches, yet they are very welcome to them; the *English* never being better pleased than when the Soldier spends his Money in Drink, especially in Punch: A Liquor made of Brandy, Water, Lime-Juice and Sugar, which make altogether an unwholesome Mixture. Some of the Agents make a considerable Advantage of selling this Liquor by their Emissaries under-hand; for the Soldier pays double its value, and those who spend but a little Money that way, are sure to be very well beaten, they taking no care whether

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A Description of the LET. IV.

ther the Soldier at Pay-day saves Gold enough to buy Victuals, for it is sufficient if he have but spent it in Punch; by which excessive tipling and forry feeding most of the Garrison look as if they were Hag-ridden. This is a fault which some greedy Agents will not correct, because they would loose too much by an Alteration.

'Tis very well known that you are a Learned Physician, but I cannot tell whether you are of Mr. Bontekoe's Opinion, who ventures to say, that most Men shorten their Days by an irregular way of Living; but this must be candidly interpreted: However, you understanding this best, I shall leave it to you to determine; but if our mentioned Author means such irregular Lives as the *English* Soldiers live here, I should make no Difficulty to declare for his Doctrine. 'Tis incredible how many are consumed by this damnable Liquor (pardon the Expression,) which is not only confined to the Soldiery, but some of the principal People are so bigotted to it, that I really believe for all the time I was upon the Coast, that at least one of their Agents, and Factors innumerable died yearly. So that if the State of Health in *Guinea* be computed by the number of the *English* which dye here, certainly this Country must have a much more unhealthful Name in *England*, than with us; and to tell an *English* man that their Illness proceeds from their Debauches in this Liquor, would signifie just as much as to inform them that the excessive eating of Flesh (of which they are such great lovers) is very prejudicial to Human Bodies. But enough of this.

Under the *English* Fort is the before-mentioned Town, which was formerly well-peopled; but this, as well as all the other, has suffered very much in the *Commanian* War; besides that the multiplicity of *English* Interlopers hath continually

LET. IV. *Gold Coast of Guinea.*

nually stript it of its Inhabitants; for when they come hither, they always take some of 'em with them to *Fida*, to assist them in buying of Slaves; after which they liking the place, live there, and seldom remember to come home again; so that at present the Village is half wasted, and the Houses are in a ruinated Condition.

Behind this Town the *English* have a round Tower; upon which are planted six Pieces of Cannon, and garrisoned I believe with about as many Men. This doth, or shou'd serve, as they say, to keep the *Negroes* of the Town in Awe, as well as defend them from all other *Negroes* their Enemies, that come from the In-land Country; but, in my Opinion, 'tis a perfect unnecessary Charge, their Castle being so high that it will easily perform that Office alone. I have herewith sent you the Sketches of the *English* chief Fort, and of that upon the *Deen Stien* or *Danish* Mount, No. 4 and 5.

Under the *English* Fort you may observe a House, not unlike a small Fort, with a Flag on it and some Cannon; this is inhabited by an *English* *Mulatto*, by Name *Edward Barter*, who hath a greater Power on the Coast, than all the three *English* Agents together (in whom the chief Command of the Coast is vested jointly;) who, by Reason of their short stay here, are so little acquainted with the Affairs of this Coast, that they suffer themselves to be guided by him, who very well knows how to make his Advantage of them: He is become so considerable that he can raise a large number of Armed Men; some whereof are his own Slaves, and the rest Free-Men, that adhere to him: So that his Interest is at present so great that he is very much respected, honoured and served by the principal People about him; and whoever designs to Trade with the *English* must stand well with him before he can succeed.

A Description of the LET IV.

This *Mulatto* pretends to be a Christian; and by his Knowledge of that Religion, which he hath acquired by the Advantage he hath of Reading and Writing, might very well pass for one; but his Course of Life is utterly contradictory: For though he is Lawfully married in *England*, he hath above eight Wives, and as many Mistresses. But this the *English* must not take for Dishonest or Irreligious, since most of their chief Officers or Governours follow the *Mulatto's* Example pretty close, for I believe that two of the present Agents have about six.

In the Draught of *Cabocorse* upon the *Danish* Mount (so called because the *Danes* possess'd it before the *English*) you may observe another *English* Fort; of which they boast as much as we do of ours at *St. Jago*; but without the least Reason, for it lay four Years more like a desolate Country Cottage, than a Fortrefs; its shattered Walls being mended with Clay, and its House within covered with Reeds, as those of the *Negroes*; and if I were an utter Stranger to the Slovenliness of the *English*, I should admire why they are so careless of a place of so great an Importance: For if an Enemy becomes Master of this Hill, and plants but six Pieces of Cannon there, he is consequentially Master of *Cabocors* also, it lying so far at his Mercy that he may from hence level it with the Ground; and yet it continued in this ridiculous Condition all the last War, and might easily have been taken by twelve Men; and really we cannot help wondering here to see the *English* regard nothing so much as enriching themselves at the Expence of their Masters.

But at last, it seems, some well-meaning Officer has informed the Gentlemen of the *African* Company in *England*, of the wretched state of
this

LET. XIX. Gold Coast of Guinea.

this Fortrefs; for in the Year 1699. express Orders came to repair and put it in a posture of Defence; and ever since they have been rebuilding of it, having intirely pulled down the old one. The Agents obliged me with a sight of the Model; pursuant to which that already finished is built, as the whole is intended; and by this I perceive they do not design to take in a large compass of Ground: but when finished it will be so strong that no Fort on the Coast will be compared to it. The Form of it, and the natural Strength of the Hill, which they intend to cut steep; so that but one access to it shall be left, will render it so strong, that if well stored with Provisions, and well garrisoned, it cannot be taken without great Difficulty; which will be yet augmented if we consider that the Enemies, being unaccustomed to the Air, and apprehensive of the Natives, can hardly besiege it: They who would have it must take it by Surprise, for I dare engage when it is finished the *English* may safely depend on it: But the Building advances so slowly, that Heaven knows when that will be. But to leave the *English* to shift for themselves and to come to our Description of *Saboe*, which begins at the bottom of this Hill, and ends about half a Mile below *Mouree*, being in its whole Extent along the Shoar hardly two Miles long, and about twice as broad. From the *Danish* Mount 'tis about a little half Mile to *Congo*, where we formerly had a fine Stone-house, divided and situated upon two Hillocks, where our Flag was planted; of which there is only a small remainder left, sufficient to prove our Propriety: And indeed we cannot expect any other Advantage by building in this place than to keep out other *Europeans*; for if any of them should settle here, they might very much prejudice our Trade at *Mouree*.

Saboe is about equal in Power with *Commany*, and its Inhabitants exactly as great Villains, we being obliged to blame their King, next the *English*, for the miscarriage of our Design against *Commany*. For this ignominious Wretch, under pretence of being Moderator betwixt the *Commanians* and us, abused us several times by dilatory and fraudulent Means; which though we plainly saw, yet we were afraid to resent, least instead of a feigned Friend, we should make him our professed Enemy: And for this Reason we were obliged not only to pass by his mean-spirited Frauds unobserved, but sometimes also to make him a Present.

The Kingdom of *Saboe* produceth in great abundance, *Corn*, *Fammes*, *Potatoes*, and other *Fruits* of the Earth; with which and Palm-Oil about an hundred *Canoas* are daily laden at *Mouree*, bound for *Axim* and *Akra*.

At *Mouree* about half a Mile below *Congo*, stands our Fort *Nassau*, built by our selves, which was our chief place of Residence when the *Portuguese* had *Elmina*; and really if *Elmina* were not in being, we needed not to be ashamed to own this for our chief Fort. It is almost square, the Front being somewhat the broadest; it is provided with four Batteries and Eighteen Pieces of Cannon; the Walls are higher than those of any Fort, except *Elmina*, upon the whole Coast; the Curtain takes in the two Sea-Batteries, and is so spacious and convenient, that we might easily make such a Battery as the *English* have at *Cabocors*: But its greatest Ornaments and Conveniences are the four Towers placed at its four Corners. To be short, this Fort is next *Elmina*, our best, as you may see in the Draughts of it, No. 6. and 7. It was formerly garrisoned by seventy or eighty Men; whose number at present is very much diminished, tho' there

there are enough still left to defend it against the *Negroes*.

The Village *Mouree* lying under it, is not so large as *Elmina*, but more populous; the greatest part of its Inhabitants are Fisher-men, who go out every Morning four or five Hundred *Canoas* to fish, and upon their return are obliged to pay the fifth Fish as Toll to our Factor, who governs this Town. This sort of Toll we yet reserve at three places besides, viz. at *Axim*, *Chama* and *Elmina*, by reason we have conquered these places, though I dare not affirm that of *Mouree*. No other *Europeans* have this peculiar Prerogative, nor do any of them exercise such a Sovereign Authority over their *Negro* Subjects as we; which is indeed chiefly their own fault, and by their means we have also lost some of our former Power.

Before I leave *Saboe* I must inform you that its Natives have been longest known to our Company, whose Directors have seen two of their Ambassadors at *Amsterdam*, though so long ago, that I know nothing of their Reception or their Errand to *Holland*; of both which the present King is as ignorant as my self.

I designed to have ended this Letter with the *Saboean* Country; but having time enough on my Hands to describe the *Fantyn* Land, I shall take this opportunity to do it. This Country Borders on the West of *Saboe*; the Iron Mount half a Mile below *Mouree*, being its Extremity: This Hill is about a quarter of a Mile long, and hath on its highest part a charming Walk so thickly shaded with Trees that the Light is obscured at Noon-day. From the foot of this Hill *Fantyn* extends it self about nine or ten Miles along the Sea-side, being also some Miles broad.

The *English* have a Fort in this Country besides three Lodges, as we have a Fort here also. The

A Description of the LET. IV.

first *English* Flag which offers it self to our view in our Descent, is at *Ingenisian*, where the intire Garrison consists of one whole *English-man*, who lies there: Is it possible for him to preserve the Honour of the Flag?

Half a Mile below this, at *Amamabo*, the *English* have a small, but very neat compact Fort. Not to detain you by describing it I refer you to the Draught, No. 8. and 9. In which you may observe some Ships in the Road, which is always full of *English* Ships. This place would afford a considerable Gold and Slave Trade, if the *English* Interlopers did not carry it very near all, and the *Zeland* Interlopers are sure to make use of what opportunity the others leave.

The *English* here are so horribly plagued by the *Fantynian* Negroes, that they are sometimes even confined to their Fort, not being permitted to stir out. And if the *Negroes* dislike the Governour of the Fort they usually send him in a *Canoa* in contempt to *Cabocors*; nor are the *English* able to oppose or prevent it, but are obliged to make their Peace by a Present. The Town *Amamabo* may very well pass for the strongest on the whole Coast, affording as many Armed Men as the whole Kingdom of *Saboe* or *Commany*; and yet in proportion but a fifth part of *Fantyn*.

If the *Fantynians* were not in perpetual Civil Divisions, the circumjacent Countries would soon find their Power by the Irruptions into their Territories. Besides that this Land is so populous, it is very rich in Gold, Slaves, and all sorts of Necessaries of Life; but more especially Corn, which they sell in large Quantities to the *English* Ships: This great Opulency has rendred them so Arrogant and Haughty, that an *European* who would traffick with 'em is obliged to stand bare to them.

Here

LET. IV. Gold of Coast Guinea.

Here is no King, the Government being in the Hands of a Chief Commander, whom they call their *Brasso*, a Word importing Leader. He is a sort of Chief Governour, and has the greatest Power of any in the whole Land, but is somewhat closely restrained by the old Men, who are a sort of National Councillors, not unlike some *European* Parliament, acting perfectly according to their Inclinations, without consulting the *Brasso*; besides these every part of *Fantyn* hath also its particular Chief, who will sometimes scarce own himself Subject to the *Brasso*, who hath the ineffectual Name only of Supreme Power.

The In-land Inhabitants, besides Trading, are employed in Tillage and drawing of Palm-Wine: Of which they have a sort here call'd *Quaker* (which signifies the same as in *English*) from its extraordinary exhilarating Qualities, which are experienced by those who take large Draughts of it; 'tis sold at double the price of the common sort, and so greedily bought up, that there is seldom enough for the demand.

The *Negroes* of *Fantyn* drive a very great Trade with all sorts of Interlopers, and that freely and boldly in the sight of both Nations; I mean the *English* and *Dutch*, neither of them daring to hinder it: For if they should attempt it, 'twould ruine them there, we not having the least Power over this Nation. There are, I believe, four Thousand Fishermen in this Country.

But to proceed on our Journey; about half a Mile further, we come to *Adja* a Village, where, as well as formerly at *Amamabo*, we had a Fort, till by Treachery we were forced out of it by the *English*; who being jointly engarrisoned with our Men, treated them in a barbarous and cruel manner. The *English* have planted their
Flag

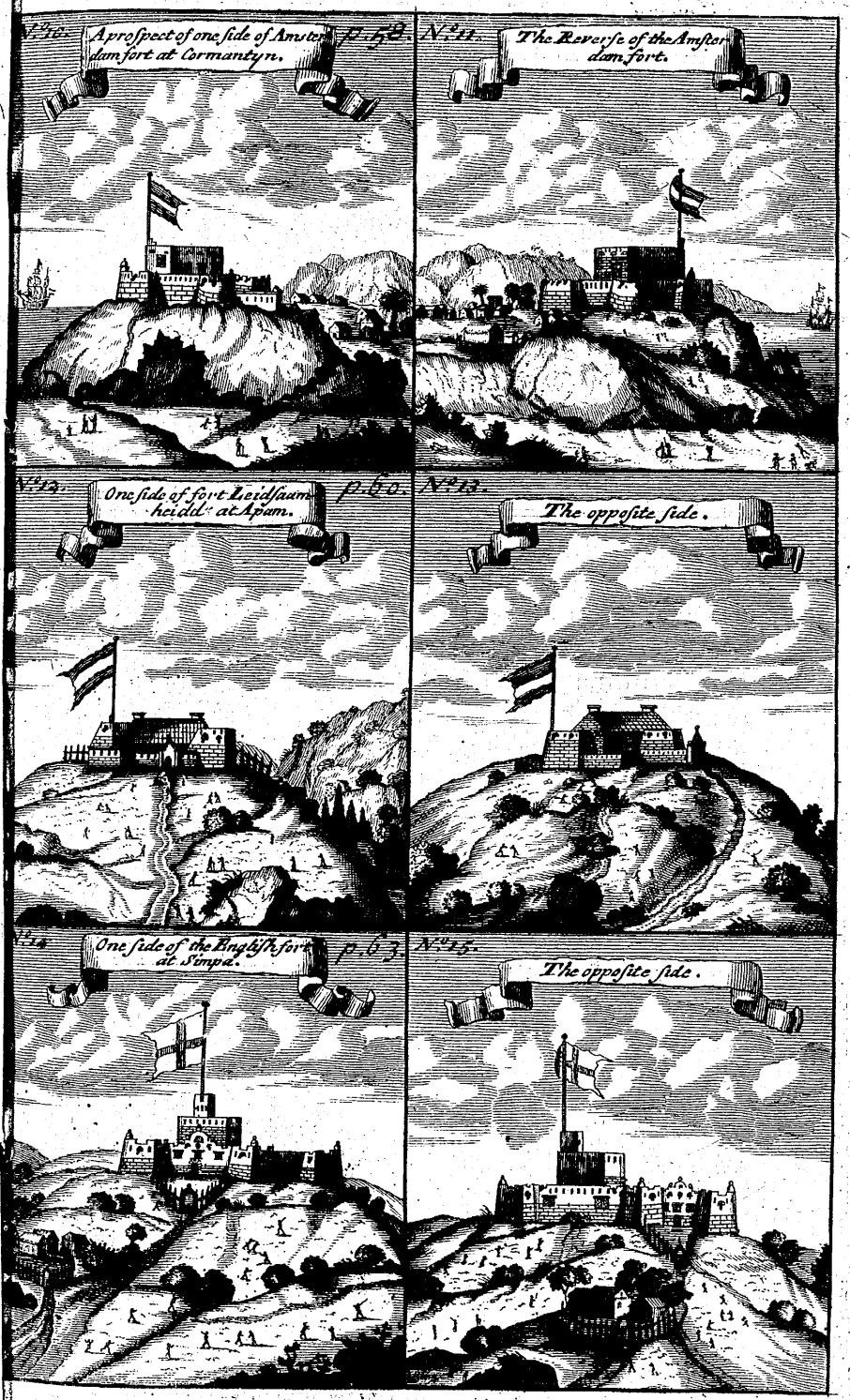
A Description of the LET. IV.

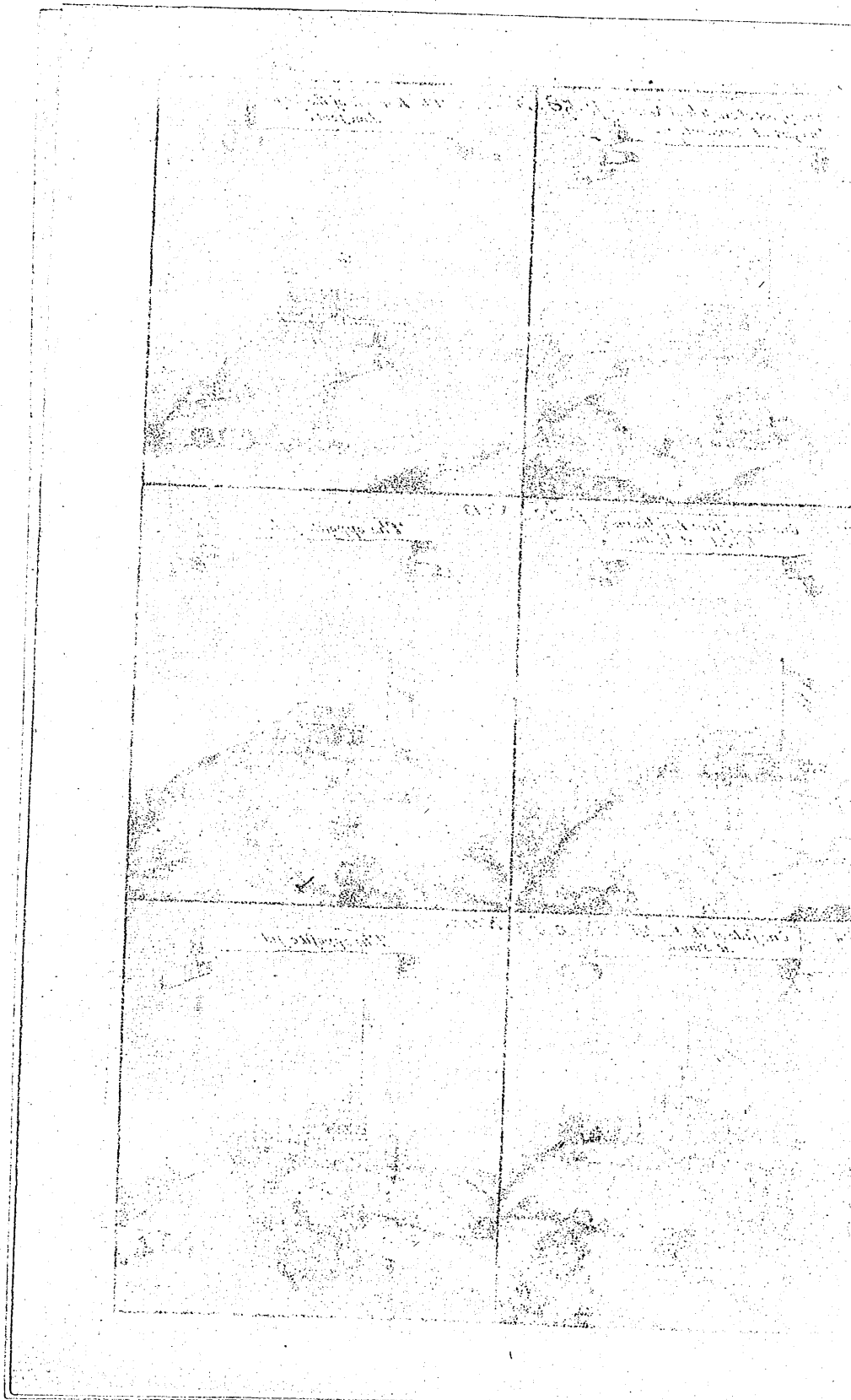
Flag upon a Negroe's House here, and their Company hath one Factor here to buy Millet of the Fantyneans for their Slave Ships; but he finding greater Profit in trading with the Interlopers, can spare his Masters Ships but a small share.

A little lower, just at the Village, justly called little Cormantyn, stands our Fortres Amsterdam; the chief Residence of the English, till they were driven from thence by Admiral De Ruyters, An. 1665. This Fort being sufficiently large, is strengthened by three small and a fine large Battery, containing twenty Pieces of Cannon: See the Drawing No. 10 and 11. The Governour set over this Fort is a chief Factor, as that of Mouree. A moderate Charge would very much improve this Fortres; but the Commerce of the place not being sufficient to bear the Expence, tis better to let alone. This Village is so small and wretchedly poor it is not worth our thoughts. But great Cormantyn, a Town which lies a Cannon-shot below our Fort upon a high Hill, is so large and populous that it very well deserves the Name of Great: All the Inhabitants, besides Merchantile Traders, are Fishermen, amounting to the number of 7 or 800, and sometimes 1000: From this place the Country of Fantyn reaches 7 or 8 Miles on the Shore, being all the way replenished with small Villages very pleasant to observe in passing by in a Canoa.

At the end of Fantyn the English two Years past planted another Flag, and began to build a Fort: whether their Expectations were not satisfied, or they could not agree with the Negroes is uncertain; but at present they are endeavouring to remove all the Materials from thence; which the Negroe Commander in Chief hath hitherto hindered, and how it will end Time must discover.

From





LET. IV. *Gold Coast of Guinea.*

From what I have said you may be informed what places the *English* and we possess in *Fantyn*, both of us having an equal Power, that is, none at all. For when these villanous People are enclined to it, they shut up all the Passes so close that not one Merchant can possibly come from the In-land Country to trade with us, and sometimes not content with this, they prevent the bringing Provisions to us, till we have made Peace with them. They have a hank upon us, we having formerly contracted to give them a good Summ of ready Money, besides 300 Gilders for every one of the Companies Ships which for the future should bring any Goods hither, in consideration of their Aid in the taking Fort *Amsterdam*, and other auxiliay Assistance; but in this Contract it was particularly stipulated, that Slave-Ships should be excepted rom paying any thing: Notwithstanding which they are now become so unreasonable, that they will make no difference between Slave-Ships and others, obliging us equally to pay for all; and all our Remonstrances that it is contrary to the Treaty are wholly ineffectual; for if we will live at quiet, we are always obliged to humour them. They also extort a good Sum from the *English* yearly. In short, they treat us both alike. But having said enough for this time, I desire you'd accept the repeated assurances of my Service, &c.

LET-

LETTER V.

Describing the Country of Acron, and our Fort there: Agonna, and the English Fort there; and lastly, the great Kingdom of Aquamboe, and the English, Danish and Dutch Forts in it; together with some remarkable Events in that Country.

S I R,

MY last of the 27 — concluded with Fantyn. The yet undescribed Remainder of the Gold Coast, contains the Three following Kingdoms, viz. Acron, Agonna, and Aquamboe: The first whereof borders on the Fantynean Country; and in the middle of it, at the Village Apam, in the Year 1697, we began to build a small Fort, or rather House, now fortified with two Batteries, as the Draught will better inform you No. 12 and 13. To this we have given the Name of Fort Leydsambeyd, i. e. Patience; because we met with sufficient opportunity of exercising that Vertue in building of it, by the frequent oppositions of the Negroes. Our chief Factor there, by the deadness of Trade, and the depraved Nature of the Inhabitants, is so perplexed, that he hath enough to do to keep his Temper. I never was so deceived in my Expectation as by these Natives; they appeared so well at first, that by my Advice the building of this Fort was very much expedited; but I soon enough repented of it. Upon the two Batteries are eight Pieces of Cannon; but its greatest Strength and Ornament is derived from a fine Turret before it.

The

LET. V. Gold Coast of Guinea.

The Village which lies under it is very little, and formerly, as well as now, only inhabited by Fishermen. But this place, as well as all Acron, is very conveniently situated for Trade; and if the Natives were more tractable, might in few Years become a populous Town. Acron, as I told you, is a Kingdom; but its King under the Protection of his principal Subjects, especially his Nephew and General: This is a most pernicious Villain, whose Savage Humour occasioned all the Differences we have had, and the opposition we have met with here. I have several times discoursed with him, and tho' I could not discover any Capacity in him that he was a Man of the least Judgment; yet the whole Council turns upon and centers in him. The rest of the Chiefs are all very good Men, and are not for pushing on War. The King, who is about seventy years of Age, is an extraordinary good-natur'd Man, with whom I have often been very merry: He is thought to be the richest Prince in Ready-money on the whole Coast (except the King of Aquamboe;) and yet I have observed him so meanly robed, that all he had about him was not worth half a Crown.

The People of Acron seldom or never enter into War; for having chosen the Fantyneans for their Protectors, none dare injure or attack them; by which they have a very good opportunity of tilling their Land in quiet; and they accordingly husband their Time and Ground so well, that every Year produceth a plentiful Harvest; a great part of which Crop they dispose of to other Countries. Harts, Hares, Partridges, Pheasants, and other Wild-fowl and Quadrupedes are here in great abundance, and very good. About three or four Months past, three or four Friends and my self had the Diversion of taking a Hare in a manner not very common. Behind our Fort, which

is

A Description of the LET. V.

is built on a Hill, is a Vale about a Mile square, where there were abundance of Hay-cocks; here, about Twi-light, we met a young Hare, that being pursued by my Dog, took refuge in a Hay-cock; in which, though we made a diligent search, we could not find him, till at last burning the Haycock, to our mighty surprize, we found the Hare sitting under the Ashes of the Hay unhurt, and carried her alive with us to *Elmina*. From this Accident, and the vast quantities of Hares, I question not but a good pack of exquisite Hunters would have very good Sport here.

Acron is divided into *Little* and *Great Acron*. *Little Acron* is that which we have described: *Great Acron* is further Inland, and its Government is a sort of Republick, if not Anarchy; and though these are two Countries, and have no dependance on each other, yet they live in perfect Amity.

A little below our Fort a Salt River takes its Course Inland about a Mile, which abounds both in Fish and Fowl, and is consequently very pleasant.

About a Mile further Eastward, in the Country of *Agonna*, is a very high Hill, called *Monte de Diable*, or Devils Mount; to whom it is often presented by the Seamen, because being very high, they often see it at a distance long before they can reach it, when the Wind is contrary. This Hill is reported to be enriched with vast quantities of Gold; of which it is also affirmed, that the *Agonmasian Negroes*, after violent Showers, gather it to a considerable value, the Rain having washed it off with the Sand. This Year one Mr. Baggs died at *Cabocors*, who was Agent for the *English*, and entrusted with a more ample Commission than any of his Predecessors, or the three together who used to govern, had been charged with for several Years. This extensive Commission,

LET. V. Gold Coast of Guinea.

tion, if we may believe the *English*, was given him by the Directors of the *African Company*, because he had informed them of, and promised to dig Gold, or Gold Oar, out of this Hill, and send it over to them. To this purpose he brought all manner of necessary Instruments along with him. But I am certain if he had pursued his Design effectually, the *Agonmasians* would have treated him and his Men as ill as the *Commarians* did us; which, I believe, his Successors will wisely consider.

Agonna begins with or about this Hill; and is at present, as it hath for some time past, been governed by a Woman, with as much Courage and Conduct as other Countries are ruled by Men. I don't remember any other Kingdom amongst the *Negroes* where the Supremacy descends to Females as well as Males. This Governess is so wise, that to keep the Government entirely in her own hands, she lives unmarried. But that she may not remain a perfect stranger to the soft Passion, she generally buys a brisk jolly Slave, with whom she diverts her self; prohibiting him on forfeiture of his Head to intrigue with any other Woman: And when the Youth hath lost his Charms, or her Passion palls, he is exchanged for another; tho' some will not allow her so honourable as to be satisfied with one at a time; if she should, 'twould discover a natural Chastity and Virtue, since, checked by no Religion or Law, she is so perfectly Mistress of her Favours, that she may confer them on whom she pleaseth without Fear or Scandal.

About the middle of *Agonna* the *English* built a small Fort in the Year 1694, a Draught whereof see No. 14 and 15. It is covered with a flat Roof, and hath four Batteries, so large that a Man may easily leap over them without a Stick; and the
Guns

Guns are of a proportionable bigness, one of them discharging a half Pound Ball: In short, it is like our Forts at *Boutry*, *Zaconde*, *Chama* and *Apam*; and theirs at *Dickjeschoof*, a Fort which wants another to defend it. The adjacent Village, by some called *Wimba*, and others *Simpa*, is about as large as other Villages commonly are, chiefly inhabited by Fishermen, and very agreeably situated amongst Trees. Trade is here at as low an Ebb as at *Apam*; but when the Wars in the In-land Country come to an end, both places will be found well situate for Commerce.

Agoma surpasses *Acron* in Largeness, Power, and Riches; though in Fertility and Pleasantness they are very near equal; only the former is adorned with a beautiful large fresh River, which both the *English* and *Negroes* affirm to abound as plentifully with Oysters, and other Fish, and all sorts of Apes, as any on the whole Coast. Having not observed it my self, I am obliged to relate this on report.

We come next to the last Country on the Gold Coast, namely that of *Aquamboe*; the greatest part of which is situate Inland; but I shall describe it among the Kingdoms of the Coast, because we have a daily and considerable Traffick with them; and their King extends his Power over the *Negroes* of the Coast above twenty Miles; and notwithstanding these are governed by several Kings, I shall venture to add them to his Territories, he equally exercising an unlimited Sovereignty over them and his own Subjects. His Arbitrary Despotick Power occasions the Proverbial saying, That there are only two sorts of Men in *Aquamboe*, of which the King and his Friends are one, and their Slaves the other; so that he wants no other Attendants than those of his own House.

The

The *Aquamboe Negroes* are very Haughty, Arrogant and War-like; their Power is also very terrible to all their Neighbouring Countries, except *Akim*: The Nations under their Power, are miserably tormented with the daily plundering, or rather robbing Visits, the *Aquamboean* Soldiers make them, they not daring to oppose 'em in the least, for fear the King, who never fails severely to revenge his Soldiers Quarrels, should hear of it. Some time past the *Aquamboean* Government was administered by two, viz. the Old and Young King, though the latter is excluded on pretence of his Minority, by his Fathers Brother, assisted by his own Mother; so that the Uncle reigned in conjunction with his Father. This double Hierarchy was found extremely prejudicial to the Subjects, who were sure to suffer from the one as well as the other Tyrant; till the Year 1699. when the old King dying, the young one established himself solely on the Throne, utterly excluding the other, and reigning at present. The old King was a Man of a Wicked, Abject Temper, and an inveterate Enemy to the *Europeans*; and though he received from the *English*, *Danes*, and us, an Ounce of Gold, in recognition of the Liberty given us by his Predecessors to build in his Dominions; yet he horridly plagued us, and that in so unreasonable a manner, that if he did but Fancy any of us had injured him, he was sure to oblige us all three to Satisfaction, by shutting up the Passes so closely, that not so much as a single Merchant could get to us: So that 'tis not to be doubted but his Death hath, and will contribute to the Advancement of the *European* Trade here; the present King being a more Intelligent and Rational *Negro*, as well as a Friend to the *Europeans*, especially the *Hollanders*; which plainly appeared in his dangerous Illness, that his Coun-

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try

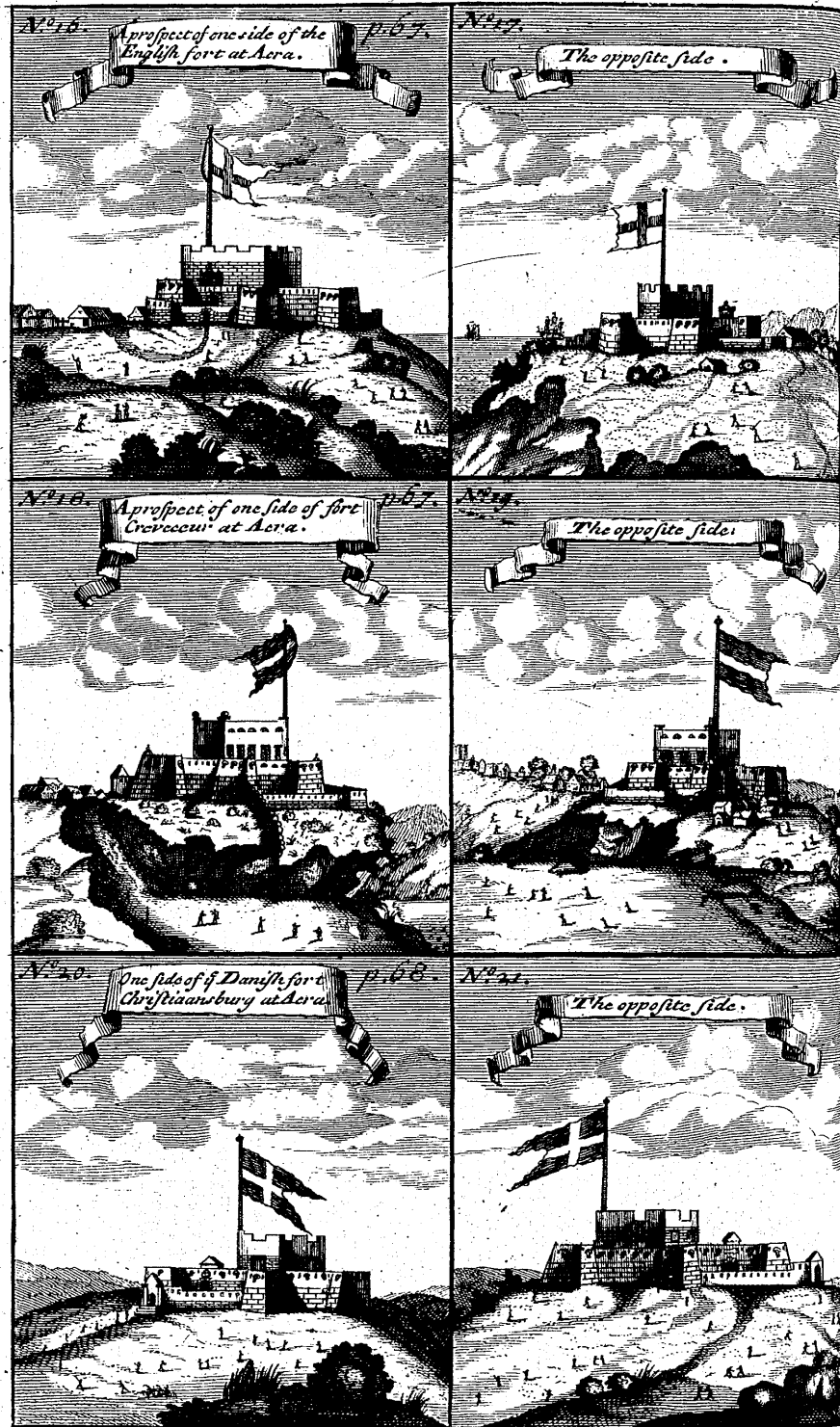
A Description of the LET. V.

try Physicians could not cure; for then he confidently entrusted himself in our Hands, coming in Person to our Fort with a few of his Attendants, and resided there for some time; being roughly enough handled by our Barber, but luckily almost cured: His Distemper being of that Nature, that he cannot expect to be intirely freed from its Effects; and he is accordingly at present not only incapable of procreating Children, but of the enjoyment of any of his Wives; of which he hath a large number.

Excessive Venery in his Youth occasioned his Indisposition; his Wives who endeavoured to restrain him he rewarded with broken Heads, tho' he hath too late sufficiently repented of it: And 'tis indeed Pity, for he is a clean well-shaped *Negroe*, and in the Flower of his Age.

In the time of the old King we were very desirous to build a Fort, and accordingly begun it at the Village *Pomii*, at the end of the Gold Coast. But when our Ship with building Materials arrived at *Acra*, being informed that *Ado* was gone with his Army against the Enemies, for fear the old King should too much impose on us we desisted; in which we were very fortunate by reason we should only have put our selves to unnecessary Expence; for at this time we find the Trade not so considerable as was pretended; and that a Lodge with a Man or two are sufficient: Wherefore without a very great Alteration of the Posture of Affairs, I don't believe that a Fort will ever be built there.

I have before hinted to you, that we, as well as the *English* and *Danes*, have a Fort at *Acra*, all which three may be reckoned amongst the best Forts on the Coast. Steering our Course Eastwards, the first we meet with in our way is that of the *English*; which is a well-built square Fort, with



LET. V. Gold Coast of Guinea.

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with four Batteries; its Walls high and thick, especially on that side towards us somewhat thicker than ordinary; 'tis furnished with twenty five Pieces; the greatest part of which are so small and slight, that if they should be attacked they would do very well to exchange them for twelve good heavy Guns: Its situation you may better observe from the Draughts, No. 16 and 17. This, like all the *English* Forts, is very meanly garrisoned, as if it were sufficient to build Forts, furnish them with Cannon and necessary Provisions, without Men: In which the *English* are every where deficient; and it were well if others did not too closely follow their Example. But of that no more at present, not doubting but those whom it concerns will in time amend that Fault.

Within Cannon-shot below this, lies our Fort *Creveceur*; how proper it is for the Residence of a chief Governour the Trade thereabouts will decide. This Fort surpasses the *English* in largeness and good Guns, though about equal in strength, except only that our Walls are thinner than theirs, and consequently cannot endure so great a Shock: And indeed 'tis to be wished that we may live in Peace with that Nation; for if it should happen otherwise both have here a convenient opportunity of continually exchanging very rough and warm Salutations. The Draught of this Fort you will find No. 18 and 19.

Exactly a Cannon-shot below ours stands the *Danish* Fort *Christiaansburg*; the only one they have on this Coast, which was taken from them by the *Negroes*, Anno 1693. when they intirely stript it and kept it for some time. This misfortune of the *Danes* was occasioned by the Death of several of their Garrison; and though we could not but bemoan their hard Fate, yet it was really diverting to observe, what work the *Negroes*

A Description of the LET. V.

groes made with the Fortrefs : Their Commander *Affammeni* dressed himself in the *Danish* Governour's Habit, and caused himself to be complimented by that Name; in acting which part he occasioned several very comical Scenes; he thundred at all the *English* and *Zealandish* Interlopers by way of Salute with his Cannon, as if there would never be an end of the Powder, and remained in Possession of the Fort till two *Danish* Ships arrived on the Coast; when, by means of a very considerable Present to the King of *Aquamboe*, but more especially by our Intercession, it was re-delivered to them. Which Service they afterwards as basely as ungratefully rewarded; but they were no great Gainers by it; for to Garrison their Fort, they were obliged to leave their Ships so poorly Manned that they became a Prey to the Pirates in the fight of *Guinea*.

This Fort would be too strong for the united Force of the *English* Fort and ours. It is a square Building, strengthened with four Batteries, and to the best of my Memory twenty Guns. It appears very beautiful, and looks as if it were but one continued Battery; as it is really in Effect; for the Roof being intirely flat, the Cannon may conveniently be planted on all parts of it. The Draughts are worthy your curious Perusal, No. 20 and 21. and I doubt not but will please you. Thus I have sent you all the Draughts of the whole Coast from *Elmina* to *Acra*; and when another Drawer comes hither, you may expect those West of *Elmina*, which will make up the same number of eleven: I have taken care you should have two Views, viz. East and West, though I won't promise as not having a Compass with us, that they are not sometimes two or three Points varied; but that I leave the Skillful to correct.

'Tis

LET. V. *Gold Coast of Guinea.*

'Tis now time to proceed to the more In-land part of *Aquamboe*. Though the *English*, *Danes* and we have Forts here, yet our Authority is very finall, and confined within our own Walls: So that the Forts only serve to defend our selves; for if we should make any Attempts on the *Negroes*, they would certainly end in our Destruction.

Each Fort hath its adjacent *Village*, distinguished by its particular Name, though the general one is *Acra*; the Name of this Country, which was formerly a Kingdom, whose Inhabitants were conquered by the *Aquamboeans*, and driven to a place called *Little Popo*, which at present contains the remainder of the great Kingdom of *Acra*.

It might be reasonably conjectured, that the three several Companies Trading here, might be apt so to clash with one another that it might be fatal to the whole Commerce: But Experience proves the contrary; for here is such great plenty of Gold and Slaves, that no one is in danger of wanting its share; and each is stocked with Commodities, which the other hath not, which very often tends to the promotion of Trade.

At this place alone sometimes more Gold is received, than on the whole Coast besides; and its Traffick would be yet enlarged, if the *Negroes* of *Aquamboe* and *Akim* could agree, as they generally are at difference; the latter pretending a Feudal Right over the former, and subsequent thereto demanding an Annual Tribute of them; which the *Aquamboeans* will by no means submit to, as knowing very well that a Concession of that Nature may in time cost them their whole Country. But the King is subtle enough to know how by fair Words and Presents to sow Dissentions betwixt the Governing Men of *Akim*, and thereby preserve his Dominions in Peace and a prosperous Trade.

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Having formerly hinted the Extent of this Country; I shall now add, that the King and his Nobles, or rather Favourites, are so very rich in Gold and Slaves, that I am of Opinion this Country singly possesseth greater Treasures than all those we have hitherto described taken together: The chief Employments of the Inhabitants are Merchandise, Agriculture and War; to which last they are particularly addicted.

Though the Soil is sufficiently Fertile, yet they commonly fall short of Provisions towards the latter end of the Year, and accordingly are obliged to fetch them from other places.

They don't trouble themselves with Fishing, nor with the Boiling of Salt, though this Country affords a vast plenty of it; that they leave to the Coast Negroes, who are either born here, or come from other places hither to live; and are very numerous and serve to People several fine Towns: These not content with Fishing and the preparation of Salt, drive as considerable Trade with Foreign Ships as those of Axim and Fantyn. The number of Slaves sold here at least equals what are disposed of on the whole Coast (Amamabo not excepted;), this Country being continually in War, with some of the circumjacent Nations, who are very populous, and from whom they take a vast number of Prisoners; most of which they sell to the Europeans.

If I have before talk'd of Negroes who followed the Wars, you must not from thence infer that they make that their whole Employment: No, it is but one part, I assure you; and all the Negroes in general are Soldiers as long as the War continues, if at least they are but able to buy Arms, or their Masters bestow any on them; and the War ended each Man applies himself to the Exercise of his particular Calling: But if there happens

happens to be any of such a turbulent Nature that they cannot live out of the Camp, they go to serve in the Neighbouring Wars; and these are in a stricter fence called Soldiers. Amongst the Fishermen there are very few Soldiers; for they living upon the Shoar and under our Protection, are not frequently attack'd by Enemies; and therefore are seldom furnished with Arms.

Having run through the whole Gold Coast; I shall now, Sir, allow you time to entertain your self with its Description, designing in my next to inform you of the In-land Countries whence the Gold is brought to the Coast, as far as they have fallen under my Cognizance: In the mean time, I hope, what I have already done hath afforded you at least some Satisfaction; in which expectation I remain, Sir, Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

Treating of the Countries where the Gold is digged; the cruel Wars and utter Destruction of some of them. The Negroes manner of searching for Gold. The several sorts of Gold. How false Gold is bought, and how detected. Of Gold Weights: And, lastly, a Reflection concerning the Digging of Gold; that it is Feasible to be done more successfully and to a better Advantage by the Europeans.

S I R,

BE pleased to accept this as a Performance of my Promise to describe those Countries from whence the Gold is brought: To which I shall add, the manner how Gold is found or digged; the several Species of it, and the Weights it is weighed by: An account of the false Gold, and whatever else falls under that Head.

The first Country which produceth Gold is *Dinkira*, situate so far In-land that our Servants are commonly five Days in going from *Elmina* to it, and from *Axim* it is above ten Days Journey; not so much on account of its real distance from either place, as because of the badness of the Roads, to a degree which frequently obliges them to go double the compass of Ground, that would otherwise be necessary; and that the *Negroes* either cannot or will not help.

This Country, formerly restrained to a small compass of Land, and containing but an inconsiderable number of Inhabitants, is, by their Valour,
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so improved in Power, that they are respected and honoured by all their Neighbouring Nations; all which they have taught to fear them, except *Afiante* and *Akim*, who are yet stronger than they.

They are possessed of vast Treasures of Gold, besides what their own Mines supply them with; either by Plunder from others, or their own Commerce; in which they are abundantly more expert than any other *Negroes*: Besides which they have three Countries in subjection to them; each of which produces some, though not so much Gold, *viz. Wassa, Encasse and Juffer*; each of these borders upon one another, and the last upon *Commany*. The Gold of these Countries, their own, and what they brought from other parts, satisfied the demand of the whole Coast from *Axim* to *Zaconde*, about three Years past, during the *Commanian* Wars: But since our Peace with the *Commanians*, the Roads being free and open to the Merchants, the distance of several places from them, makes them not travel farther at present than to *Chama, Commany, Elmina* and *Cabocors*: Wherefore the higher Coast is not extraordinarily supplied with Gold; for though there are some Countries betwixt *Dinkira* and them which have Gold Mines; to instance, in *Eguira* and *Adom*, besides *Abocroc* and *Ancober*, which also have a small share; yet all added together will not amount to a quantity sufficient to supply all the upper Forts. In the Year 1694. I heard the *Brandenburghers* complain that they could not receive two Marks of Gold in a whole Months time; nor did we fare much better in our Forts, Trade being extremely dull at that time.

The Gold which is brought us by the *Dinkirans* is very pure, except only that 'tis too much mixed with *Fetichés*, which are a sort of Artificial

A Description of the LET. VI.

cial Gold composed of several Ingredients; among which some of them are very odly shaped: These *Fetiches* they cast (in Moulds made of a sort of black and very heavy Earth) into what Form they please; and this Artificial Gold is frequently mixed with a third part, and sometimes with half Silver and Copper, and consequently less worth, and yet we are pestered with it on all parts of the Coast; and if we refuse to receive it, some *Negroes* are so unreasonable that they will undeniably take back all their pure Gold: So that we are obliged sometimes to suffer them to shuffle in some of it. There are also *Fetiches* cast of unalloyed Mountain Gold; which very seldom come to our Hands, because they keep them to adorn themselves: So that if ever we meet with them, those who part with them are obliged to it by Necessity, or they are filled with the mentioned black heavy Earth; with which the Unskilful are liable to be basely cheated, receiving instead of Gold frequently half the weight in this sort of Earth.

By what hath been said, you may imagine how Rich and Potent the Kingdom of *Dinkira* was. But a few Months past it was so entirely destroy'd, that it lies at present desolate and waste. Certainly it cannot be unpleasant to inform you how such a fatal and sudden Destruction fell upon this so potent a Land, as well as whence their Ruin proceeded; which I am obliged to take from the Report of some of the *Negroes*; and the Event hath given me sufficient Reason to believe they told Truth.

Dinkira, elevated by its great Riches and Power, became so arrogant, that it looked on all other *Negroes* with a contemptible Eye, esteeming them no more than its Slaves; which rendred it the Object of their common Hatred, each impatiently

LET. VI. Gold Coast of Guinea.

ly wishing its downfall; tho' no Nation was so hardy as to attack it, till the King of *Asiante*, injured and affronted by its Governour, adventured to revenge himself on this Nation in a signal manner.

The occasion of which was this. *Bosante*, the King of *Dinkira*, a young Prince, whose Valour was become the Admiration of all the *Negroes* of the Coast, sent some of his Wives to complement *Zay*, the King of *Asiante*; who not only received and entertained them very civilly, but sent them back charged with several very considerable Presents to express his obliging Resentment of the grateful Embassy: And being resolved to return his Obligation, he some time after sent some of his Wives to complement the King of *Dinkira*, and assure him of the great Esteem he had for his Person. These Ambassadors were not less splendidly treated at *Dinkira*, being also loaded with Presents; but the King cast a wanton Eye upon one of them; and hurried on by exorbitant Lust, gratified his brutal Desire: After satiating of which, he suffer'd her together with the rest to return to their Country, and their injured Husband, who was informed of this Affront: But he took care to make the King of *Dinkira* sensible, that he would not rest till he had washed away the Scandal in his injurious Blood. After he was made sensible of the King of *Asiante's* Resolution, knowing very well who he had to deal with, he heartily wished he had not been guilty of the Crime; but since it was done, he offered him several hundred Marks of Gold to put up the Injury. The enraged Prince, deaf to all such Offers, prepar'd himself for a vigorous War, by raising a strong Army, in order to make a Descent on *Dinkira*: And not being sufficiently stored with Gunpowder, he bought up great quantities on the Coast. The *Dinkirans* being foolish enough

nough to assist him themselves, suffered his Subjects to pass with it uninterrupted through their Country, notwithstanding they knew very well it was only designed for their Destruction. Whilst he was making these Preparations, the King of *Dinkira* died; which might encourage a belief that the impending Cloud of War would blow over. Whether the Governours of *Dinkira* were too haughty to implore a Peace of the injured *Zay*, or he instigated by the Enemies of that Country, is uncertain: But he still immoveably persisted in his purpose of utterly extirpating the *Dinkirans*. And about the beginning of this Year, being compleatly ready, he came with a terrible Army into the Field; and engaging the *Dinkirans*, who expected him, he beat them; but fighting them a second time, he entirely defeated them. The *Negroes* report, that in these two Battles above a hundred thousand Men were killed: Of the *Negroes* of *Akim* only, who came to the assistance of the *Dinkirans* there were about 30000 killed; besides that a great *Caboceer* of *Akim*, with all his Men, were cut off. What think you, Sir? these are other sorts of Battles than are usually fought betwixt the Kings here; who if they should oblige all their Subjects, even the lame, decrepit and blind to come into the Field, could not raise such a number. The Plunder after this Victory took up the *Achantines* fifteen days time, (as is said, but perhaps largely enough;) that *Zay's* Booty alone amounting to several thousand Marks of Gold, as is affirmed by one of our *European* Officers, who was sent on some Embassy to *Zay*, and says, he had several times seen the Treasure. This Messenger of ours, who is now in the *Achantean* Camp, hath Orders to take an exact Account of what he hears and sees there: Of which I wish I had a Transcript, which I doubt not would furnish

nish some extraordinary Matter: But to defer this to another time. Thus you see the towering Pride of *Dinkira* in Ashes, they being forced to fly before those, whom they not long before thought no better than their Slaves, and themselves being now sold for Slaves. We have not yet received the Particulars of this whole Affair; but this Account of it coming to hand, I thought fit to impart it to you.

Next *Dinkira* we come in order to the Description of *Acanny*, whose Inhabitants, long before the *Dinkirans*, were famed for great Traders; and brought the Gold of *Afante* and *Akim*, together with some of their own, hither to Market: And that which they vend was always so pure and fine, that to this day the best Gold is called by the *Negroes*, *Acanni Sica*, or *Acanny Gold*. They usually came in Company with the Inhabitants of *Cabesterra* (a Country between them and *Saboe*) with their Goods, to *Elmina*, *Cabocors*, *Mouree*, *Amamabo*, *Cormantim*, and as far as the *English* Village *Simpa*. Their Gold was never mixt with *Fetiches*, like that of *Dinkira*, and therefore much more valuable; but they were very troublesome to deal withal, though not so peevish and positive as those of *Dinkira*, and always obliged us to comply with their own Humour: But for three Years past we have not much reason to complain of them, they not having traded for much: For they, on what account I am ignorant, falling out with the *Dinkirans*, were so beaten that all their Governing Men, and no small number of the Inferiour People were killed and taken Prisoners; to redeem which out of Slavery, they were obliged to strip themselves of all they were possessed of in the World; by which means they were reduced to the utmost Poverty and Inability to defend themselves: But the *Dinkirans* themselves being
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now ruined, as well as they, and having declared for the King of *Afiante*, perhaps these may recover some of their Ancient Lustre.

Akim is the next in our way, which furnishes as large Quantities of Gold as any Land that I know; and that also the most valuable and pure of any that is carried from this Coast: it is easily distinguished by its deep colour. *Acra* at present carries away the greatest part of this Metal from hence; and from the *Acrians* also we have it very good and pure, without *Fetiches* or *Kakeraas*. Having several times heard that *Akim* was an extraordinary large Country, I once took the opportunity of asking some of the *Akimese* how many Days Journey their Country was; they replied, that very few Natives knew how far it extended In-land towards the *Barbary-Coast*; which according to what they told me, was incredible. This Country, for as far as it is known to us, was formerly under a Monarchal Government; but the present Successor being yet but young, and betraying but too palpable Signs of a cruel Nature, hath not been able to make himself Master of the whole Land, but is obliged to be content with a part: For the Governing Men of the Kingdom fearing he will prove a great Tyrant, to restrain him, have taken a part of the Administration into their Hands: So that it is a sort of Commonwealth; which proves very well for *Accany* and *Aquamboe*; for if the Government became Monarchal, no Divisions would arise amongst them, and they would be at leisure to prey on their Neighbours.

We have always esteemed the three mentioned Countries the richest in Gold; but that there certainly are several more is undeniable. *Afiante* is a convincing Proof of this, which being but lately known to us, we find to afford more Gold than *Dinkira*; also *Ananse*, a Country situate betwixt
Afiante

Afiante and *Dinkira*; as there are undoubtedly many more, with which we are yet utterly unacquainted.

Avine must not here be forgotten. I take it to be the very first on the Gold Coast, and to lie far above *Axim*. From the Inhabitants of this Country we formerly used to receive large Quantities of fine and pure Gold; and they being the civilest and fairest Dealers of all the *Negroes*, we traded with them with a great deal of Pleasure; but the *Dinkirans*, who would lord it over all their Neighbouring Nations, subdued this; since which time we have not received much Gold of them. In the Conquest of this Land, the *Dinkirans* made a brave and obstinate Resistance, and had no doubt been subdued themselves if the Natives of *Avine* could have been unanimous; for the *Dinkirans* in one Battle with a Governour of theirs lost above two Thousand Men, and left the mentioned Governour such an Absolute Victory, that there was not a single Person left to carry the News to *Dinkira*, they being all killed with poisoned Arrows; which the *Avinese* know very well how to use. Upon this Defeat the *Dinkirans* got together a larger Army; which the Victorious *Avinese* understanding, sent to his Country-men for farther Assistance; instead of which he met with nothing but Derision, they accusing him of Cowardice; and replying, that he was able to beat the *Dinkirans*; but if he was beaten then it was their turn to come and fight them Man by Man. Thus fighting one against one they lost their Country and themselves intirely, almost in the same manner that the *Chinese* were conquered by the *Tartars*; whereas if they would have united they might easily have beaten the *Dinkirans*.

From what I have said you may collect, that the Gold is brought to us on the Coast from In-land

land Countries; and from the little that hath been hinted, you may also imagine how they are situated. I cannot inform you better, because the *Negroes* cannot give any certain account of them, nor do any of our People go so far: Wherefore I must beg of you, my good Friend, to be contented, and turn your Eyes to what I shall present you concerning the Gold it self.

There is no small number of Men in *Europe* who believe that the Gold Mines are in our Power; that we, like the *Spaniards* in the *West-Indies*, have no more to do but to work them by our Slaves: Though you perfectly know we have no manner of access to these Treasures; nor do I believe that any of our People have ever seen one of them: Which you will easily credit, when you are informed that the *Negroes* esteem them Sacred, and consequently take all possible care to keep us from them. But to come nearer the Subject: This Illustrious Metal is generally found in three sorts of places: First, the best is found in or betwixt particular Hills; and the *Negroes* apprehending where the Gold is, dig Pits; and separate it from the Earth which comes out with it.

The second place is in, at, and about some Rivers and Water-falls; whose violence washeth down great Quantities of Earth, which carry the Gold with it.

The third is on the Sea shore; where (as at *Elmina* and *Axim*) there are little Branches or Rivulets into which the Gold is driven from Mountainous Places, as well as to the Rivers; and after violent Showers of Rain in the Night, next Morning these places are sure to be visited by hundreds of *Negroes*-Women naked, except a Cloth wrapped about them to hide what Modesty obligeth. Each of these Women is furnished with large and small Troughs

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or Tray, which they first fill full of Earth and Sand, which they wash with repeated fresh Water, till they have cleansed it from all its Earth; and if there be any Gold, its Ponderosity forces it to the bottom of the Trough; which if they find, it is thrown into the small Tray, and so they go to washing it again: which Operation generally holds them till Noon: Some of them not getting above the value of Sixpence; some of them find pieces of six or seven Shillings, though not frequently; and often they intirely loose their labour. Thus the digging of Pits, the gathering it, at or about the Rivers, and this last mentioned manner, are all the ways they know to come at Gold.

The Gold thus digged or found, is of two sorts; one is called Dust-Gold, or Gold-Dust, which is almost as fine as Flower, and is the best, bearing also the greatest Price in *Europe*: The other sort is in pieces of different sizes; some being hardly the weight of a Farthing, others weighing as heavy as twenty or thirty Guineas; though of the last sort not many occur. The *Negroes* indeed tell us, that in the Country Pieces as heavy as one or two hundred Guineas, are found. These Lumps or Pieces are called Mountain-Gold; which being melted, touch better than Dust-Gold; but the multitude of small Stones which always adhere to 'em, occasion a great loss in the melting; for which reason Gold-Dust is most esteemed. Thus much of the good and pure Gold; and now to touch upon the false. The first sort is that mixed with Silver or Copper, and cast into *Fetiches*, of which I have before hinted: These *Fetiches* are cut into small

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A Description of the LET. VI.

bits by the *Negroes*, about the worth of one, two or three Farthings. 'Tis a common Proverb, *That you cannot buy much Gold for a Farthing*, yet even with that value in Gold you may here go to Market and buy Bread or Fruit for your Necessities. The *Negroe* Women know the exact value of these bits so well at sight, that they never are mistaken; and accordingly they tell them to each other without weighing, as we do coined Money. They are here called *Kakeraas*, the Word expressing something of very little value; and the Gold it self is indeed very little worth: For we cannot sell it in *Europe* for above forty Shillings the Ounce; and yet it passes currant all over the Coast; and our Garrison are paid their Subsistence Money in it. And for this they may buy all sorts of Edibles of the *Negroes*; who mixing it with other Gold, bring it to us again; and as soon as received, the Clerks are ordered to pick it out of the other with which it is mixed; so that this Stuff seems to pass backward and forward without the least diminution, notwithstanding large quantities of it are annually sent to *Europe* by the *French* and *Portuguese*, besides what we our selves spend: But the *Negroes* making them faster than we export them, they are like to continue long enough.

The *Negroes* are very subtle Artists in the sophisticating of Gold: They can so neatly falsifie and counterfeit the Gold Dust and the Mountain Gold, that several unexperient'd Traders are frequently cheated, and by bought Experience are taught how to know Gold. Some Pieces are cast by them so artificially,

LET. V. Gold Coast of Guinea.

ficially, that quite round for the thickness of a Knife they are very fine Gold, and the vacancy filled up with Copper, or perhaps Iron. This is a new invented Cheat of theirs; but the common false Mountain Gold is a mixture of Silver, Copper and a proportion of Gold, extreme high coloured, which very much facilitates the Cheat: For being obliged to receive one or two Pounds at a time, wherein the Pieces happen to be very numerous, we cannot touch every one, and it looking so well, causeth it to pass unsuspected. Another sort of false Gold is also frequent amongst them, which is nothing else than a certain Powder of Coral, which they cast and tinge so artificially, that it is impossible to distinguish it by any other difference than that of the weight. Of this Powder they also make Gold Dust; but chiefly of the Filings of Copper, to which they give a very good Tincture; though all the false tinged Gold in a Month or two entirely loses its Lustre; and then we begin to find that it is false: in which we are happier than in those Pieces covered over with Gold; for they remain as we receive them, without any alteration, and consequently that Cheat is the most dangerous.

If you are desirous to know how 'tis possible to avoid the reception of false Gold, especially if offered at Night or Morning. The Methods we take are, first, if it is in large Pieces, to cut them clear through with a Knife, which immediately discovers what it is: If the Piece be small, like Mountain Gold, lay them upon a Stone, and beat them with Hammer; and if made of Coral, they will

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crumble into small parts; but supposing it stand beating, you may afterwards try them with your Knife: But in the smallest bits and Dust Gold, this Method is not practicable, though we have a tolerable way of distinguishing the Coarse from the Fine; which is done by putting it into a Copper Bason, and winnowing it with the Fingers, and blowing it very strongly; by which means the false Gold will fly away, and the true fall into and continue in the Bason: Upon repeating this Tryal three or four times, the False is easily separated from the Good.

It affords us matter of Diversion to observe, that most of the raw inexperienced people (especially Sea-faring Men) who come hither, always bring *Aqua Fortis* along with them to prove Gold: But if these Men remembered the common Proverb, that there is no Gold without Dross, they would soon grow weary of their weak proof, and follow the Methods above-mentioned.

The Sign by which they pretend to distinguish the false from the true Gold is, that after they have put it into a Glass or Earthen Vessel, they pour *Aqua Fortis* upon it; which, if it be false, discovers it by its Ebullition; and if mixed with false Gold, by turning green. A miserable Tryal indeed! which they will soon be convinced of: For Example; if they take the value of four Pound in Gold, a seventh, eighth or tenth part of which is false, and pour their *Aqua Fortis* upon it; let them, I say, observe whether their *Aqua Fortis* doth not produce the same Effect,

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fect, though in less degree, as it would if the whole Mass were false: For which reason their Proof is very uncertain, and the more impracticable, because the Operation is too tedious, and besides very prejudicial to Trade, to refuse the good Gold on account of an eighth or tenth part being false. I can assure you that the present times will not admit of such useless niceness. Wherefore the mentioned Proof by winnowing with the Copper Bason being sufficient to defend us against false Gold, is much to be preferred before melting it with *Aqua Fortis*, and being at the trouble of drying it again; which the *Negroes* that have good Gold would scarce suffer.

Having treated of Gold at large, I am now obliged to say something concerning the Gold Weights; which are either Pounds, Marks, Ounces, or Angels. In *Europe* twenty Angels make one Ounce; though here but sixteen go to an Ounce: Here are also *Peso's* and *Bendo's*; the former of which contain four Angels, and the latter two Ounces; as four *Bendo's* make one Mark, and two Marks one Pound of Gold, computed according to the common value, exactly six hundred and sixty Gilders; though this at several times differs in proportion, its Worth depending on its Goodness, and its rising and falling in *Europe*. Notwithstanding all this, we constantly here reckon three Marks of pure or good Gold worth one thousand Gilders, and consequently judge of the other Weights, in the proportion which they bear to this Quantity. We use here another kind of

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Weights, which are a sort of Beans; the least of which are red spotted with black, and are called *Dumba's*; twenty four of them amounting to an Angel, and each of them reckoned two Styver Weights: The white Beans with black Spots, or those entirely black, are heavier, and accounted four Styver Weights; these they usually call *Taco's*; but there are some, which weigh half or a whole Gilder: But these are not esteemed certain Weights, but used at pleasure, and often become Instruments of Fraud. Several have believed that the *Negroes* only used wooden Weights; but it is a mistake, all of them having cast Weights either of Copper or Tin, which though divided or adjusted in a manner quite different to ours, yet upon reduction agree exactly with them.

My Thoughts being taken up in describing the Weights, I forget to inform you how the Gold is digged or found. I would refer to any intelligent Metallist, whether a vast deal of Oar must not of necessity be lost here, from which a great deal of Gold might be separated, for want of Skill in the Metallick Art: And not only so, but I firmly believe, that large quantities of pure Gold are left behind: For the *Negroes* only ignorantly dig at random, without the least Knowledge of the Veins of the Mine. And I doubt not but if this Country belonged to the *Europeans*, they would soon find it to produce much richer Treasures than the *Negroes* obtain from it: But it is not probable we shall ever possess that Liberty here; wherefore we must be content with being so far Masters of it as

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we are at present, which if very well and prudently managed, would turn to a very great Account; of which I wish you no small share, and my self a long continuance of Life to spend in your Service, &c.

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LETTER VII.

Containing a Computation how much Gold is Annually exported from this Country; to what places it is transported; and the Division of the Trade with the Negroes. What Officers are appointed in our Service; and the Names of other Employments: Together with a general List of the whole: And, lastly, by way of Conclusion, a Description of the Government of the Coast, and of the Council or Assembly of Counsellors.

S I R,

MY last treated of the Inland Countries from whence the Gold was brought; how it was digged; its several sorts; the false Gold, &c. To pursue our Subject yet farther; as I have told you whence tis brought, it is but necessary I should inform you whither it is carried, and how much is yearly brought to the Coast. As for the last, I dare affirm it as a real truth, that they not only can, but do yearly in time of Peace, deliver the quantity of seven thousand Marks of Gold. This is a large Sum; but it is divided amongst so many, each being sure to get some, that the whole is soon disposed of. The most just Calculation of the Division that I can possibly make, is as follows: viz.

Our

	Marks.
Our <i>West-India</i> Company yearly exports	1500
The <i>English African</i> Company	1200

2700

But this is to be understood of such Years in which the Commerce of both Companies happens to be very brisk; and I don't believe our Company hath for several Years past carried off above the half of this quantity.

The *Zeland* Interlopers are sure to carry off as much Yearly as our Company:

	Namely,	1500
The <i>English</i> Interlopers about		1000

But the last have for two or three Years past pursued this Trade so vigorously, that they have exported above twice that quantity.

The <i>Brandenburghers</i> and <i>Danes</i> , in time of Peace, both together about	1000
The <i>Portuguese</i> and <i>French</i> together at least about	800

Which makes 7000

I say of the last at least 800 Marks, and it is really true: For the *Portuguese* come on this Coast, on pretence of selling their *American* Commodities, viz. *Brazil Tobacco*, *Brandy* and *Rum*, and are besides as richly laden as the Interlopers themselves; which is not to be wonder'd at; for they buy their Lading, take their Men on board, and fit out their Ships in *Holland*: Nay, to be short, they are frequently fitted out at the Expence of *Dutch* Merchants, wherein the *Jews* have no small hand, they knowing how to obtain a *Portuguese* Pass: And these Ships, when they come here to this

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this Coast pass for downright Portuguese: How uneasy this must needs be to an honest Officer in the Companies Service, you may easily imagine, when a Factor, who commands one of our Forts, shall receive certain Advice, that several of the Negroe-Merchants are coming down well-stored with Gold, in order to lay it out with him, and that ere he arrives, is met by a Portuguese or Interloper; who, by selling cheap, sweeps a great part, if not all their Gold, whilst we sit still with our Goods on our Hands, as if they were visited by the Plague. I do not tell you more than I have to my sorrow experienced.

Thus I have made a rough Calculation of the Quantity of Gold, which those who understand the Affairs of the Coast, will, I doubt not, be pleased with; but those unacquainted with this Trade, may, perhaps, think I have computed wrong: If I happen to see these Gentlemen, I shall civilly desire them to correct my Computation; which no one having yet attempted, 'tis imparted to you for your satisfaction, and to the best of my Knowledge as near the Truth as I could bring it.

Note a
Tun of
Gold in
Holland
is computed
at 100000
Gilders
somewhat
under
10000
Pound ster-
ling.

According to our Reckoning then, there is brought hither and carried off exactly twenty three Tunns of Gold, reckoning three Marks to one thousand Gilders. But, as I told you, above all, this account supposeth a prosperous time when the Passes are all open and the Merchants can pass safe and uninterrupted; but when the Negroes are at War with one another, I do not believe that half this Quantity is shipped off: And of this small Quantity the Interlopers know very well how to come by their share. And supposing our Company hath one fifth

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fifth of the whole, yet when Trade is low they cannot get by it, but must make up the Deficiency by trading to other Coasts: But I hope ere long a way will be discovered of prosperously advancing our Trade here to the disadvantage of the Interlopers, which I cannot think very difficult; it consisting only in fixing a good Government on the Coast, and taking care in Holland that their Ships be laden with good Commodities, and proper for this place. However, I desire you would not from hence expect a particular of what Merchandises are most vendible here; or that I should acquaint you with the State of Trade here: that would be utterly incompatible with the faithful Service I owe our Company; I not knowing whether this Letter by some unaccountable Miscarriage may not light into the Hands of the Interlopers, who know very well how to use it to their Advantage: And indeed they sufficiently rob the Company of the Right which the States have given them on this Coast; so that none of us ought to help them to further Opportunities. Wherefore be pleased to satisfy your self with an Account in general, that to Trade on this Coast, about a hundred and fifty several sorts of Commodities are necessary.

In my third Letter you have been informed that the Castle of St. George d' Elmina is our chief Place on this Coast, and that the General, Principal Governour, chief Factor, and chief Fiscal reside there; before this Castle also do all our Ships which come from Europe cast Anchor and unlade; and we have accordingly very fine Ware-houses fitted for their Reception. This great Store-house is entrusted to the charge of our chief Factor, and is sometimes worth

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a very considerable Sum; and from hence all our other Forts are supplied with their desired Commodities. I would not have you conceive that we set up a Market with our Wares, or send any of them to be sold without our Forts; No, that is not our Business; but the *Negroes* come daily to our Castle, or Fort, with their Gold; for which, after it is weighed, essayed and purified, they receive our Commodities; none of which ever go out of our Ware-houses before they are paid for; and if the Factor will give any Credit, it is on his own account, and he is consequently liable for the value to the Company, that they may not thereby suffer; nor can he charge the Presents made to the *Negroe-Merchants* to their Accompt: But they, indeed, superadd a certain Advance to all their Factors; from which they are not only enabled to make Presents to the *Negroes*, but may be besides considerable Annual Gainers thereby; and this is done to encourage them to the more diligent Service. Besides, the *Negroes* having neither Carts, Waggon, Horses nor any other way to carry the bought Commodities to their In-land Dwellings than by Men, for about two or three Hundred Pounds value in Iron, Copper or Tin, have occasion for the assistance of fifty Men: Now whether there be not an Advantage to be made of this by our Men I leave you to judge, though the Money got thereby is hardly enough earned, they being obliged for it to climb over Hills and pass very bad Ways. Those who come from the inward part of the Country to traffick with us are chiefly Slaves: One of which, on whom the Master reposes the greatest Trust is appointed the chief of this *Caravan*: But when he comes to us he is not

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not treated as a Slave, but as a very great Merchant, whom we take all possible care to oblige, as very well knowing that he being a peculiar Favourite of his Master, may at pleasure go to the *English*, *Danes* and *Brandenburgers*, as well as come to us; for which Reason we pay him double the Respect we should give his Master.

Having heard what *Negroe* Chap-men we have to deal with, now let us consider what Officers and Servants are by the Company appointed on the other side; and how many Degrees of rising we have on the Coast. I flatter my self that this will not prove disagreeable to you, because it will afford a Prospect of what Preferment your Nephew may arrive to if he deport himself well.

First of all, here are the Soldiers with their Commanders; out of which formerly the best qualified for Merchandise and the Pen were chosen to serve the Company as Assistants; by which means one with whom you and I are very well acquainted, hath found opportunity to advance himself to almost the highest Post here. But for ten or eleven Years last past, this hath not happened; because the Gentlemen of the Company finding that not only those qualified, but such as were utterly incapable and idle Drunkards were promoted, have ordered that for the future no Soldiers should be preferred to the Assistants Places; they may become Coporals, Serjeants or Officers, and stand fair for all Offices amongst the Train of Workmen or in the Sea-Service; but an Assistant may, in process of time, be promoted to the Government of the whole Coast.

The

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The Office of Assistant is the lowest among those concerned in Trade or Writing; the Salary appointed for this Service is sixteen Guilders *per Month*, and twenty Guilders more for Board-Wages: His first step to Preferment is that of Under-Commissary or Under-Factor, with a Salary of twenty four Guilders *per Month*. By these Sub-factors most of the Gold is received; for which they are accountable to the Factor, or chief Factor, or him to whom the Trade of the place is entrusted in chief, who is also accountable to the Company; the general Accompts of the whole Coast being kept at *Elmina*, where there is also a Ware-house Keeper, who hath all moist Goods, as Wine, Beer and Brandy, &c. all Edibles, as Flesh, Pease, Beans, Oats, &c. under his keeping, and is entrusted with the Sale of them: So that when a Chief-Factor or Factor observes that his Sub-Factor or Ware-house Keeper are enclined to Extravagance, he is obliged to watch him very narrowly; for all that the Company suffer by him, the Factor is obliged to make good: Of which in less than four Years past we have a fresh Example, that one of my Brethren, not unknown to you, in such a case was obliged to make good about seven or eight Hundred Pounds, which he had not in the least squandred. Thus a Factor who hath such sort of Men under him ought to look after them very carefully, or he may be ruined at once: 'Tis true, indeed, that he hath his Remedy against the guilty Person; but what can that avail if he hath neither Effects or Money? which it rarely happens that any of these Men have; for I don't believe that those who can live on their Means in *Holland* will ever come to such a Country as this; nor is it very
pro-

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probable that their Friends in *Europe* will make satisfaction for their Follies: So that the Factors last Refuge is to bring the Offender to condign Corporal Punishment; which will not in the least contribute to his Re-imbursment. Wherefore, as I said before, his best way is to look close after them, and stop them in the beginning of their Extravagancies.

Out of the above mentioned Under-Commissaries, the oldest in Service, or the best qualified, are chosen Commissaries or Factors to reside at, and command our Out-Forts, and take care of of the Trade there; with a Salary of thirty six Guilders, besides an allowance of ten Guilders for a Servant or two, and twenty Guilders Board-Wages *per Month*, besides the certain before-mentioned Advance on the Trade.

The oldest and most experienced of these Factors is promoted to *Mouree* and *Cormantyn*, his Salary being raised to eighty Guilders *per Month*; supposing that upon being chosen by the Council here, he be confirmed by the Company: Who, not without good Reason, have retained the supplying these important Posts to themselves; as they have also that of the Chief Factor of *Elmina*, or the second Person upon the Coast, who hath a Salary of one Hundred Guilders *per Month*. These Chief Factors have also the same Advance on Merchandises and Board-Wages, as the other Factors; besides which the second Person hath ten Guilders *per Month* allowed for a Servant, and the General's or Governour General's Table is at his service. The Choice or Confirmation of these Chief Factors being reserved to the Company, that upon the Death of the Governour, or second Person they may have others ready; of whose Fidelity they are
very

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very well satisfied to supply their Places; and the Chief Factor of *Elmina* having satisfactorily discharged that Office three Years; he may, if favoured by Fortune, happen to be advanced, (if it falls vacant) to the highest Post of Governour General, who is entrusted with the Companies Authority over the whole Coast; of which he is Director-General, with a Salary of three Hundred Guilders *per* Month, and a large Perquisite Advantage in what ever is traded on account of the Company on the whole Coast: So that when Commerce is in a flourishing Condition here, his Post is very advantageous.

Till within these two last Years the Chief Factors of *Mourée* and *Cormantyn* had also the Advantage of the Slave Trade of *Fida* and *Ar-dra*, which turned to some account, and was indeed more advantageous to them than the Gold Trade; the Commerce there being at so low an ebb, that without the mentioned Slave-Traffick they could not live up to the Port which the Dignity of their Posts required, without suffering by it. But since some ill-meaning Men have preposessed the Directors of the Company in prejudice of them, by urging that by this means they became too rich; for which Reason they have thought fit to entrust the Slave Trade to the Masters of the Ships, which they send hither: The Consequence of which time will discover; but for my part I don't expect they will find it conduce much to their Interest; for the Commanders of Ships, though very expert in all Sea Affairs, yet being unacquainted with the *Negroes*, will not be able to succeed very well: Besides that some of them are of such a Boorish Nature, that they hardly know how to preserve the Honour of the Company amongst the

Negroes

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Negroes. I would not here be understood to speak of them all, for there are several Men of very good Parts amongst them: But the difference occasioned by this new Practice will clearly appear with respect to the other *Europeans* trading hither; and I cannot believe it will turn to the Advantage of the Company. But of this enough: Besides the Officers employed in the Trade on this Coast there are the following Offices.

First, the Chief Fiscal, whose Salary is fifty Guilders, and ten Guilders *per* Month for a Servant, besides the Liberty of the General's Table. Though the Fiscal's Salary seem very small, yet his perquisite Profits, if he is diligent, are very large; for all the Gold or Commodities unlawfully traded for on the Coast is forfeit; of which his share is one third part, whether the Goods in question belong to *Europeans* or *Negroes*; besides a third part of the Fines set upon the latter, and the forfeiture of Wages inflicted on any offending Officers or Servants by the Governour and Council: all which put together amount to a considerable Summ. Next the Fiscal the Book-keeper General takes place; whose Province is to keep the great Books, and the Counter-parts of the Accounts of all our Forts or Lodges on the Coast: Or, in short, to take care of all the Companies Accompts in this Country: His Salary is seventy Guilders, besides ten Guilders *per* Month for his Servants; and for a free Table is allowed twenty five Guilders more: He is generally assisted by an Under-Book-keeper, whose Salary is thirty Guilders *per* Month and two Assistants. Next him is the Book-keeper or Accomptant of the Garrison; whose Title sufficiently explains his Office.

H

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fice, and his Salary equal to a Sub-factor's, is twenty four Guilders, though Factors have thirty six Guilders; so to make amends he hath the Power of selling by Auction the Effects of all Persons who dye upon the Coast; for which he is allowed five per Cent. ad valorem; he is also commonly helped by an Assistant. Sometimes here is also a Secretary, whose Salary is fifty Guilders per Month, and under him he hath three or four Assistants; but in my time we contented our selves with an under Secretary, and the above-mentioned number of Assistants.

The last and most contemptible Office is that of Under-Fiscal, commonly called by us Auditor, though in his Walks, Informer, as he really is no better; his Salary is twenty Guilders per Month, and to his share falls also a tenth of all Forfeitures. His Person is had in utmost Contempt by all; yet to honour him as much as possible he takes place of all the Sub-factors, as the Fiscal (who also is not the more loved on account of his Office) doth of all the Chief-Factors, nay, even the second Person on the Coast; tho by the Governour's leave that place not only belongs to the Chief-Factor of *Elmina*; but to those of *Mouree* and *Cormantyn*.

Having run through our Temporal State, we now come to our Spiritual Preferments; which are but two, the first a Minister, with a Salary of one Hundred, the second a Clerk, with that of twenty Guilders per Month; besides which, the first hath ten Guilders per Month allowed for a Servant, and a place at the Governour's Table. What do you think, Sir? don't we pay our Clergy-man pretty well? I'll assure you if you think we live licentious Lives, you are in the

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the wrong, for we are very Religious; we are obliged to go to Church every Day, on forfeiture of twenty five Styvers, except on *Sundays* and *Thursdays*, when the forfeiture for omission is doubled: But I know you will reply, this is a forced service of God, and consequently not always accompanied with the most sincere Intentions: And to confess the Truth, it is not much better; for were not the restraint laid upon us, some would rather pay a visit elsewhere than to the Church.

These being all the Officers and Servants we have on the Coast besides Work-men or Labourers and Soldiers, they are commonly ranked as follows.

- The Director-General.
- The Preacher, always next the Director.
- The Fiscal.
- The Chief-Factor.
- Two or three Chief-Factors besides.
- Seven or eight Factors.
- Nine or ten Sub-factors.
- Eighteen or twenty Assistants.
- A Ware-house Keeper.
- Accomptant or Book-keeper General.
- Under Book-keeper.
- Accomptant or Book-keeper to the Garrison.
- Clerk of the Church.
- An Auditor or Informer.

The Number of these varies daily; so that there are sometimes more, and several times less of each.

There not being in all upon the whole Coast sixty Persons, one third of which are Assistants, you may easily conclude that any Person who comes hither

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hither in the said Assistants place, and behaves himself well, upon the Death of some of his Superiours, cannot miss being prefer'd to a good Post; but how the greatest part behave themselves, and what sort of Lives they lead, will perhaps be more proper for another place: And therefore to conclude this Letter, I shall only inform you how, and by whom this Coast is governed.

The Government or Direction of the Coast is principally vested in the Director-General as the Supreme Ruler; from whom all Governours of the out-Forts receive their Commands; and subordinate to whom they are obliged to act, they not being empowered to transact any important Affairs without his Knowledge and intire Consent: But difficult Affairs, or those of greater Importance, are cognizable to, and ought to be laid before the Assembly of Counsellors, or Council composed of, viz.

The Director-General.

The Fiscal, in other things besides Criminal Cases.

The Chief-Factors.

The Ensign or Banner-Bearer, and sometimes the Accomptant-General.

Who jointly make up the Council: To which are added the Factors of the out-Forts as occasional or extraordinary Counsellors. In this Council every Member is freely permitted to offer his Thoughts on what is in debate; but a wary Man will be apt to observe which side the Governour is enclined to, and not easily be persuaded to thwart him whatever he thinks, least he should fall under his Displeasure: This was

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was so well observed, during my stay here, that I believe there were very few resolutions of the Council, which were contrary to the Governour's Opinion: 'Tis no very hard matter to believe this, since some respect is due to him; and besides many have found their Accompt, by this sort of compliance, not thinking themselves obliged to enquire whether it agreed with the Interest of the Company or not; 'twas sufficient that they served themselves; the Shirt being nearer than the Coat (according to the Proverb) they could not see any great harm in it. But though this is their Opinion, I have always had other Sentiments, though I have been sometimes restrained from expressing them, for Reasons which I shall hereafter give you. I have often smiled at the glittering Title of the Council of the North and South Coast of *Africa*, which you and others frequently give us, especially when I consider that we are nothing less, and though we have all the Name have none of the Power. I doubt but you and most in *Europe* take us for a regular and well-managed Council, and that nothing is transacted without our Consent. Alas! my good Friend, how are you mistaken! but if you would be informed how far the Name and real Thing agree, 'tis necessary you be first informed that a Director-General is a Person who governs all others from the highest to the lowest on the Coast with an Arbitrary Power; who may at pleasure oblige his Inferiours to submit to his Will contrary to all Reason: And to go yet farther, he can discharge them their Offices and send them off the Coast, without giving the least Reason for so doing. Such a Director, as I have described, coming into the Council, and firmly resolved to carry the

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thing to be debated ; I would fain know who dare take the Liberty to oppose him, knowing how dear it may cost him, unless he be backed by others, which he hath no great Reason to expect : Wherefore every Man rather chooseth to comply with an Tea Brother, than by contradicting the Governour, to incur his Displeasure, and do the Company no manner of Service.

But if you ask me why a Director resolved to take no advice, but absolutely follow his own Inclinations, doth ever summon a Council : I answer, first, that the Directors of the Company may be informed that he did so ; not knowing the use he made of that Assembly. Secondly, when Offenders are to be punished with Capital or Corporal Punishments ; that not being otherwise to be done than in form of Law : And, thirdly, for the Government of the Coast which is resolved and settled in the Council, and least when any thing happens wrong the Governour should want an excuse, he now being able confidently to alledge that he acted by the Advice of the whole Council by whom it was also so resolved, tho' their real Opinions were at the same time as distant from their Suffrages as East and West.

In short, the Council is of no other real use than to participate of the Governour's Faults, and to shelter him from being answerable for them. Thus it clearly appears that it is impossible for the Companies Affairs to succeed under an ill Governour : Wherefore, for the Interest of the Company, I hope that its Directors will for the future diminish the Governours Power, charging him expressly to regulate himself more by the Advice of the Council : Which, when the Directors please to do, I can't doubt of seeing

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a more Regular Government on the Coast, and all Affairs managed with more Justice and Discretion.

Now you are justly informed of the Nature of our Council ; would you desire to be a Member ? I believe not ; and for my part I assure you, that I had rather quit the Honour to obtain a Liberty of being in reality a Councillour instead of bearing the Name only. Yours, &c.

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H 4 LET.

LETTER VIII.

The Insalubrity of the Coast: The Author's Opinion from whence it proceeds. The Difference betwixt the present and former Seasons. Some Instances of violent Thunders, and the Damage occasioned by them.

S I R,

Yesterday I sealed my last to you, on suspicion that the Ship would sail last Night; but they being stayed by an unavoidable Obstacle one Day longer, and I at present at leisure, I have dedicated this Day to your Service, in committing the following Lines to Paper, which please to honour with your Perusal.

The Guinea Gold Coast is situate about the fifth Degree of Northern Latitude: From which you may easily infer, that we live in a scorching Air, though not so bad as is reported; for it is become too customary for Men in their Relations rather to add than to diminish. Several who have lived some Years here with me, must own, as well as I, that in the Months *October, November, December, January, February* and *March*, the Heat is very violent here; but it is not so hot in the six remaining Months, but that it can be easily born without the least inconvenience: I have known the time when we could as well have endured a Fire, if we had not been ashamed, as in *Europe* about *September*; besides, the whole Year is here refreshed with

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with cool Evenings: So that he that hath lived here ten Years, and consequently his Body become opener than in *Holland*, will not be apt to complain very much of the Heat.

The Unwholesomeness of this Coast, in my Opinion, seems chiefly owing to the Heat of the Day, and coolness of the Night; which sudden change I am induced to believe occasions several contrary Effects in our Bodies, especially in those who are not accustomed to bear more Heat than Cold, by too hastily throwing off their Cloaths to cool too fast.

The second and greatest Cause which I can find is, That the Gold Coast from one end to the other, so greatly abounds with high Mountains, in the Valleys betwixt which, every Morning a thick, stinking and sulphurous Damp, or Mist riseth, especially near Rivers or Watry-places: Which Mist so spreads its self, and falls so thick on the Earth, that it is almost impossible to escape the Infection while we are fasting, and our Bodies more susceptible of it than the Natives. This Fog happeneth most frequently in the ill Season of the six Months, which we here call Winter, but more especially in *July* and *August*. Wherefore we are more seized with Sickness in that time than in the good Season or Summer. The Stench of this unwholesome Mist is very much augmented by the *Negroes* pernicious Custom of laying their Fish for five or six Days to putrify before they eat it, and their easing their Bodies round their Houses, and all over their Towns; and if this odious Mixture of noysome Stenches very much affects the State of Health here, it is not to be wondered, since 'tis next to impossibility, not only for new Comers, but those who have long continued here, to preserve

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serve themselves intirely from its Malign Effects. The great Difference betwixt the *European* Air and this, is so observable, that few come hither who are not at first seized by a Sickness which carries off a great many, and that chiefly because we are so wretchedly unprovided with what should comfort and nourish these poor Men; for we have no help to have recourse to but corrupted Med^cines, and unskilful Physicians, they being only ignorant Barbers, who bring several into the utmost danger of their Lives: Whereas Nature is strong enough, by the Assistance of good Nourishing Diet and Restoratives, it might probably recover the Patient. But, alas! how should he be able to get them? For our Medicines, as I have before told you, are most of them spoiled; and for Food, what is here to be gotten for the common People besides Fish and a dry lean Hen? And, indeed, were he able to pay for better, here is nothing proper for a weak Stomach; for all the Oxen or Cows, Sheep and Hens, are dry lean and tough: So that a sound Man, not to mention an infirm one, hath enough to do to eat them. So that the best, beside proper Physick, that the poor Sick can get here, are Culinary Vegetables and Spoon-Meats; the Director and the Chief-Factor are abundantly furnished with the former, but they are not in every Bodies reach.

There are several who would fain persuade us that our Mens Sickness here is owing to their own Mismanagement; urging that they might very easily prevent it by a regular Life, and carefully avoiding all Excesses in Eating and Drinking: But Experience convinces us of their Mistake, for we daily see the most temperate and regular Men seized with dangerous and too often Mortal Diseases. But

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But it is indeed to be owned, that some people here occasion their own Sickness; though that cannot be said of all. If these Men were more careful of their Healths, 'tis more than probable that so many would not sicken and die here yearly as now do: But these rash and inconsiderate Wretches no sooner receive their Pay, than (if not already indebted that Sum) they lavish it out in Palm-Wine and Brandy; both which taken in excess, are very pernicious; which is not the only Inconvenience, for spending their Money thus idly, they do not allow themselves sufficient to buy necessary Food; the defect of which they are then forced to supply with Bread, Oil and Salt, or at best with a little Fish; so that it is hardly to be expected, that these Men should be healthful. This is the common course of Life which the ordinary people here lead: And it were to be wished that their Example was not followed by their Superiours; Excessive Drinking being here too much in vogue; and the larger their Salary is, the greater their Thirst appears to be; and consequently the less regard had to the Kitchin. Some are also very lucky if their Pay be not attached, and they entred into Bonds as deep as their present and future Salary will satisfy; or what is worse yet beyond all this, in hopes only that their Relations will satisfy it: All which eats like a Canker; and yet they are by use so bigotted to drinking, that 'twould be impossible to keep them from it by Blows: And to make the quicker Work, they are as zealous Votaries to *Venus* as to *Bacchus*, and so waste the small portion of Strength left them from tipping

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ling and the ill Air, and then adieu Health, and soon after Life it self. But it is indeed convenient it should be so; another wants his place: If Men lived here as long as in *Europe*, 'twould be less worth while to come hither, and a Man would be obliged to wait too long before he got a good Post; without which no body will easily return rich from *Guinea*, the chief Persons there being the only People who can lay up any thing, and they not near so much as is reported of them. However the Money we get here is indeed hardly enough acquired: If you consider we stake our best Pledge, that is, our Lives, in order to it.

But to return to the Unhealthfulness of this Country. Some here distinguish betwixt one place and another; and I am somewhat inclined to their Opinion: If they choose those places where the Wind blows continually and very fresh, and where the *Negroes* occasion the least Stench, they are undoubtedly the most healthful; and as such I should prefer *Bontry* and *Zacondee* in the first place.

How unwholsome soever this Country is, yet we find very few of the Natives afflicted with any Distemper; which yet is not much to be wondred at, since they being born in this Air, and bred up in the Stench, are not liable to be infected with the one or the other. The National Diseases here are the *Small-Pox* and *Worms*; by the former of which in these thirteen or fourteen Years time thousands of Men have been swept away: And with the latter they are miserably afflicted in all parts of their Bodies, but chiefly in their Legs; which

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which occasions a grievous Pain, which they are forced to bear till they can get the *Worm* quite out, that being sometimes a Month: The manner which the Artists take to get it out is this; as soon as the Worm is broken thro' the Tumour, his Head commonly first making its way, after they have drawn it out a little way, they make it fast to a stick, about which they every day wind a small part of it, till continuing this tedious Method, they have entirely wound out the whole, and the Patient is freed from his Pain. But if the Worm happens to break, they are put to a double Torture, the remainder part of the Worm either rotting in the Body, or breaking out at some other place. The *Negroes* are most afflicted with these Worms: But though the *Europeans* are but seldom troubled with them, yet they do not escape them entirely: I have seen some *Negroes* who had nine or ten of them at once, with which they were inexpressibly tormented. This *Worm-Disease* is frequent all the Coast over; but our Men are most tormented with it at *Cormantyn* and *Apam*; which perhaps may be occasioned by the foul Water which they are obliged to drink there. If you would know the length of these Worms, Monsieur *Focquenbrog* obligeth you with a pathetic Description; by which you are informed that they are some of them an Ell-long, and some as long as Pikes, and have not the patience to stay till the Man is dead, but seize him alive.

In the Country of *Ante* several *Negroes* are afflicted with Ravenous Appetites; which is thought to proceed from their drinking a sort of Palm-wine called *Crisia*.

The

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The Natives are very much to be pitied, that being shot, cut, or otherwise wounded in their Wars, they neither know nor have any other way of cure than by green Plants, which they boil in Water and foment the part with that Decoction; which proves effectual in some cases, these Vegetables being endowed with a wonderful Sanative Vertue. But others either not knowing the Simples, or being ignorant how to prepare them aright, apply their Fomentations in vain: Whilst the Wound Gangrenes, and at best turns to a running, which continues the whole Life. Those seized by the Venereal Distemper, are also incurable, except they happening to be near our Fort fall into our Barbers Hands; who, for a good large Summ of Money cure them.

Besides the abovementioned Distempers, most of the Negroes live healthful Lives, but seldom arrive to a great Age: The Reason of which, owning my Ignorance, I dare not pretend to assign. 'Tis observable that here are several Grey-headed People, who look as if they were old, but indeed are not so; this perhaps may be owing to their too early and excessive Venery, by which they so enfeeble themselves, that a Man of fifty (a good old Age here) seized by any Sickness, generally leaves this World. Natures Dictates are very early understood here; and Children of eight or nine Years know very well how the World is propagated, and before twelve they generally reduce their Knowledge into practice: So that it is next to an impossibility to meet with a Maid at Marriageable Years. The Inhabitants for that Reason to secure a Maiden-head marry young, and perhaps then have it just as secure as a handful of Flies;

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Flies; for the young Children hearing daily such discourse as is not very proper for their Ears, and which is the common Conversation of the Negroes, seldom have patience till they come to Years of Maturity.

'Twill not be Labour lost to say something concerning the Winter and Summer, or the good and bad Time, as it is called here; and the great Alteration of Weather, which I have observed here in the space of ten Years. The Summer is accounted to begin with September, and continue the five subsequent Months, and the Winter takes up the remaining six Months in the Year, and is sub-divided into two Rainy, two Misty and two Windy Months: But the Season alters so much from Year to Year that we have in a manner left off reckoning them; the Summer comes sometimes a whole Month earlier one Year than another, and the same is also observed of the Mist and Rain. In short, they come so confused and uncertain, that it is impossible to make any Calculation of them.

Formerly, when I first came to the Coast, Summer and Winter succeeded alternately, exactly at a certain time, and the latter was much severer than at present. The Rains were so violent, continuing for several Days successively as if the Country were to be drowned, and we expected a second Deluge; but at present are not either so violent nor so frequent. Axim, which is but twenty Miles from Elmina, is generally more moistened with Rains than any place upon the whole Coast: And I did not a little wonder when I was first placed there, that the Rains continued so long; for asking one of our Military Officers how long it commonly lasted? he told me above eleven Months, and

twenty eight Days in a Year, and consequently every Leap-Year was blessed with one whole Day of fair Weather: But though the Officer stretched a little, yet 'tis undeniably true, that it rains here at least half the Year; for which Reason only Rice and Trees can grow, the other Fruits being destroyed by too much Wet.

'Tis surprizing to observe that the Storms or Travadoes, as they are here called, are in a few Years so very much lessened; and since I am to speak of the Winds and Thunder here, I shall first take notice how violent the Wind used to blow here. You may be informed by Mounfieur *Focquembrog*, that when he was here, such a great and sudden Storm arose, that the Ships at Sea durst not sail with full Sail, for fear of being over-turned or split against the Rocks or Shores: But at present here is not the least Reason to be afraid; for though we are sometimes attacked by violent Travadoes, or Storms of Thunder, Lightning and Wind, yet they don't come upon us either so suddenly, or forcibly as to occasion any very remarkable Damage.

In some old Papers of the Director *Valkenburg* concerning the Coast; I found that at *Elmina*, in the Year 1651, there was such a terrible Thunder, which so affrighted every Body that they thought the World was at an end: The Gold and Silver was melted in the Bags, which remained untouched; and their Swords broken in the Scabbards, without the latter's being perceivably singed, as well as several strange Accidents which then happened: But the Paper being Worm-eaten I could not distinctly read it, only I perceived that they were in dismal Apprehensions for their Gun powder, the Thunder seeming most violent where that was. About

About 1691. when I was at *Bontry*, there was such a fierce and boisterous Storm in the Country of *Ante*, that Hundreds or rather Thousands of Trees, were either thrown down to the Ground, or blasted by Lightening. The Stake which supported our Flag was shattered into Splinters from top to bottom, and yet remained standing, but so torn assunder, as if one or two Hundred Chissels, had been driven into it in order to split it. The *Negroes*, in the same terrified Condition with us, being of Opinion that the force of the Thunder is contained in a certain Stone; after the Storm was over brought one, which they ridiculously believed had so shattered our Flag-pole: But no wonder they were of that Opinion; for in *Europe*, where we think we are better informed, several People don't much differ from them. But what I have observed of the Effects of Thunder, is sufficient to convince me that 'tis impossible they should be caused by a Stone; nor is there any natural Reason for it; and with super-natural Things I have nothing to do, but had rather believe it the Effects of a violent Compression of Air: But the manner of its Operation I leave the Naturalists to determine.

Not long after, a like Accident happened to one of our Ships cruising before *Axim*, very much injuring its Main Mast and Bolt-Sprit.

In 1693. or 1694. the Thunder broke all the Drinking-Glasses of the Factor's Chamber, and raised up his Child with the Bed under it; both which it threw some feet distant, without the least hurt done. What do you think, Sir? was it possible for a Stone to do this? I believe not.

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Not

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Not long after this, the *English* Fort at *Acra* was so roughly handled by the Thunder, that its Walls were left shattered with Holes even to the Powder-Room, and some Pewter-Potengers were melted into a lump: 'Tis easy to imagine with what terrour they were struck when they found it come so near their Powder.

When I had the Government of *Mouree*, one of the Turrets was rent several feet by a Clap of Thunder; and my Constable being lodged there, affirmed in the Morning he had received a violent shock on his Arm without any farther injury: However, I was in great Danger; for having the Day before removed my Powder, I had caused two or three Thousand Pounds of it to be brought into the Garret, where it lay when the Storm began; but I could not be easy till it was carried to a safer place; however before that could be done I was in no small Confusion.

From what I have related you may collect what sort of Weather we were formerly accustomed to; which so seldom happens at present, that in the space of three or four Years we have not observed any thing extraordinary of that Nature to happen.

The difference betwixt the Heat and Cold formerly and at present, is also very great; for the Heat has been here so excessive in Summer-time, that we seemed to have Dog-days as well as in *Europe*; but now it is become more moderate and supportable: The Cold was also then so fierce in the Nights, that we were persuaded it froze; and in reality we were not much in the wrong, for the Earth, which usually is very moist by reason of the Dew, was on the contrary dry and appeared whitish.

Some

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Some of my Predecessors affirmed, that coming into their Accompting-House in the Morning, they found their Ink frozen: The Truth of which I will not determine, but only hand it to you as I received it.

But this I assure you, that we have felt Nights so cold about *September*, that they made us shake, as I told you before. The present Winters are indeed cold, but not so severe as formerly, though they continue longer; for we have two thirds, or at least half of the Year Winter: Which while I am Writing I believe you begin to think of, and I wish it may happen to you in due Season, and be so mild as not to give you the least Uneasiness, but afford you as much Pleasure as is possible to be wished by, Yours,
E. C.

LETTER IX.

Of the Natural Disposition and Manners of the Negroes on the Gold Coast. That they are very fraudulent and crafty, idle and careless. Of their Cloathing, Education of Children and Complements: Their Courteous Reception of Visitants; and their manner of Visiting amongst the great Men. Of their Mannual Arts; Navigation, Fishing and Agriculture. The Difference of Languages on the Gold Coast. Their Nobility: How many Degrees of Preference amongst them. Their careless ill-contrived way of Building, and making their Roads. Their Musical Instruments; they have no Beggars amongst them, only those shameless ones who do not want. A Description of the Mulattoes.

SIR,

YOURS of the 24th. reached me in very good time. But my present intended Subject is likely so to over-charge this, that for want of room I shall be obliged to defer answering yours till the next opportunity, when I promise not to fail.

I design to treat of the Natural Temper of the Natives; and if this Letter doth not swell

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swell to an unusual Bulk, I shall be at a loss to do Justice to my Subject: Wherefore I must beg your excuse for crowding so many things into one Letter so immethodically, for you are presented with them as they occur to me; and so, Sir, be pleased to accept them.

To begin. The Negroes are all without exception, Crafty, Villanous and Fradulent, and very seldom to be trusted; being sure to slip no opportunity of cheating an European, nor indeed one another. A Man of Integrity is as rare among them as a white Falcon, and their Fidelity seldom extends farther than to their Masters; and it would be very surprizing if upon a scrutiny into their Lives we should find any of them whose perverse Nature would not break out sometimes; for they indeed seem to be born and bred Villains: All sorts of Baseness having got such sure-footing in them, that 'tis impossible to lye concealed; and herein they agree very well with what Authors tell us of the Muscovites. These degenerate Vices are accompanied with their Sisters, Sloth and Idleness; to which they are so prone that nothing but the utmost Necessity can force them to Labour: They are besides so incredibly careless and stupid, and are so little concerned at their Misfortunes, that 'tis hardly to be observed by any change in them whether they have met with any good or ill Success. An Instance of which is that when they have obtained a Victory over their Enemies they return Home diverting themselves with leaping and dancing: But if on their side they are beaten out of the Field, and utterly routed, they yet Feast and are Merry, and Dance, and

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and can cheerfully sport around a Grave. In short, Prosperity and Adversity are no otherwise distinguishable in them than in the cloathing and shaving of their Head: Of which more hereafter. Monsieur *Focquenbrog's* Description of them is undeniably true, when he informs us, that they Feast at Graves, and if they should see their Country in Flames, would cry out, let it burn, and not suffer it in the least to interrupt their Singing, Dancing and Drinking: That they are equally insensible of Grief or Necessity, sing till they die, and dance into the Grave.

This Description is so pertinent, I believe it cannot be mended in so few Words. 'Tis true indeed, that they very greedily heap up Money and Goods; to which their Minds are strongly enclined: But after that they set so small a value upon them, that if they meet with a very great loss, you can never perceive it by their Carriage, it never robs them of an Hours repose; and they are no sooner at their Resting-place, but, like the Beasts, they sleep perfectly undisturbed by any Melancholy Reflections: So that the Advice, not to take care for the Morrow, seems designed more peculiarly for the practice of these Men.

Their Young are extraordinary Vain, and desirous to pass for Persons of Quality, though perhaps but Slaves: Notwithstanding which they mightily carefully adorn their Bodies, and are very fine in their way.

But now let us see how they manage the Affairs of Dress. The Fashions of adorning their

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their Heads are very various; some wear very long Hair curled and platted together and tyed up to the Crown of the Head; others turn their Hair into very small Curls, moistening them with Oil and a sort of Dye, and then adjust them in the shape of Roses; between which they wear Gold *Fetiches*, or a sort of Coral here called *Conte de Terra*, which is sometimes of a quadruple value to Gold, as also a sort of blew Coral, which we call *Agrie*, and the *Negroes Accorri*, which being moderately large, is so much valued, that 'tis generally weighed against Gold. They are very fond of our Hats, never thinking they pay too much for them. Their Arms, Legs and Waste, are adorned with Gold, and the above-mentioned sorts of Coral. Their common Habit is made of three or four Ells of either Velvet, Silk, Cloath, *Perpetuana*, or some sort of Stuff; and several have this sort of Habit or Paan, as they call it, made of fifty sorts of Stuff. This they throw about the Body and roll it up into a small compass, and make it fast; so that it hangs from the Navel downwards, covering the Legs half way: About their Arms they also wear Ornamental Rings made of Ivory, Gold, Silver, &c. and about their Necks Strings or Chains of Gold, and Coral amongst their above-mentioned Dress: And I remember to have seen several of these Strings or Chains worth above one Hundred Pounds Sterling. But these are the Jewels; and they who want them are no Company for those who have 'em.

The *Manceroes* or Youth do not dress themselves so pompously; but the *Cabocero's*
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or chief People are as meanly and plainly Habited, choosing rather to pass for poor than rich Men. They wear only a good Paan, a Cap made of Harts Skin upon their Heads, and a Staff in their Hands, like the old *Israelites*, and a String or Chain of Coral about their Heads: And this is the Dress they daily appear in.

The Commonalty, such as Wine-Drawers, Fishermen, and such like, are very poorly Habited, some with an Ell or two of sorry Stuff, others with a sort of Girdle only drawn through between their Legs and wrapped about them just to hide their Nakedness: To which the Fishermen add, a Cap made of Harts Skins or Rushes, though most of them endeavour to get an old Hat of the Sailors, which serves them in hot as well as cold Weather. The Men here are not so very much addicted to sumptuous Attire; but Pride even amongst the Savage, as well as in the *Netherlands* and all *Europe* over, seems to have established its Throne amongst the Female Sex: And accordingly the Womens Dress is richer than the Mens. Ladies platt their Hair very artfully, and place their *Fetiches*, Coral and Ivory, with a judicious Air, and go much finer than the Men. About their Necks, they wear Gold Chains and Strings of Coral, besides ten or twelve small white Strings of *Conte de Terra*, and Gold; about their Arms and Legs also they are plentifully stored therewith; and they wear them so thick about their Waste, that their Nakedness would be sufficiently covered thereby, if they wore no Cloaths; and the rather because they always have

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have a Garter or rather Girdle. Perhaps Mr. *Constantyn Huygens* thought of our black Mistresses when he adviseth the Men to two, and some Women to three Garters; and if Stockens were in fashion here three Garters would be soon thought as necessary as one is now: But this by the by. To return to our *Negroe Ladies*; on the lower part of their Bodies they wear a Paan which often is three or four times as long as that of the Men: This they wind around their Waste, and bind it on with a Fillet of red Cloth, or something else about half Ell broad and two Ells long, to make it fit close to the Body, both ends of the Fillet hanging out on their Paan; which in Ladies of Quality is adorned with Gold and Silver-lace: On the upper-part of their Body they cast a Veil of Silk or some other fine sort of Stuff; whilst their Arins are beautified with Rings of Gold, Silver and Ivory. These Female *Negroes*, I can assure you, are so well-skilled in their Fashions, that they know how to dress themselves up sufficiently tempting to allure several *Europeans*; but their greatest Power is over those who make no difference betwixt White and Black, especially when the former colour is not to be found.

Having done with their Cloaths, let us see how they educate their Children; with which the Men never trouble themselves in the least, nor the Women much indeed: The Mother gives the Infant suck for two or three Years; which over, and they able to go, then tis, turn out Brutes; if it be hungry she gives it a piece of dry Bread, and sends it abroad
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where ever it pleases, either to the Market, or to the Sea-side to learn to swim, or any where else ; no Body looks after it ; nor is it any Bodies business to hinder its Progress. These Children are as well contented with dry Bread, as ours with all manner of Delicacies, they neither think of nor know any Delicacies ; nor are their Mothers troubled with them, but do their Business undisturbed: When, on the other side, if our Children can but go alone, we are continually perplexed with Thousands of Fears of some or other ill Accidents befalling them.

Child-bearing is here as little troublesome as the Men can wish ; here is no long Lying-in, nor expensive Gossiping or Groaning-Fests : I once happened to be near the place where a *Negroe* Woman was delivered of two Children in the space of one quarter of an Hour ; and when she seemed most uneasy I found 'twas not sufficient to urge any Shrieks or Cries from her ; but the very same Day I saw her go to the Sea-side to wash her self without ever thinking of returning to her Bed. And indeed most Women are here equally easie in this Particular, tho' it happens (but that is very seldom) that a Woman is obliged by Illness to keep her Bed some Days. Here is no Provisions made for Linnen or any Necessaries for the New-born Infant ; and yet all its Limbs grows Vigorous and Proportionate as in *Holland* ; except only that they have larger Navels than ordinary with us : But this is the Mother's fault. If Child-bearing were in all Particulars so easie in our Country——But no more of

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of this least you should tell your Lady, and she bring the *Dutch* Women about my Ears, and 'tis not very adviseable to anger them. But to return to our Subject ; the Child is no sooner born than the Priest (here called *Feticheer* or *Confoe*) is sent for, who binds a parcel of Ropes and Coral, and other Trash about the Head, Body, Arms and Legs of the Infant : After which he Exorcises, according to their accustomed manner ; by which they believe it is armed against all Sicknes and ill Accidents : And doubtless this is as effectual as if done by the Pope himself. By this you may observe what Power the Priests have over evil Spirits : But when I come to describe the Marriage and married Lives of the *Negroes*, I shall present you with something more concerning Child-bearing ; and at present proceed, only informing you that these Ropes and Trash serve the Children instead of Cloaths commonly till they are seven or eight Years of Age ; at which period they pride themselves in a necessary Lappet of half an Ell of Stuffs.

If the Father is a Fisherman or Husbandman, and the Child a Male, he breeds him up to his Vocation very early : And the Child now beginning to find that he must soon shift for himself, he is sure to secure all that a convenient Opportunity will give him leave against that time, which his Parents never contradict.

I have hinted with what sorry and how little Food the *Negroes* content their Children ; which would hardly be possible if they fared deli-

deliciously themselves. But they are not guilty of this sort of Intemperance, but live rather too soberly, Two Pence a day being sufficient to diet one of them. Their common Food is a Pot full of Millet boiled to the consistence of Bread, or instead of that Jambs and Potatoes; over which they pour a little Palm-Oyl, with a few boiled Herbs, to which they add a stinking Fish. This they esteem a nice Dish; for 'tis but seldom they can get the Fish and Herbs: As for Oxen, Sheep, Hens, or other Flesh, they only buy that for Holy-days: Of which more in another place. The *Negroes* are not so sparing in their Diet because they don't desire better Food, of which we have sufficient Proof when they eat with us, for they are then sure to satiate themselves with the best at the Table at that rate, as if they were laying in for three days. Nor is it for want of Money that they live thus, but only out of pure fordid Covetousness.

I have been sometimes of Opinion that they thought all dear things unwholsome. The Diet I have described is that of the Commonalty; nor do the Rich fare much better: They allow themselves a little more Fish, and a few more Herbs. But for an extraordinary Dish they take Fish, a handful of Corn, as much Dough, and some Palm-Oyl, which they boil together in Water; and this they call *Mallaget*; and is, I can assure you, a Lordly Entertainment amongst them; and, to speak truth, 'tis no very disagreeable Food to those who are used to it, and is very wholesom in this Country.

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Though the *Negroes* eat so poorly and so little, they drink the more, being great Lovers of strong Liquor, and let the World go how it will, they must have Brandy in the Morning and Palm-Wine in the Afternoon; and he that hath one Penny in Money thirsteth after three Pennyworth of Drink, which is welcome to them Night and Day; and we are forced to give strict Orders to our Men to watch our Cellars at Night, for they know too well how to get at them. They are so besotted to strong Liquors and Tobacco, that you may equally entrust Bacon to a Cat, as either of them within their Power. The Women are as guilty of this Vice as the Men; and, as if it were a Virtue, their Children are taught it at the Age of three or four Years.

The Salutations and Civilities of the *Negroes* claim a place here, as being remarkably peculiar. Upon accidentally meeting each other, the Salutation is pulling off the Hat or Cap, or uncovering the Head, amongst those *Negroes* who converse with us; but the Inland People don't esteem the uncovering of the Head for any sign of Respect. Next, they ask after each others Welfare; but not like our manner, by enquiring after one anothers Health; but the first Question is, *How did you sleep?* to which the Reply is, *Very well*: And the other returns the Question to the first, who if he hath slept well tells him so. From whence we may observe, that the *Negroes* conceive good found Sleep to be the most necessary Preservative of Health. When one *Negroe* is visited
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by another, he takes his Guest by the Hand, and knipping his two middle Fingers together, he bids him welcome: This is the Ceremony in use if this be his first Visit; but if he hath been there before, and is returned again, he expresseth his Welcome by telling him, *You went out and are returned*, intimating they wish him good Fortune; to which he answers, *I am come again*: And this passeth current on both sides for refined Civility. They are very obligingly civil when they receive Visits from a person who lives in another Country. As soon as the Complements are passed, the Wife, or a Slave, brings Water, Grease or Ointment to wash and anoint the Stranger, herein agreeing with the ancient times, who were accustomed to wash and anoint the Feet of their Guests.

The Visits of Kings and those of the best Rank, are accompanied with several odd Ceremonies: For instance; when a Lord or King of a Town is advanced very near to, or reaches that King's Town he intends the Honour of a Visit to, he dispatches one of his Attendants to complement and advise him of his coming; who on the other side is sure to send back a Messenger of his own with his Ambassador, to complement and assure him of a hearty Welcome. While they are on their way, the King or General ranges all his Soldiers in Battel-Array, in the Market-place, or before his Palace; these being frequently about three or four hundred Men, who sit down expecting the approach of their Guest; who to express his State and Grandeur the

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most effectually, takes care to advance but slowly, and is attended by a great number of armed Men, who leaping and dancing also make a dismal Military Noise.

Having at last reached the place where the other sits expecting him, he doth not make directly towards him, but detaches all his Un-armed People of Fashion to present their Hands by way of Salutation to the other's Men, that are next or around him, as well as to himself: After all which at last the two Kings or Generals, armed with Shields, make their Mutual Approaches; and if the Visitant be of higher Rank than himself, or he designs to honour him with an extraordinary Reception, he embraces and bids him welcome three times successively: But if his Visitant be below him, he welcomes him by barely thrice presenting his Hand to him and filleping his middle Finger, which is done in three successive Advances; which being ended, the Guest and his Attendants sit down opposite to the other, expecting him to come and welcome him and his Followers; which is also soon after done with three circular Advances: After which he returns to his place and sits down, sending Persons to salute and welcome the rest of his Visitant's Troop, to ask after their Health and the Intent of their coming; which the Chief generally answers by Messengers of his own. These Mutual Ceremonies frequently last an Hour or two, or till the Entertainer rises and obliges his Guest to go into his House, where he is presented by the King and the great Men of the Town with Sheep,

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Sheep, Fowl, Jammes or whatever is agreeable: And thus ended this tedious Salutation, which I have spent too much time in describing; but I hope you will not be tired with it, for in order to abridge it I have omitted several Circumstances.

In the beginning of this Letter I told you the *Negroes* were very idle and not easily prevailed on to work, as well as that they had very few Manual Arts: All which indeed are employed chiefly in the making of Wooden or Earthen Cups, Troughs, matting of Chairs, making of Copper Ointment Boxes, and Arm-Rings of Gold, Silver or Ivory, with some other Trash. Their chief Handicraft, with which they are best acquainted being the Smithery; for with their sorry Tools they can make all sorts of War-Arms that they want, Guns only excepted; as well as whatever is required in their Agriculture and House-keeping. They have no Notion of Steel and yet they make their Sables and all cutting Instruments: Their principal Tools are a kind of hard Stone instead of an Anvil, a pair of Tongues, and a small pair of Bellows, with three or more Pipes; which blow very strong and are an Invention of their own. These are most of their Arts, besides that of making of *Fetiches*; which I have before informed you of: But their most artful Works are the fine Gold and Silver Hat-bands which they make for us; the Thread and Contexture of which is so fine, that I question whether our *European* Artists would not be put to it to imitate them: And indeed if they could, and were no better paid than the

Negroes

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Negroes, they would be obliged to live on dry Bread.

You must not take it ill that this Letter is filled up with a Medley of all sorts of Subjects; that, according to our Proverb, *I jump from the Ox to the Ass*; for I usually write what first occurs to my Memory. Having once mentioned their Navigation, which is not very considerable, I shall acquaint you they use a sort of Boats called *Canoes*; the largest of which are about thirty foot long and six broad: From this size they go down to the smallest sort, which are about thirteen or fourteen foot long and three or four broad. The biggest of these being capable of carrying a reasonable Merchant-Man's Boat lading; we generally use them in the transportation of our Goods from place to place: They are rowed in proportion to their size, by two, three, five, seven, nine, eleven or fifteen Rowers; which when they exceed two, must always be an odd number, because they are obliged to sit in couples, and an odd one is requisite to steer. Instead of Oars they use a sort of Paddles made like a Spade, having a Handle about the same length; with which paddling the Water with an under-hand stroke, they keep the *Canoe* in a very swift Course. With the least sort of *Canoes*, with two or three Men in each, they generally go a fishing; which leads me to their Fishing-tackling, consisting of great and small Hooks; also Harping-Irons, which they use when they have hooked a great Fish: They are besides furnished with casting as well as other large Nets; which last they

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they plant in the Sea over Night, and draw them in the Morning; when they are frequently full of all sorts of Fish: But if a Sword-fish, or any other such rough Guest happens to get in the Net, 'tis sure to be torn in pieces with the Sword's Snout: But this Damage is easily prevented if the Negroes are timely informed of it; for they go two or three Canoes in Company well furnished with Harping-Irons; and considering they greedily eat this sort of Fish, if they can but take him, he makes amends for two or three broken Nets.

I shall here say nothing of their Agriculture; not only because I have already touched upon it, but by reason I hope for a better opportunity of treating that Subject.

Though the Gold Coast is not extended above sixty Miles in length, yet we find there seven or eight several Languages, so different that three or four of them are interchangeably unintelligible to any but the respective Natives: The Negroes of *Funmore*, ten Miles above *Axim*, cannot understand those of *Egira*, *Abocroe*, *Ancober* and *Axim*: There is indeed a vast difference in their Languages. That of *Axim* is a very disagreeable brutal Sound; that of *Ante* very different from it, though not much more beautiful: But more shocking is that of *Acra*, not having the least Similitude with any of the rest. The other Coast Negroes, those of *Aquamboe* only excepted, generally understand one another: But the In-land Negroes is by much the pleasantest and most agreeable; I mean those of *Dinkira*, *Akim*,

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Akim, *Acamy* and *Adom*; this difference is easily discernable to a Person but the least acquainted with their Languages, and appears as that betwixt *Brabanders* and Foreigners: And if the *Negroes*, which we daily converse with, who live about our Forts, expressed themselves as agreeably as the others, 'twould be no difficult matter to learn their Language in two or three Years, which we find at present we can scarce do in ten, at least not in any sort of Perfection. Some of us, amongst which I dare reckon my self, have made such a Progress, that we understand the greatest part of it, though we can hardly hit the Pronunciation. The Sound of some Words is so strange, that though we have often endeavoured to express them with our *European* Letters, yet we have never been able to do it; and the *Negroes* can neither write nor read, and consequently have no use of Letters; which renders it impossible for us to trace their Faults. Dr. *Dapper*, who never was here, hath adventured to express their Words; which, though I may pretend to some Knowledge of their Languages, I dare not attempt, being assured I shall not succeed much better than he.

Could the *Negroes*, as I have said, either read or write, we should be able to learn their Tongues speedily by observing the Letters which expressed each thing; but having no other assistance than the bare Sound, I think 'tis folly to attempt farther. Wherefore, Sir, I hope you'll expect no more on this Head.

I remember to have met with some Hints in a certain Author tending to a Description of several Noble Families; but in all the time of my Residence here, I have not been able to discover what sort of People these were who put any value upon the Nobility of Families: I shall not take up much of your time in Enquiries what difference there is betwixt one *Negro* and another, or why one is more esteemed than another; for if I should dwell never so long on this Subject, the Result is, only the richest Man is the most honoured, without the least regard to Nobility.

I have observed five Degrees of Men amongst the *Negroes*; the first of which are their Kings or Captains, for the Word is here *Synonymous*.

The second, their *Cabocero's*, or Chief Men; which reducing to our manner of Expression, we should be apt to call them Civil Fathers; whose Province is only to take care of the Welfare of the City or Village, and to appease any Tumult.

The third sort are those who have acquired a great Reputation by their Riches, either devolved on them by Inheritance or gotten by Trade. And these are the Persons which some Authors have represented as Noblemen; but whether they are in the right or not, shall hereafter plainly appear.

The

The fourth are the common People employed in the Tillage of Wines, Agriculture and Fishing.

The fifth and last are the Slaves, either sold by their Relations, taken in War, or come so by Poverty.

These five being the only Degrees which are to be found amongst the *Negroes*; let us enquire by what means they arrive at any of the three first.

First, The Dignity of King or Captain in most of these Countries, descends Hereditarily from Father to Son, and in defect of Issue to the next Male-Heir; though sometimes so much regard is had to his Riches in Slaves and Money, that he who is plentifully stored with these, is often preferred to the Right Heir.

The Inauguration of a King is not clogged with many Pompous Ceremonies; for Coronations and Coronation Oaths being here equally unknown, the new King is shewn to the People, and sometimes carried through his Territories; and the whole Affair terminates in one merry Day: But in case of Competitorship, when two pretend to that Dignity at the same time; for Confirmation of the Loyalty of their Followers, each Pretender obliges his Respective Party to an Oath of Allegiance; without this happens all things run very smoothly, some Offerings only made, as usually here on all Solemn Occasions. The Principal Men or

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Cabo-

Cabocero's, are commonly limited to a set number; but some of them dying and the Vacancies not filling, when upon assembling together they find their number too small, they choose out of the Commonalty Persons well advanced in Years to compleat their number (for young Men are seldom admitted into this Honourable Assembly) who are obliged to express their Gratitude to their Electing Brethren by a Present of a Cow and some Drink; after which they are lawfully admitted and confirmed. The Custom of *Axim* obliges the Candidate for this Dignity to be a Native of that Country living at *Axim*, at least keeping a House there, inhabited by one of his Wives, or some of his Family, and sometimes residing there himself; which is somewhat like our being obliged to keep Fire and Light to preserve our Right of Citizens in *Holland*. If there be one alone, or several, he or they are all brought to our Fort and presented to our Factor, with a request that they may be admitted into their Society; who, if he hath nothing to object against him, administers an Oath to him on the Bible, obliging him to be and remain true to the *Netherlanders*, and to aid and assist them to the utmost of his Power against all their Enemies whatsoever, whether *Europeans* or *Negroes*, and deport himself on all occasions as a Loyal Subject: After which he takes an Oath, not unlike the former, respecting his own Nation; both which Oaths are confirmed by an Imprecation, *That God would strike him dead if he swore contrary to his Intentions, or doth not keep his Oath*; in farther

ther Confirmation of which the Bible is held to his Breast and laid on his Head; which are the Ceremonies used to render the Oath Obligatory: This done, the Factor having registered his Name, acknowledges him a Member of their Assembly, and admits him to all the Rights, Privileges and Advantages appendant thereto; and having made the due Presents to his Brethren, he is a *Caboccer* during his Life. In other places on the Coast the Election of a *Caboccer* is somewhat different; but it being so well regulated at *Axim*, I shall content my self with describing that only.

The third sort of *Negroes* are those enriched either by Inheritance or Trade; who, to acquire a Reputation and great Name amongst their Fellow-Citizens, buy about seven small Elephants Teeth, which they make into Blowing-Horns; upon which they cause their Family to be taught all sort of Tunes usual, according to the extravagant Course of the Country: Which when they have learned, they inform all their Relations and Acquaintance that they intend to shew their Blowing-Horns publicly, that they may come and make merry with them for several Days together; whilst they, their Wives and Slaves appear with as much Pomp and Splendour as is possible, borrowing Gold and Coral of their Friends to make the greater Show, and distributing Presents amongst them: So that this extravagant Ceremony becomes very expensive. This Initia-

tory Festival being over they are free to blow upon their Horns at pleasure, which none are permitted who have not thus aggrandized themselves; but if they are enclined to divert themselves are obliged to borrow them. How contradictory is the Course of Things in this World! In some places Men are obliged to beg hard and make Interest for Horns, whilst they come home to the Houses of others as unexpected as undesired,

A *Negroe* thus far advanced in Honour, usually makes himself Master of first one and then another Shield: Of which he makes a Shew as publick and pompous as that of the Horns; and is obliged to lye the first Night with all his Family in Battle Array in the open Air; intimating that he will not be affraid of any Danger or Hardship in Defence of his People. After which he passes the next and the remaining Days of the Feast, which are generally about eight, in Shooting and Martial-Exercises, as well as Dancing and all sorts of Mirth; himself, his Wives and Family being as richly drest as they possibly can; and all that he hath in the World exposed to publick View, and removed from place to place. But this Festival is not so expensive as the former; for instead of making Presents, as usual in that, he here on the contrary receives very valuable Presents; and when he designs to divert himself, or go to the War, he is permitted to carry two Shields: A Favour not allowed to any who hath not thus qualified himself.

These

These are the Nobility which Authors boaff of on this Coast; but that in reality they are not so is plain, because no Person can Enable himself, but must be so by Birth, or by Creation of another: In both which they are deficient; for by Birth they are only Slaves, and consequently widely distant from Nobles, and they owe their advance only to themselves and their Money; their Port of Honour here being always open to him who is rich enough to bear the Expence. Besides, in other Places Nobility engages those honoured with it firmly in the publick Service of their King or Country; which these are not the least concerned for, applying themselves to nothing but Trade: But if any are fond of having them Gentlemen and Noblemen, I shall let them remain so. And it will not a little redound to my Honour, that I have for several Years successively been waited on by one of these Noblemen in the Capacity of a Footman, without having the least respect to his Nobility.

The fourth and fifth sort need no other account to be given of them, than that they are common People and Slaves.

These Blowing-Horns naturally lead me to a Description of the Musical Instruments with which they chiefly divert themselves. But I shall first inform you that the *Negroes* in building their Villages have not the least

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least regard to the Pleasantry of the Situation. With us indeed it is usual, and is doubtless very reasonable to put a high value upon a fine Prospect and pleasant Walks; but these lumpish Wretches frequently choose a dry and disagreeable place to build on; neglecting at the same time well-plant-ed Hills, charming Vallies, and beautiful Rivers; which they have in great abundance, and serve them for no use nor afford them any diversion. They are full as indifferent and negligent in the making of their Roads, they being generally as rough and perverse as the People themselves: A Road which need not to be above two Miles in length, frequently becomes three by its crookedness and unevenness; and though they have been often made sensible of this Inconvenience by us, and a very little trouble would mend them, yet they will not alter them; the way once made must still remain, though it leads them twice as far out of the way.

Their Musical Instruments are various, and very numerous, but all of them yield a horrid and barbarous shocking Sound: The chief of them are the mentioned Horns, made, as I have already told you, of small Elephant's Teeth; though not so very small but some of them weigh betwixt twenty and thirty Pounds, and others more: To adorn these they cut in them several Images of Men and Beasts; and that so finely that it seems to be done Litterally in
Obedi-

LET. IX. | *Gold Coast of Guinea.*

Obedience to the Second Commandment; for indeed 'tis difficult to discern whether they are most like Men or Beasts; at the lower end of these Horns is a piece of Rope coloured black with Hens or Sheeps Blood, and at the small end is a square Hole; at which by blowing they produce a sort of extravagant Noise; which they reduce to a sort of Tone and Measure, and vary as they please: Sometimes they blow upon these Horns so well, that though it is not agreeable, yet it is not so horrid as to require a whole Bale of Cotton annually to stop ones Ears, as *Focquenbrog* has it.

Their second sort of Instruments are their Drums; of which there are about ten several sorts, but most of them are excavated Trees covered at one end with a Sheeps-skin, and left open at the other; which they set on the Ground like a Kettle-Drum, and when they remove it they hang it by a String about their Necks: They beat on these Drums with two long Sticks made Hammer-Fashion, and sometimes with a straight Stick or their bare Hands; all which ways they produce a dismal and horrid Noise: The Drums being generally in consort with the blowing of the Horns; which afford the most charming Asses Musick that can be imagined: to help out this they always set a little Boy to strike upon a hollow piece of Iron with a piece of Wood; which alone makes a Noise more detestable than the Drums and Horns together.

Of

Of late they have invented a sort of small Drums, covered on both sides with a Skin, and extended to the shape of an Hour-Glass: The Noise they afford is very like that our Boys make with their Pots they play with on Holidays, with this difference only, that these have Iron-rings, which makes some alteration in the Sound. 'Twould be ridiculous to tire you with all the Instruments of the *Negroes*: I shall therefore take leave of this Subject, by describing the best they have; which is a hollow piece of Wood of two hands breadth long, and one broad; from the hinder-part of this a Stick comes cross to the fore-part, and upon the Instrument are five or six extended Strings: So that it bears some sort of Similitude to a small Harp, or if you will, is not very unlike the Modern Greek Musical Instruments, and affords by much the most agreeable Sound of any they have here. Having said enough on this Subject, let us turn our selves to another.

What is most commendable amongst the *Negroes*, is, that we find no poor amongst them who beg; for though they are never so wretchedly poor they never beg: The Reason of which is, that when a *Negro* finds he cannot subsist, he binds himself for a certain Summ of Money, or his Friends do it for him; and the Master to whom he hath obliged himself keeps him in all Necessaries, setting him a sort of Task, which
is

is not in the least slavish, being chiefly to defend his Master on occasion, and in sowing time to work as much as he himself pleases. So that, as I have before told you, here are no Beggars obliged to be so by Poverty: But shameless Beggars, without the least necessity, are so plentiful that they all undistinguishably deserve that Name: A King himself is not ashamed to beg; and that for such mean things as he might buy for one penny or two pence; they are so scandalous importunate, that 'tis impossible to get from them without giving them something.

Though I have been tedious in this, I hope you will pardon it; for I must own my Itch of Scribling is not yet over, and I cannot help giving you an account of a wonderful and extraordinary sort of People, I mean the *Tapayers* or *Mulattoes*; a Race begotten by *Europeans* upon the *Negro* or *Mulatto-Women*. This Bastard Strain is made up of a parcel of profligate Villains, neither true to the *Negroes* nor us, nor indeed dare they trust one another; so that you very rarely see them agree together. They assume the Name of Christians, but are as great Idolaters as the *Negroes* themselves. Most of the Women are publick Whores to the *Europeans*, and private ones to the *Negroes*; so that I can hardly give them a Character so bad as they deserve. I can only tell you whatever is in its own Nature worst in the *Europeans* and *Negroes* is united in
them;

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them ; so that they are the sink of both. The Men, most of which are Soldiers in our Service, are cloathed as we are ; but the Women prink up themselves in a particular manner : Those of any Fashion wear a fine Shift, and over that a short Jacket of Silk or Stuff, without Sleeves ; which reaches from under the Arms to their Hipps, fastened only at the Shoulders : Upon their Heads they wear several Caps one upon the other, the uppermost of which is of Silk, pleated before and round at the top to make it fit fast ; upon all which they have a sort of Fillet which comes twice or thrice around the Head. Thus dressed they make no small Shew : On the lowerpart of their Body they are cloathed as the *Negroe-Women* are ; and those who are poor are only distinguishable by their Dress, they going naked in the upper-part of their Body.

The whole Brood, when young, are far from handsome, and when old, are only fit to fright Children to their Beds. If a Painter were obliged to paint Envy, I could wish him no better Original to draw after than an old *Mulatto-Woman*. In process of time their Bodies become speckled with white, brown and yellow Spots, like the Tygers, which they also resemble in their barbarous Nature : But I shall here leave them, for fear it may be thought that I am prejudiced by hatred against 'em ; but so far from that, that there is not a single Person who hath any thing to do with them, but he must own they are not worth speaking to.

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to. Well, as disagreeable as it is to be obliged to such Company, I have this satisfaction, that it cannot be so irksome to me here, as it will be agreeable to me to tell you in few Months, *Viva voce*, how much I am Yours, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R X.

Describing the several Religions of the Negroes. Their Opinions of a Deity, and different Sentiments concerning the Creation of Man: Manner of solemn Swearing on several Occasions. The Manner of asking Questions of their Idol; how it is managed, and the Frauds of their Priests on that account. How, and on what occasions, Publick and Solemn Exercises of Religion are here enjoined. Every private Person hath his particular False God and Holidays, which he appoints in Honour of that; the Offerings to it. Which would be the most effectual way to convert the Negroes to Christianity. Of their forbidden Meats: Their Opinions concerning their False Gods. The Reward of Good and Evil. Of Murther and Adultery, &c. wherefore amongst them. Various Opinions of a Future Life. Miraculous Priests living in the Inland Country. What the Negroes think of Devils, Conjurors and Apparitions. How they eject Devils. Only two Festivals among them. The Difference betwixt Fortunate and Unfortunate Days. They are very Superstitious. An Instance thereof.

S I R,

MY last was very long; and if I treat the Subject largely, this will not be much shorter: For the Religion of the Negroes, of which I de-
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A Description of the L E T. X.

sign to speak, will afford Matter enough for a Book alone, by reason of the numerous and different sorts of it: For there is no Village or Town, nay, I had almost said, no private Family which doth not differ from another on this Head: But not thinking it worth while to recount all the various Opinions, I shall therefore pass them over, and only speak of their publick Religion and Worship; in which they almost all agree.

Almost all the Coast Negroes believe in one true God, to whom they attribute the Creation of the World and all things in it, though in a crude indigested Manner, they not being able to form a just Idea of a Deity. They are not obliged to themselves nor the Tradition of their Ancestors for their Opinion, rude as it is, but to their daily Conversation with the Europeans, who from time to time have continually endeavoured to emplant this Notion in them. There are two Reasons which confirm me in this Sentiment: First, that they never make any Offerings to God, nor call upon him in time of need; but in all their Difficulties, they apply themselves to their *Fetiché* (of which more hereafter) and pray to him for Success in their Undertakings: The Second is, the different Opinions of some of them concerning the Creation; for a great part of the Negroes believe that Man was made by *Ananse*, that is, a great Spider: the rest attribute the Creation of Man to God, which they assert to have happened in the following manner: They tell us, that in the beginning God created Black as well as White Men; thereby not only hinting but endeavouring to prove that their Race was as soon in the World as ours; and to bestow a yet greater Honour on themselves, they tell us that God having created these two sorts of Men, offered two sorts of Gifts, *viz.* Gold, and the Knowledge or Arts of Reading

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Reading and Writing, giving the Blacks the first Election, who chose Gold, and left the Knowledge of Letters to the White. * God granted their Request, but being incensed at their Avarice, resolved that the Whites should for ever be their Masters, and they obliged to wait on them as their Slaves. Others again affirm, that Man at his first Creation was not shaped as at present; but that those parts which serve for the distinction of Sexes in Men and Women, were placed more in view for the convenience of Propagation: What think you, Sir, is not this a ridiculous Notion? would it not be very obliging to the Turks to sometimes gratify their Bestial Appetites with Women in an Unnatural Manner, not to mention their *Sodomy* with Men.

I have found very few Negroes of this Sentiment; but having asked those who are its Assertors, when the shape of Man was alter'd to its present State: they replied, that God had done it out of respect to Modesty when the World became so well Peopled that the present Shape was sufficient to preserve the Race of Mankind. Others on the Gold Coast would persuade us, that the first Men came out of Holes and Pits, like that at present in a great Rock on the Sea, near our Fort of *Acra*. But 'tis time to stop my Hand, for if I should particularize all their Notions concerning the Creation, the Moon and Stars, instead of being short, I should grow insupportable tedious. I shall only tell you, that Father *Kirchen* would not find it very difficult to persuade them that the Planets are Peopled, or at least the Moon: for they have already discovered a Fellow beating a Drum in her.

I promised just now to explain the Word *Fetiché*, which is used in various Senses. *Fetiché* or *Bossun* in the Negro Language, derives its self from their

* The Negroes believe, that there is no Gold in any other Countries besides their own; and that no Blacks have any Knowledge or the Art of Letters; nor have they any Notion of the extent of the World but what they recollect from our Informations.

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False God, which they call *Bossum*. Are they enclined to make Offerings to their Idols, or desire to be informed of something by them? they cry out, Let us make *Fetiche*; by which they express as much, as let us perform our Religious Worship, and see or hear what our God saith. In like manner, if they are injured by another they make *Fetiche* to destroy him in the following manner: they cause some Victuals and Drink to be Exorcised by their *Feticheer* or Priest, and scatter it in some place which their Enemy is accustomed to pass; firmly believing, that he who comes to touch this conjured Stuff shall certainly dye soon after. Those who are afraid of this coming to such places, cause themselves to be carried over them; for 'tis the wonderful Nature of this Exorcised Trash, that then it does not in the least affect the Person, nor can it at all affect those who carry him, or any Body else besides him. So that tho' the Art of poisoning is a Favourite peculiar to the *Italians*, yet they have always found themselves obliged to endanger the Innocent to come at the Guilty, and never yet could hit on so distinguishing and discreet a Poison as this of our *Negroes*; though I must confess I like that of the *Italians* so little, that I had rather walk over all that the *Negroes* can lay for me, than have any thing to do with theirs.

If they are robbed they make use of much the same means for the discovery and condign Punishment of the Thief: They are so obstinately bigotted to this Opinion, that if you should produce a hundred Instances of its Impotence, 'twou'd be impossible to alter their Sentiments, they having always something ready on which to charge its contrary Success. If any Person be caught strowing this Poison, he is very severely punished, nay, sometimes with Death, though it be on the
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last account of Thieving, which is here freely allowed. Obligatory Swearing they also call, making of *Fetiche's*; Is any Obligation to be confirmed, their Phrase is, *let us as a farther Confirmation make Fetiche's*. When they drink the *Oath-Draught*, 'tis usually accompanied with an Imprecation, *that the Fetiche may kill them if they do not perform the Contents of their Obligation*. Every Person entering into any Obligation is obliged to drink this Swearing Liquor. When any Nation is hired to the Assistance of another, all the Chief ones are obliged to drink this Liquor, with an Imprecation, that their *Fetiche* may punish them with Death, if they do not assist them with utmost Vigour to Extirpate their Enemy. But Oaths on this occasion are so frequently taken and broken, that they themselves have no great Opinion of them; besides, they have found out a way to absolve themselves from their Oaths, take the Money of those who have hired them to the assistance, and act directly contrary to their Obligation: for having entered into this solemn Engagement or Oath, in the presence of their Priest; they doubt not in the least but that it is, in his Power to free them of the Obligation. This you will be apt to say looks a little like the Papacy; but I'll assure you 'tis in reality, as I have represented it. But of late Years some *Negroes* are so refined, that before they take their contractory Oaths, they oblige the Priest to swear first, and drink the *Oath-Draught*, with an Imprecation, that the *Fetiche* should punish him with Death, if he ever absolved any Person from their Oath without the unanimous consent of all interested in that Contract. Oaths taken in this manner are generally kept unviolated and punctually performed. If you ask what Opinion the *Negroes* have of those who falsify their Obligations confirmed by the Oath-Drink; they

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they believe the perjured Person shall be swelled by that Liquor till he bursts; or if that doth not happen, that he shall shortly dye of a Languishing Sickness: The first Punishment they imagine more peculiar to Women, who take this Draught to acquit themselves of any Accusation of Adultery; and if I may be allowed to make a Comparison, this Drink seems very like the bitter Water administred to the Women in the Old Testament by way of Purgation from the charge of Adultery. Thus in the Description of the Religion of the *Negroes*, I find my self insensibly fallen upon their Oaths; but since even that is a part of Religious Worship, I have some excuse for pursuing that Subject yet a little farther. If any Person is suspected of Thievery and the Indictment is not clearly made out, he is obliged to clear himself by drinking the *Oath-Draught*, and to use the Imprecation, that the *Fetiche* may kill him if he be guilty of Thievery. The several ways of taking Oaths are so numerous, that I should tire you as well as my self with a Repetition of them: Wherefore I shall content my self with adding only one esteemed the most Solemn and Obligatory, which is only used on important occasions, and is in the following Manner.

Each Priest or *Feticheer* hath his peculiar Idol, prepared and adjusted in a particular and different manner, but most of them like the following Description. They have a great Wooden Pipe filled with Earth, Oil, Blood, the Bones of dead Men and Beasts, Feathers, Hair; and, to be short, all sorts of Excrementitious and filthy Trash, which they do not endeavour to mould into any Shape, but lay it in a confused heap in the Pipe. The *Negroe* who is to take an Oath before this Idol, is placed directly opposite to it, and asks the Priest the Name of his Idol (each having a particular one;)

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one;) of which being informed, he calls the *Fetiche* by its Name, and recites at large the Contents of what he designs to bind by an Oath, and makes it his Petitionary Request that the Idol may punish him with Death if he swears falsely; then he goes round the Pipe and stands still and swears a second time in the same place and manner as before, and so a third time likewise: after which the Priest takes some of the mentioned Ingredients out of the Pipe; with which he touches the Swearer's Head, Arms, Belly and Legs, and holding it above his Head, turns it three times round; then he cuts off a bit of the Nail of one Finger in each Hand, of one Toe of each Foot, and some of the Hair of his Head, which he throws into the Pipe where the Idol is lodged: all which done the Oath is firmly Obligatory. But to turn to another Subject.

When the *Negroes* design to begin a War, to drive a Bargain, to Travel or attempt any thing of Importance; their first Business is to consult their False God by the Priest, concerning the Event of their Undertaking, who very seldom Prophesies Ill, but generally encourages them to hope for prosperous Success; which they take on his Word, not doubting the Issue in the least, and obsequiously perform all the Priest's Commands; which generally oblige them to offer up Sheep, Hogs, Fowls, Dogs and Cats to their Idol; or at other times perhaps, Cloaths, Wine and Gold; by which the Priest is sure to be the greatest Gainer, for he sweeps all to himself, only presenting Garbage and the Excrements of the slaughtered Sacrifice to his God to divert himself withal: And thus, besides the Money given him, he makes a shift to pay himself very well out of the Offerings for his small trouble.

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If the Priest is enclined to oblige the Querent, the Questions are put to the Idol in his presence and generally in one of the two following methods. The first way is by a bundle of about twenty small bits of Leather; in the middle of which they bind some Trash of the same Nature; with that they fill the mention'd Pipe: Some of these Ingredients promise good Success, and others threaten the contrary. This Bundle the Priest shuffles together several times; and if those which presage a good Issue happen to come frequently together, he assures the Querent that his Undertaking shall end well. But 'tis here to be observed that the Dextrous Priest can by slight, make which he pleases of the Leathers come together; and that if he ever gives them an unlucky or discouraging Answer, 'tis only to extort more Offerings from them, on pretence of appeasing the incensed God, but in reality to redouble his own Perquisites.

The second way of consulting their Idols, is by a sort of wild Nuts; which they pretend to take up by guess and let fall again: after which they tell them, and form their Predictions from the numbers falling even or odd. In short, the Priests, who are generally sly and crafty, encouraged by the stupid Credulity of the People, have all the opportunity in the World to impose the grossest absurdities and fleece their Purfes; as they indeed do effectually. For if the Event confutes their Presage, they never want an excuse; the Sacred Rites were not carefully performed, this or that part of it was slubbered over or omitted, the God is therefore enraged; and 'tis for that reason the Affair hath succeeded so crossly. This is glibly swallowed. The Priest is never accused of Falshood; if the whole Land be ruined, his Reputation remains secure and untouched: But if by chance his Auguries come to pass, there

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there is not in the World a Wiser or Holyer Man, and he is sure not to want his Reward.

Publick General Religious Exercises of a whole Nation or Town are customary on account of Unseasonableness or Unfruitful Weather in Floods, or a great Drought: When the Chief of the Town or Nation assemble and advise with the Priest what course is most proper to remove the present publick Calamity; and what they order is immediately ridiculously commanded or forbidden through the Land by a publick Cryer; and whoever dares presume to act contrary to this Order, is sure to incur a large pecuniary Penalty. When their Fishery is at low Ebb, they make Offerings to the Sea: but this generally happens about August or September, when Experience tells them that a vast Quantity of Fish is commonly taken, and yet this is always believed an Effect of the Offering.

Almost every Village hath a small appropriated Grove, where the Governours and chief People frequently repair to make their Offerings; either for the publick good, or for themselves. These Groves are esteemed Sacred, no Person presuming to defile them, pluck, cut, or break off any Branches of Trees; who, besides the accustomed Punishment, is not willing to lay himself under an universal Malediction.

Each particular Person hath his peculiar False God, which he or she worships after their manner, on that Day of the Week on which he was born. This they call their *Bossun*, or in their Portuguese *Sante-Day*, on which they drink no Palm-Wine before Sun-set: They are habited all in white, and as a Sign of Purity smeared with white Earth. Most of the *Negroes*, especially the Principal, have besides this another Weekly Day Sanctified to their *Fetich's*. On these Days they kill a Cock, and some-

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sometimes, if they are rich, a Sheep, which they offer up to their God in Words alone; for they immediately fall upon it and tear it to pieces with their Fingers; taking it for granted, that 'tis sufficient to say 'twas killed for him: And as he hath none of it, so the Owner, when a Sheep is killed on this Account, hath the least share of it; for his Friends and Acquaintance fall like a Dog upon a sick Cow, each as greedily as narrowly watching his opportunity of seizing a piece, which goes immediately to the Fire, foul or clean 'tis no great matter, they are not very nice: The Guts they cut into small pieces, and squeezing out the Excrement with their Fingers, they boil it together with the Lungs, Liver, and Heart, with a little Salt and Malaget, or Guinea Pepper, without washing it from the Blood. This they call *Eynt-jeba*, and it's esteemed the greatest Delicacy that can be dressed up.

If it was possible to convert the *Negroes* to the Christian Religion, the *Roman-Catholicks* would succeed better than we should, because they already agree in several particulars, especially in their ridiculous Ceremonies; for do the *Romanists* abstain one or two Days weekly from Flesh; these have also their Days when they forbear Wine; which, considering they are very great lovers of it, is somewhat severe. The *Romanists* have their allotted times for eating peculiar sorts of Food, or perhaps wholly abstaining from it, in which the *Negroes* out-do them; for each Person here is forbidden the eating of one sort of Flesh or other; one eats no Mutton, another no Goats-Flesh, Beef, Swines-Flesh, Wild-Fowl, Cocks with white Feathers, &c. This Restraint is not laid upon them for a limited time, but for their whole Lives: And if the *Romanists* brag of the Antiquities of their Ecclesiastical Commands; so if you ask the *Negroes*

L E T. X. Gold Coast of Guinea.

Negroes why they do this, they will readily tell you, because their Ancestors did so from the beginning of the World, and it hath been handed down from one Age to another by Tradition. The Son never eats what the Father is restrained from, as the Daughter herein follows the Mother's Example; and this Rule is so strictly observed amongst them, that 'tis impossible to persuade them to the contrary.

I have already informed you of the Signification of the Word *Fetiche*, that it is chiefly used in a Religious Sense, or at least is derived from thence: Before I proceed to inform you how they represent their Gods, I shall only hint that all things made in Honour of their False Gods, never so mean, are called, *Fetiche*: and hence also the Artificial Gold mentioned in my sixth Letter derives its Name.

How their Gods are represented to them, or what Idea they form of them, I never yet could learn, because indeed they do not know themselves: What we are able to observe is, that they have a great number of False Gods; that each Man, or at least each House-keeper, hath one; which they are persuaded narrowly inspects their Course of Life, and rewards Good, and Punishes Wicked Men; but their Rewards consist in the Multiplicity of Wives and Slaves, and their Punishments in the want of them; though the most terrible Punishment they can imagine is Death; of which they are terribly afraid: And, indeed, 'tis this which enflames their Zeal in Religious Affairs, and occasions their Abstinence from forbidden Meats and Drinks, fearing they should dye if they but once tasted it. Murder, Adultery, Thievery, and all other such like Crimes, are here accounted no Sins, because they can expiate them with Money; which they cannot do in any other

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other Mis-deeds, which still remain charged to their Account. Mr. *Frederick Cojet* describing the Opinions of the Inhabitants of *Formosa*, relates the same concerning them.

Their Notions of a Future State are different; most of them believe that immediately after the Death of any Person he goes to another World, where he lives in the same Character as here, and makes use of all the Offerings of his Friends and Relations made here after his Death: But they have no Idea of future Rewards or Punishments, for the good or ill Actions of their past Life; except some of them, who take it for granted, that the Deceased are immediately conveyed to a famous River, situate in the Inland Country, called *Bosmanque*: (supposing this to be taken in a Spiritual Sense, because it visibly appears that the Body is left with them.) 'Tis here their God enquires what sort of Life they have lived: Have they religiously observed the Holy-days, dedicated to their God, abstained from all forbidden Meats, and inviolably kept their Oaths? they are gently wafted over the River, to a Land abounding in all kinds of Happiness, not unlike *Mahomet's Paradise*: But if on the contrary the departed hath sinned against any of the mentioned Rules, his God plunges him into the River, where he is Drowned and Buried in Eternal Oblivion.

Others are persuaded that after Death, they are transported to the Land of the Blacks or Whites, and changed into white Men: This is somewhat like the *Metempsychosis* of *Pythagoras*, and serves to hint how much more honourable they account the white Men beyond themselves.

The Inland *Negroes* inform those Blacks who live amongst us, that a great *Feticheer* or Priest lives in a very fine House far In-land; of which they relate nothing but Miracles: They affirm, that

L E T. X. Gold Coast of Guinea.

that the Winds and Weather are at his Command, and that he can change them at Pleasure; that though his House is without any Roof, yet it is always sheltered from Rain; that he not only knows all things past, but can as accurately fore-tell all future Events as if they were present before his Eyes; and cures all sorts of Distempers: In short, he knows so much, and does such wonderful Things, that Father *Marcus Avianus*, wou'd be obliged to stand bare, and was indeed nothing compared with him. His Country-Men assert, that all those near his Abode, must appear before and be examined by him; upon which if they are found to have led a good Life, he sends them away in Peace to a happy Place: but if on the contrary, he kills them a second time with a Club made on purpose for that use, and placed before his dwelling Place, that it may always be ready at Hand. From hence you may easily infer, whether this *Negroe* is not incredibly Reverenced and Esteemed by his Country-men; and indeed they look upon him as a sort of Demi-God: So slyly hath this Arch-Cheat insinuated this great Opinion of himself into the Minds of his Neighbours, that (this being no old Story, he at present living) they every Day relate fresh Miracles of him.

By this you may see, that the Conjurors and Miracle-Mongers are no strange things amongst the *Negroes*; they firmly believe in them, but in a different manner from our *European* Ridiculous Opinionists; who are persuaded no Conjuror can do any Feats without the help of the Devil: For on the contrary, the *Negroes* do not doubt but that 'tis a Gift of God, and though in reality 'tis a down-right Cheat, yet they, ignorant of the Fraud, swallow it as a Miracle, and above Humane Power; but that the Devil may not in the least participate of the Honour, they ascribe it

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all to God : And for my part, if there were any Men endow'd with such Supernatural Qualities, I should certainly agree with the *Negroes* in ascribing it to God, and not to the Devil.

Since we are got on this Subject, I must not forget to inform you that the *Negroes* believe that there is a Devil, and that he frequently does them a great deal of Mischief: But what Authors write, that they pray and make Offerings to him, is utterly false. If I mistake not, I have read in *Oliver Dapper*, that the *Negroes* never eat or drink, without throwing some Portion of it to the Earth for the Devil; but this is a great mistake; 'tis true, indeed, that before they Eat or Drink they are accustomed to throw away some, but this is not for the Devil, they won't oblige him so far; 'tis for their False God, or sometimes for their deceased Friend.

The Devil is Annually banished all their Towns with abundance of Ceremony, at an appointed time set apart for that end. I have twice seen it at *Axim*, where they make the greatest stir about it. This Procession is preceded by a Feast of eight Days, accompanied with all manner of Singing, Skipping, Dancing, Mirth and Jollity: In which time a perfect lampooning Liberty is allowed, and Scandal so highly exalted, that they may freely sing of all the Faults, Villanies and Frauds of their Superiours as well as Inferiours, without Punishment, or so much as the least interruption; and the only way to stop their Mouths is to ply them lustily with Drink, which alters their Tone immediately, and turns their Satyrical Ballads into Commendatory Songs on the good Qualities of him who hath so nobly treated them.

On the eighth Day in the Morning they hunt out the Devil with a dismal Cry, all running one after another, throwing of Excrements, Stones, Wood, or any thing they can come at, as thick

as Hail at *Satan's* Posteriors. When they have driven him far enough out of Town, they all return; and thus conclude their eight Days Divine or rather Diabolical Service. From hence we may observe, that they believe there are more Devils than one, because he is driven out of above one hundred Towns at the same time. And to make sure that he doth not return to their Houses, the Women wash and scour all their Wooden and Earthen Vessels very neat, to free them from all Uncleaness and the Devil.

The *Negroes* of *Ante* also drive out the Devil in the same manner: But these poor Wretches are tormented with a worse Devil, though they call him a God. This is a Giant, one side of his Body being sound the other rotten, which if any Person do but touch he dyes immediately; (which I believe without the least scruple.) This over-grown Devil, or God, (for the difference is not very great) they endeavour to appease with Eatables; to which purpose thousands of Pots or Troughs of Victuals are continually found standing throughout the whole *Antese* Country; so that he must have a worse than canine Appetite if he hath not his Belly full.

They stedfastly believe the Apparition of Spirits and Ghosts, and that they frequently disturb and terrifie some People: So that when any, but more especially any considerable Person, dyes, they perplex one another with horrid Fears, proceeding from an Opinion that he appears for several Nights successively near his late Dwelling.

They have no other Solemn Times or Festivals, besides *that* when their Harvest is compleated, which we call their *Fair*, and *that* of banishing the Devil.

Excepting what the *Negroes* have learn'd of the *Europeans*, they have no Notion of the divisions of the

A Description of the LET. X.

the Year into Months and Weeks ; but reckon their time by the shining of the Moon ; whence they likewise collect when it is proper to sow : But that they have long been acquainted with the Division of Months into Weeks and Days, seems very probable to me , by Reason each Day of the Week has its proper Name in their Language. Their Sabbath falls on our Tuesday, but in Ante, like that of the Mahometans, on Friday ; and differs from other Days no otherwise, than that no Person is then permitted to Fish : but all other Works are allowed without the least interruption as freely as on other Days.

The Inland Negroes divide time in a very strange manner, into lucky and unlucky : In some Countries the Great Fortunate time lasts nineteen, and the lesser (which is different from the other) seven Days ; and betwixt these are seven ill or Unfortunate Days, which is a sort of Vacation to them, for then they do not Travel, Till their Land, or undertake any thing of Consequence, but remain altogether idle. The Inhabitants of Aquamboe are more bigotted in this particular than any of the rest: for besides that they will not resolve concerning any Affairs on these Days, they will not willingly accept any Presents made them, but send them back again, or at least cause them to be kept in a certain place apart until the lucky Days come.

Who first settled this distinction of good and bad Days, I cannot determine ; nor do I believe any Person can : All that I can conjecture of the reason of them is, that perhaps some leading Man amongst them might have been Fortunate on the one, and Unfortunate on the other ; upon an observation of which he might resolve to form it into a Rule, to which he would adjust the remainder of his Life, and that others consequently following his Example, it grew first into a Custom, and afterwards into a Law. The

LET. X. Gold Coast of Guinea.

The Inhabitants of one Country differ very much from those of another in this particular : This Nation accounting their happy Days at one time, and that fixing them at another ; whilst the Coast Negroes don't trouble themselves therewith in the least, but believe all times alike.

On the Gold Coast the Natives are not in the least acquainted with Image-Worship, but at Arbra there are thousands of Idols.

Believing I have sufficiently enlarged on the Religion of the Guineans, I shall take leave of that Subject ; and to fill up a small vacancy in this Letter, just hint something of their strange Superstition, nothing uncommon ever happening which is not attributed to some Miracle or another : Of which I could tire you and my self with Instances, that happened since I have been here ; but to avoid that, I shall content my self with one Instance of a thousand.

In November 1698. The King of Commany, formerly our utter Enemy, was killed at Cabocors by the English ; a few Days after which our chief Factor at Elimina happened to dye, to the great Grief of the Negroes, who all unanimously agreed, that the before-mentioned King of Commany had called him to him to the Elizian Fields ; and that since he had no opportunity when alive to send any of our chief Men thither he had taken this Opportunity after his Death of obliging one to follow him, out of revenge, and that we might have the less reason to triumph on occasion of his Death. Thus far and farther extends their horrid Superstition ; but we shall leave them and it as impossible to be separated, and conclude this with my hearty Respect to your self and Lady, &c.

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LET.

LETTER XI.

Of the Government of the Negroes, which by reason of the small Power vested in the Caboceroes is very loosely and irregularly managed. The difference between Monarchical and Republican Government. What sort of Government that of Axim is. How their Courts of Justice are held and how Justice is distributed. What Credit is to be given to Evidences. The Extensive Authority of our Factor at Axim. Punishments of Murther and Thievery. Respect of Persons thought no Injustice; and wherefore. Stealing of Men and Cattle severely punished. The Office of Judge redounds very much to the advantage of our Factor at Axim, as appears by a farther Explanation. The unjust Way of recovering Debts, which is two or threefold. Wars arise from hence. The Reasons which sometimes engage them in a War; which is very cheap. The Military Force of the Negroes living on the Coast near the Sea is very inconsiderable. Their Cowardice in Battel. Their manner of Fighting. Of their Plundering. The Authority of their Priests in War. Their usual Arms, Power and Prerogative of their Kings. They live in no great State, nor are in the least revered. Their Revenue. The Poverty of some of them. Education of their

their Children very mean. The Office of a King or chief Person.

S I R,

YOUR obliging Letter, dated the 4th of October, was very welcome, and so speedily brought to me by the Ship, the *Flying Dragon*, that from hence only she might very well deserve that Name; tho' I could wish on other occasions she were not found so swift; for when our Companies Ships are just at her Heels, instead of the two Wings the Painter has bestow'd on her, she seems rather to have four by her Expedition, she being no sooner discovered but she gets out of sight: Well, however, if we cannot catch her, may God grant her a safe Passage rather than she fall into the Enemies Hands.

'Tis with a great deal of Satisfaction I am informed that you have received and are so well pleased with my Letters treating of this Coast, and that you like that part describing the *Commanian Wars* so well as to thank me for my trouble, and earnestly desire that I will impart what is yet wanting to compleat the design: To excite me to which you all along praise my Endeavours. This is what indeed might prevail upon a Person of a humour different from mine; but I am too conscious of my own Imperfections to be ignorant how far the complimentary Commendations your Civility bestows, belong to me, and am not in the least moved by them; but if you would urge me to proceed, you ought to use no other Arguments than that 'tis your desire, and the Obligations I have to you are the most prevalent which can be offered. This I am writing as a proof of my zealous Inclinations to serve you, since I am not in haste likely to obtain another Opportunity,

is like to take in as much matter as would fill one and a half or two Letters.

Our present Subjects are, the Government, Administration of Government, and Wars of the *Negroes*; each of which I shall but imperfectly touch upon, because the two former will naturally fall in on some future occasions, and the last you have already had a Specimen of in the Relation of *Commany*: and to conclude this Letter, I design to shew you the *Guinea* Kings in their brightest Lustre and Glory.

The Government of the *Negroes* is very licentious and irregular, which only proceeds from the small Authority of their chief Men or *Cabocero's*; and frequent Wars are occasioned by their remiss Government and absurd Customs.

The difference betwixt the Administration of the Government of Monarchies and Commonwealths is here very great. Of the former the Power and Jurisdiction being vested in a single Person, I shall not say much at present: But shall only speak of the Republicks; amongst which that of *Axim* and *Ante* seeming the most like Regular, I shall represent them as Instances of the rest: though indeed the best of their Governments and Methods of Administration of Justice are so confused and perplexed, that they are hardly to be comprehended, much less then are they to be exprest with any manner of connexion on Paper.

The Government of *Axim* consists of two parts, the first whereof is the Body of *Caboceroes*, or chief Men; the other the *Manceroes*, or young Men. All Civil or Publick Affairs which commonly occur are under their Administration; but what concerns the whole Land, and are properly National Affairs, as making of Peace and War, the raising Tributary Impositions to be paid to Foreign Nations (which seldom happens) that falls under the

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Cognifance of both Parts, or Members of the Government: And on these occasions the *Manceroes* often manage with a Superiour Hand, especially if the *Caboceroes* are not very rich in Gold and Slaves, and consequently able by their assistance to bring over the other to their side.

Their distribution of Justice is in the following Manner: If one of the *Negroes* hath any pretension upon another, he doth not go empty-handed but loaded with Presents of Gold and Brandy (the latter of which is here of a Magnetick Virtue) and applies himself to the *Caboceroes*; after the delivery of which he states his Case to them, desiring they will dispatch his Cause with the first opportunity, and oblige his Adversary to an ample Satisfaction. If they are resolved to favour him highly, a full Council is called immediately, or at farthest within two or three Days, according as it is most convenient; and after having maturely consulted, Judgment is given in his Favour, and that frequently as directly opposite to Justice as to any other Reason than the received Bribe.

But on the contrary, instead of favouring, are they incensed against the Plaintiff, or have they received a larger Bribe from his Adversary, the justest Cause in the World cannot protect him from Judgment against him; or if right appear too plainly on his side, to avoid an ensuing Scandal, they will delay and keep off a Trial; obliging the injured Person, after tedious and vain Solicitations, to wait in hopes of finding juster Judges hereafter, which perhaps does not happen in the Compass of his Life; and so of consequence the Suit devolves upon his Heirs as an Inheritance; who, whenever an Opportunity offers, though thirty Years after, know very well how to make use of it; as I my self have several times had such Causes come before me, that one would be apt to think 'twere impossible they should remember so

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long, considering they want the Assistance of Reading and Writing.

It sometimes falls out that the Plaintiff, or perhaps the Defendant, finding the Cause given against him contrary to Reason, is too impatient to wait for an Opportunity of having Justice done him; but makes use of the first favourable one of seizing such a quantity of Gold or Goods as is likely to repair his Damage, not only from his Adversary or Debtor, but the first which falls in his way, if at least he does but live in the same City or Village; and what he hath thus possess'd himself of he will not re-deliver till he receive plenary Satisfaction, and is at Peace with his Adversary, or is obliged to it by force. If he be strong enough to defend himself and his Capture, he is sure to keep it, and thereby engage a third Person in the Suit on account of the seizure of his Effects for Security, who hath his Remedy on the Person on whose account he hath suffered this Damage: so that hence proceed frequent Murders, and sometimes Wars are thereby occasioned; but of this more hereafter.

But if the Sentence of the *Cabocero's* be Just, or the Cause come to our Fort to be decided in presence of our Factor, the Dispute is amicably concluded by adjudging it against him who the Evidence prove is in the wrong, and 'tis found has not a sufficient Plea to offer in his Defence to clear himself of it: But if on the other side he can clear himself by Witnesses, he is discharged; and if neither of the Parties have any Evidence, the accused clearing himself upon Oath is discharged; which if he cannot do, he is liable to have Judgment pass against him, to pay what is charged on him, provided that the Plaintiff have given in his Charge upon Oath, which he is always obliged to do.

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The Oath of Purgation is prefer'd before the Oath of Accusation; for if the Plaintiff prove his Complaint by two, or but one Witness, the Defendant is not allowed to swear.

This frequently occasions some very ill Accidents, Perjury being no new thing among the *Negroes*; and he that is injured this way is sure to watch all Opportunities of Revenge. But this Injustice very seldom or never occurs any where but at distant and far in-land Places, where our Factors can take no cognizance of it: But all Suits arising amongst or near our Forts are determined by the Sentence of the Factor and the *Caboceroes*, and so remain decided for ever; their Judgment being strictly Obligatory and admitting of no Appeal but to the Director General, in case the Factor and *Caboceroes* have been misinformed in the Cause, which scarce ever happens; so the *Negroes* pay the Fines they are condemned in, with the utmost Willingness. What these Fines are, and how proportioned to Crimes, I shall immediately inform you.

Thus you see when a Law Suit is begun we can end it without the assistance of Attorneys or Councillors, in a much shorter time, and perhaps with as much Justice, as where those Gentlemen are most employed: though I must own that the Causes here are seldom so difficult and puzzling as to require the Advice or Assistance of Council: for the Causes, Plaintiffs, Defendants and Judges, are equally simple and upon a level; so I leave to your Judgment whether this is to be commended or blamed.

As to the usual Penalties: First, Murder is punished two several Ways, one is by the Death of the Murderers, and the other by a pecuniary Mulet; which again is of two sorts, with respect to the

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Free, and those who are not so; that is, the Free-born and the Slaves.

'Tis very seldom that any Person is here executed for Murther, if he either hath any Effects himself, or hath any rich Friends to pay the appointed Fine.

If any Body kill a Free-born *Negroe* of *Axim*, and the Murther is to be remitted by a Fine, the old usual Summ of five hundred Crowns is demanded of him, though the whole demand is seldom paid, the Murtherer generally getting some Abatement, according as the Relations of the Murthered Person stand affected; for 'tis at their choice to be contented with as little as they please, and they only he is obliged to agree with; quite contrary to what a certain Writer affirms, *viz.* that the Fines accrue to the King; which is so false, that he has no pretence to the least share, unless he hath been assistant in the getting of them, when indeed he is paid for his Trouble only.

The mentioned five hundred Crowns is to be understood of a common free *Negroe*, but on account of a considerable Person I have known the Fine augmented to ten times that Summ; which indeed should not suffice; there being too many that would willingly give five hundred Crowns to remove a chief Man out of the way; wherefore the Fine in this case is left to the Discretion of the Judges.

The Murther of a Slave is usually Fined six and thirty Crowns; but 'tis in this case as in the first, if the Murtherer stand hard he obtains an Abatement of the injured Person, who seldom gets above a Chain or String of Gold of above thirty two Crowns.

But if a Murtherer cannot pay his Fine, he is obliged to give Blood for Blood, and is accordingly executed in a miserable and cruel Manner:

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For they do in a sort kill him a thousand times, by cutting, hacking, pricking, or running him through the Body and shooting him, or whatever else they can invent to Torture him, unless our Factor sends for him out of their Hands; and orders his Crime to be punished by striking off his guilty Head. Next to Murther, Thievery and Adultery is most severely punished; but at present we shall only touch on the former, reserving the latter for another place.

Robbery is commonly punished by the Restoration of the stolen Goods, and paying a Fine; in the adjudging of which, particular regard is had to the value of the stolen Goods, the place where and by whom the Fact is committed: For Example, one is fined twenty Crowns, besides what he hath stolen, and another for Robbery every way equal shall be fined one hundred or more, and that without the least Injustice, I mean according to their Antient Municipal Customs; of which a Factor who sits in Judgment ought not to be ignorant, least according to his own Opinion only, he pronounce an improper Sentence. Respect of Persons in the Administration of Justice is not here look'd upon as the least Injustice; though the best Effect of this is that the Rich are commonly more severely handled than the Poor, which they think reasonable on two accounts; first, the Rich were not urged to it by Necessity; and, secondly, they can better spare the Money: for no Body is here Fined above his Ability, unless by an Accumulation of Crimes; he hath given occasion thereto, and then he is sent into Slavery: This is the true Reason why a discreet *Negroe*, tho' he is rich, will always pretend Poverty, least he or some of his Relations falling into the Hands of the Judges should be too hardly used on that account.

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The stealing of Men is punished with rigid Severity, and sometimes with Death it self; and they are equally severe against the Stealers of Cattle, as Hogs, Sheep, &c. And herein they agree with our Opinion, for the dumb Beast cannot defend it self, nor call any to its assistance. They will rather put a Man to Death for stealing a Sheep, than killing a Man, more especially in those places where they are free from any subjection to the *Europeans*, who generally punish it by a pecuniary Mulct only; whether it be, that they are not fond of Blood, or that they love the profit which accrues to them thereby, that I leave to you to determine, since I have before informed you that the *Negroes* under our Government had rather it should be attoned by a Fine, but not extorted by Avarice instead of Justice. And according to this Rule, I squared my Conduct in my Judges Office; of which I shall hereafter give you an Instance.

All Fines which occur at *Axim* are paid into the Factors Hands, who distribute them to the injured Persons first deducting his Fee, which not many Years past was very considerable, but not long since was diminished by a certain Gentleman, and the Factor strictly ordered not to demand more than eight Crowns for the decision of the most important Suit, which should come before him; and not only that, but if offered he was commanded to refuse it. An Order really too severe, to hinder another's doing good, and not permit him to receive and use his just Perquisites at pleasure. This Gentleman pretended thereby to shew his renderness to the Blacks; but my self and several others were of another Opinion: Its true source was pure Envy, which would not suffer him to let any of the Officers of the Company, his
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Fellow-Servants, to get any thing, nor indeed any but himself; of which his continual Management with the Blacks was but too convincing a Proof: For if he himself decided any Cause for them, or fined them for any Crime, he was not content to be paid eight Crowns only; but, on the other hand, sometimes enhanced the Price to some hundreds; and I believe the *Axim* Factors finding this Law so exorbitantly broken by its Maker, have not the least regard to it; nor are they in the wrong, for it directly clashes with the old Municipal Customs of the Country: And for my part, if it had been made before my coming into that Office, I should not have taken much notice of it; but by acting consonant to their Antient Usages, have gained the Affection of the Blacks more than by following any Innovation: And this very Law-giver on the contrary, by unjust Management, and his exorbitant Avarice, was only exposed to their implacable Hatred and inveterate Curfes. But enough on this Head: I shall next shew what are the Perquisites which accrue to the Factor at *Axim* by the Exercise of his Judicial Office.

For Instance; if a *Negro* be fined one hundred Crowns for a Crime, the Factor's share is two thirds, and the Assembly of *Caboceroes* have the remaining third. But on account of Murther, Robbery, or the forcing the Payment of Debts; three fourths of the whole are the Complainants, and the remainder belonging to the Factor and the *Cabocero's*, is divided according to the mentioned proportion of one third to the *Cabocero's*, and two thirds to the Factor; which render it much more advantagious for the Factor to be Judge here than in our own Country, supposing our *European* Judges to act honestly; what they get by unlawful Means, as I am ignorant, I don't desire to be better informed. These Judicial Fees are, or at least before

before this Order, were paid very freely, without the least scruple by the *Negroes*: even those for whom the Factor had got in a Debt, were very well contented to pay one fourth part of the whole Receipt; and this was as firmly settled as the price of Bread at *Amsterdam*.

I shall, according to my promise, by way of digression, insert a Relation of a Cause depending when I was Factor at *Axim*. In the Country of *Ancober*, which hath long been subject to *Axim*, lived two *Cabocero's* both considerable Men, who for several Years had been engaged in a dispute, each pretending that the other was born his Slave, and by Inheritance he had an inviolable Right over him: This was a very perplexed Cause, each of them seem'd to back his Pretence with Reason, and a Proof deduced from many Years past; insomuch that the *Cabocero's* of *Ancober* found themselves puzzled how to decide it: And both Parties being agreed to plead the Cause before me, and expect my determination; not that they thought me wiser than their Country-men and Honourable Council, but only that it might be ended by my Power; Accordingly it came before my Judgment Seat; and tho' I patiently spent one whole Day in hearing the Cause, yet I assure you at the end I was just as wise as at the beginning, each of them confirming his Pretension by so many Witnesses, and seeming to have so much right of his side, that I could not tell who to give it for. But, however, to put an end to this litigious Suit, I asked them if they were both contented to submit to my decision; to which they freely consenting, I spoke to them in reconciling Terms, assuring them that all which they pretended on each side seemed reasonable; wherefore 'twas impossible to decide which of them was in the right, the proper Witnesses of this

this Cause being all long since dead, and that all the Evidence they had brought was not valid, it being only by Hear-say, and the Merits of the Cause consequently forgotten: Having thus prepared them as cautiously as I could, and observed that they both seemed to agree to it, I made difficulties of deciding the dispute, by telling them that before they went out of my Fort it was my request they should be perfectly reconciled and own each other for free Men, and that he who should ever pretend that the other was his Slave, should be liable to a severe Fine.

They both seemed very well satisfied with this determination, embracing each other, and vowing an Eternal Friendship: And the more effectually to convince me of their Satisfaction, they each of them made me a very good Present for putting an end to their Quarrel: And, indeed, I really believed all was forgotten and forgiven. But two or three Months afterwards one of them hired two Ruffians to murder the other in his own House, which they did by shooting him through the Head: At which I being very much incensed, considering it as a thing of dangerous Consequence by no means to be suffered in a well-govern'd Commonwealth (as we say) but to be exemplarily punished in order to deter others from such Practises, sent some of my principal Officers to *Ancober* with Orders to have the Murderers delivered over to me that I might bring them to condign Punishment: But they boldly answered them, that they were not subject to their Master, and that he might exercise his Authority where he had Jurisdiction. This angered me yet worse, for by this not only my self but the Authority of the Company was affronted and diminished; to keep up which nothing ought to be neglected. Upon which, I soon resolved to go to that Country,

try, accompanied with some of our People, and being gotten about three Miles from our Fort I found about 500 Armed *Negroes*, imagining, I suppose, the sight of them would terrify me: But on the contrary, as soon as the mutual Salutations were pass'd, I asked them why they denied and affronted the Authority of the Company, and did not consider what Mischief it would pull down on their Heads: To which they answered, that they were belyed, for they never pretended to forfeit the Protection of the *Hollanders*, or withdraw their Obedience, since the former was so advantagious to their Country. Having thus far received satisfaction, I demanded the Murtherers to be delivered to me in order to their Punishment; but this they positively denied, but told me, perhaps they would punish them themselves. Upon this I took my leave of them and was going away; but threatned them withal, that from this time forward, I should believe they all had a Hand in the Murther, and that I would certainly secure all of their Country-men I could get into my Power and punish them as Murtherers: This had such a good Effect, that they immediately consulted together, and sent some of their People to desire me to give them a little time to consider of my demand, upon which they would bring me an answer. I stayed about a quarter of an hour; after which they brought me the Malefactors Fettered, only desired me that I would not be too hasty in punishing them, but only stay till they were all present; which I promised them; and returned with the Criminals very well satisfied with my Expedition.

Scarce three Days after all the chief Men of *Ancober* came and shewed themselves before my Fort, requesting that I would acquaint them how I intended to punish the Murtherers; they were answered

swered, by Be-heading them. And to strike a greater terrour, I caused the Executioner with his Instruments to appear. Upon which they set up a dismal Lamentation, and begged that I would in compliance with the custom of their Country, suffer the Crime to be attoned with Money: Though I desired nothing more, yet I stood off as though I was not to be perswaded to that until the Relations of the Murthered Persons (who were already appeased) came and desired me, and what was most perswasive, offered me the whole Fine: This was what I aimed at: but however, to shew my self as generous as they, I was satisfied with half the Summ, and so we were both very well contented, and the Criminals, who were the Children of considerable People, were set at Liberty. This I have related at large to shew you how we manage our selves here to keep up our Authority and Respect; which is so considerable, that no *Negroe* is permitted without leave of the Factor to decide any Cause upon forfeiture of all that is thereby gained. In my time a *Negroe* came to desire me to get him a Debt, which I promised, and performed accordingly; but the Debtor, who was no very good Friend of his, informed me that this Debt was contracted by lying with the other's Wife, and appointed to be paid by the *Caboero's*. The Plaintiff coming for his Money, I asked him if he did not know that it was all forfeit, he having ended the Affair without my Knowledge; he frankly confessed that it was, and begged I would give him but one fourth part of it; but finding him so moderate, I gave him half; for which he very submissively thanked me, and went away very joyful.

This is intended to prevent the *Negroes* having any opportunity of forming any designs in opposition to us, or to our disadvantage.

But

But to return to where I left of : At several places on the Coast, Debts are recovered in a very unjust and villanous manner, especially on those places where we have little or no Power, or in some of the Kingdoms. A Rascally Creditor in those places, instead of asking his Money of his Debtor, and summoning him before the Judges in case of refusal, seizes the first thing he can meet with, though of six times the value of his Debt, without any regard who is the Proprietor, who when he comes to ask for it, is told that he must go to such a Person, who is his Debtor, and must pay him for it : and this no Body can hinder, so he goes immediately to ask the other for Money for his Goods. This is very extravagant Justice, the first Creditor has six times the value of his Debt, and if the second is as unreasonable as the first, and affirms that he would not part with his Goods for a less price, the Creditor is obliged to give him full satisfaction, in imitation of an old *Roman Law* ; by which, if any Person was injured in his Honour and Reputation, the Injurer was obliged to pay such a Sum as the Injured shou'd swear he wou'd not suffer the damage for less, if left to his choice. 'Tis true, indeed, this course is generally taken in case of small Debts : But however, the poor Wretch that is the Debtor, is sometimes obliged to pay a Shilling for a Debt of one Penny in proportion. This is not to be opposed, for the Creditor is more potent than he, and is upheld in it perhaps by the King, or the great ones : This happens daily ; and several Men are thereby enriched from a poor Estate ; and this here bears the Name of Justice ; but in my Opinion 'tis abominably distorted. Some *Negroes* have yet another way to force Money out of People : Which is, that one of these insolent Fellows goes to a Person, and tells him that he hath received such

such damage by his Son, Nephew, Slave, or some Body else depending on him ; for which he comes to ask satisfaction of him, threatening him that else he will murder or sorely wound him or shoot some Body else at his cost ; and if this Villain have courage enough to put it in Execution, as I have twice seen it happen, the other must suffer the same as if he had done it.

Besides their accustomed Distribution of Justice above described, they have yet a very odd sort of Justice, which is under the Direction and Administration of the *Mancero's*, who have erected a sort of Judicial Society in every considerable Village, whose Province it is to adjudge all trivial Crimes that shall appear before them, and of these the *Negroes* are very frequently guilty ; I mean beating, cursing or reviling one another : Upon which the Person who thinks himself injured, applies to the *Mancero's* much in the following Terms, viz. such a Person hath injured me, I sell or surrender him to you ; punish him according to his desert. Upon which these Gentlemen with utmost diligence take him into Custody, and after a very superficial enquiry into his Crime, lay a Fine of some Crowns upon him ; which if he seems unwilling to pay, as being unjustly imposed on him, they not having heard what he had to say in his defence, the *Mancero's* not at all concerned hereat only go to the Market where they take up as much Goods on his account as the amount of the Fine, which he is, though unwillingly, forced to pay ; and they have no sooner received this Money, but it is spent in Palm-Wine and Brandy.

The Offences which these *Mancero's* usually Fine are so various and ridiculous, that I have not patience enough to particularize any of them ; 'tis enough that I inform you that if these idle Judges

ges have nothing to do the whole Day, and consequently get no Money to make them drink; their time is only spent in contriving to bring in some Body on one pretence or another in order to furnish them with Liquor.

The Consultations with the *Caboceroes* in conjunction with the *Mancero's* principally relating to War, we shall at present touch upon.

When they're desirous of entering into a War, on account of Ambition, Plunder, or to assist other Countries already engaged in a War, these two Councils consult together: But otherwise the greatest part of their Wars are chiefly occasioned by the recovery of Debts, and the disputes of some of the chief People among them. I have formerly hinted something on this Subject, with promise to proceed farther on it.

The firmest Peace of Neighbouring Nations is frequently broken in the following Manner: One of the leading Men in one Country hath Money owing him from a Person in an adjacent Country, which is not so speedily paid as he desires; on which he causes as many Goods, Freemen, or Slaves to be seized by violence and rapine in the Country where his Debtor lives, as will richly pay him: The Men so seized he claps in Irons, and if not redeemed sells them, in order to raise Money for the payment of the Debt: If the Debtor be an honest Man and the Debt just; he immediately endeavours by the satisfaction of his Creditors to free his Country-Men: or if their Relations are powerful enough they will force him to it: But when the Debt is disputable, or the Debtor unwilling to pay it, he is sure to represent the Creditor amongst his own Country-Men as an unjust Man, who hath treated him in this manner contrary to all right, and that he is not at all indebted to him: If he so far prevails on his Country-Men that

that they believe him; he endeavours to make some of the other Land Prisoners by way of Reprizal; after which they consequently arm on each side, and watch all opportunities of surprizing each other. They first endeavour to bring the *Caboceroes* over to their Party, because they have always some Men at their devoir; next the Soldiers: And thus from a trifle a War is occasioned betwixt two Countries, who before lived in Amity, and continues till one of them be subdued; or, if their Force be equal, till the Principal Men are obliged to make Peace at the request of the Soldiers; which frequently happens, especially about Sowing time, when all the Warriours desire to return to till the Ground; for in serving in the War without pay, and defraying all expences out of their private Fortunes, they quickly grow tired; especially if they get no Advantage of, and consequently no Plunder by the Enemy.

When the Governours of one Country are inclined to make War with those of another, perhaps on account that they make a better Figure in their manner of Living, or that they're richer; so that these have a mind to some of their Effects: Then they assemble together, in conjunction with the *Manceroes*, who also give their advice, and being young, and puffed up with hopes of Plunder, are easily induced by the persuasions of the *Cabocero's*; and the joynt resolution is no sooner formed than every one prepares for War; and being got ready, make an Irruption into the designed Country, without giving the least notice or declaring War, urging much the same Reasons with a present *European* Potentate, 'tis *My Royal Will and Pleasure, and for my Glory*. And thus they kill and pillage each other. The injured Nation, to revenge this perfidious breach of Peace, if not Powerful enough of its self, hires another to

assist it for less than two thousand Pounds sterling; for which price the best are here to be had, well armed and appointed for an Engagement: So that indeed War is not here very dear, though at this cheap rate you cannot imagine the Armies so formidable that are hired for such trivial Wages: but Plunder is their chief aim, instead of which they often get good store of blows, which prove all the Perquisites to their mentioned Wages. These Wages they divide amongst the *Caboceroes* and the *Manceroes*; but the former manage the Affair so cunningly, that the latter have not above four or five Shilling each, or perhaps half that Summ; for the leading Men are sure to adjust the account so well in favour of themselves, that a mighty residue is not likely to be left to make a future dividend. But as for the Plunder, though particularly appropriated to defray the expence of the War in the first place, and the remainder to be divided, yet every Man seizes the first part thereof he can lay hold on without any regard to the publick: But if no Booty is to be come at, the *Manceroes*, like Cats that have wet their Feet, make the best of their way Home, not being obliged to stay longer than they themselves please. Each is under a particular Chieftain in a fort, though he can command only his Slaves; a free *Negroe* not owning his Authority, or submitting even to their Kings, unless compelled by their exorbitant Power, without which they live intirely at their own Pleasure: But if their Leader is disposed to march up first towards the Enemy, he may, but will not, be followed by many.

War, as I have twice before told you, is not so expensive as in *Europe*; Our four Years War with the *Cammanyfchians* (except the damage done to our Trade) did not cost us in all six thousand Pounds

Pounds sterling: For which Summ we had successively five Nations in our pay. But I have formerly treated this Subject so largely, that I need not say any more of it at present.

A National Offensive War may very well be managed here with four Thousand Men in the Field; but a Defensive requires more. Sometimes the number of what they call an Army does not amount to more than two thousand. From whence you may infer of what force the Monarchies and Republicks on the Coast are, *Fantyn* and *Aquamboe* only excepted; the first of which is able to bring an Army of twenty five Thousand Men, and the latter a much larger. But the Inland Potentates, such as *Akim*, *Afante*, &c. are not to be reckoned amongst these; they being able to over-run a Country by their numerous Armies; tho' I cannot inform you any otherwise concerning those People, than what by hints we learn from the *Negroes*, who are not always to be believed. But as for the Monarchies situate near us, I dare affirm, that though each of the two contending Armies were composed of five or six several Nations, they would not together make twenty five thousand Men; upon which account joyn'd to their Cowardice, very few Men are killed in a Battle; and that Engagement is very warm which leaves one thousand Men upon the place; for they are so timorous that as soon as they see a Man fall by them, they run for it, and only think of getting safe Home. In the last Battle between the *Cammanyfchians*, and those of *Saboe*, *Acanmi*, *Cabes-Terra* and two or three other Countries, I don't believe that one hundred Men were killed, and yet the *Cammanyfchians* drove their Enemies out of the Field, and obtained a compleat Victory.

They are very irregular in their Engagements, not observing the least shadow of Order ; but each Commander hath his Men close together in a sort of Crowd ; in the midst of which he is generally to be found ; so that they attack the Enemy Man for Man, or one heap of Men against another ; and some of their Commanders seeing their Brother Officer furiously attacked, and somewhat put to it, choose rather to run with the Hare than hold with the Hounds, and that frequently before they had stroke one stroak, or stood so much as one brush ; and their Friends whom they left engaged certainly follow them, if in the least pressed, unless so entangled with the Enemy, that 'tis not for want of good will if they don't ; but if no opportunity offers, tho' against their will, they get the Reputation of good Soldiers.

In fight the *Negroes* don't stand upright against one another, but run stooping and listening that the Bullets may fly over their Heads. Others creep towards the Enemy, and being come close, let fly at them ; after which they run away as fast as they can, and as if the Devil were sure of the hindmost, get to their own Army as soon as possible, in order to load their Arms and fall on again. In short, their ridiculous Gestures, stooping, creeping and crying, make their Fight look more like Monkeys playing together than a Battle.

The Booty which the Commonalty chiefly aim at, are the Prisoners and Ornaments of Gold, and *Conte de Terra* ; for some, especially the Inland *Negroes*, are so simple as to dress themselves in the richest manner possible on these occasions : Wherefore they are frequently so loaded with Gold and *Conte de Terra*, that they can scarce march

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Common Prisoners who cannot raise their Ransom, are kept or sold for Slaves at pleasure : If they take any considerable Person, he is very well guarded and a very high Ransom put upon him : But if the Person who occasioned the beginning of the War be taken, they will not easily admit him to Ransom, though his weight in Gold were offered, for fear he should for the future form some new design against their repose.

The most Potent *Negroes* can't pretend to be insured from Slavery ; for if he ever ventures himself in the Wars it may easily become his Lot ; he is consequently obliged to remain in that State till the Summ demanded for his Redemption is fully paid ; which withal is frequently set so high, that he, his Friends, and all his Interest are not sufficient to raise it : on which account he is forced to a perpetual Slavery, and the most contemptible Offices. Some amongst them are so barbarous, that finding their hopes of a high Ransom frustrated, they pay themselves by cruelly murdering the wretched Prisoner.

Wars betwixt two Despotical Kings, who have their Subjects intirely at their Command, are of a long Duration, and frequently last several Years successively, or till the utter Ruine of one of 'em ends the dispute. They frequently lye a whole Year incampt against each other without attempting any thing, a few diverting Skirmishes excepted : only against rainy Weather they each return home without molesting one another.

Though this is chiefly owing to their Priests, without whose Suffrage they are not easily induced to attempt a Battle ; they advise them against it, under pretence that their Gods have not yet declared in favour of them ; and if they will attempt it notwithstanding, they threaten an ill Issue : But if these crafty Villains observe that

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their Army is much stronger than the Enemies, and the Soldiers well inclined to fighting, they always advise to attempt it; though with such a cautious reserve, that if it succeeds contrary to expectation, they never want an excuse to bring themselves off: The Commanders or Soldiers have done this or that thing, which they ought not to have done; for which reason the whole Army is punished. In short, let the Event prove how it will, the Priest is infallibly Innocent, and his Character always maintains its own Reputation.

I doubt not but I have sufficiently enlarged on their ridiculous Wars, if I have not dwelt longer on them than they deserve; wherefore I shall relating the Events which happened in my time, and apply my self to the description of their Military Arms.

The chief of these are Musquets or Carabins, in the management of which they are wonderful dextrous. 'Tis not unpleasant to see them exercise their Army; they handle their Arms so cleverly, discharging them several ways, one sitting, the second creeping, or lying, &c. that 'tis really to be admired they never hurt one another. Perhaps you wonder how the *Negroes* come to be furnished with Fire-Arms, but you will have no Reason when you know we sell them incredible quantities, thereby obliging them with a Knife to cut our own Throats. But we are forced to it; for if we would not, they might be sufficiently stored with that Commodity by the *English*, *Danes*, and *Brandenburghers*; and could we all agree together to sell them any, the *English* and *Zeeland* Interlopers would abundantly furnish them: And since that and Gun-powder for sometime hath been the chief vendible Merchandise here, we should have found but an indifferent Trade without our share in it. 'Twere indeed to be wished that

that these dangerous Commodities had never been brought hither, or at least that the *Negroes* might be in a short time brought to be content with somewhat else in their room: but this in all appearance is never likely.

Next their Guns, in the second place are their Swords, shaped like a sort of chopping Knives, being about two or three Hands broad at the extremity, and about one at the handle, and about three or four Spans long at most; and a little crooked at the top. These Sabres are very strong, but commonly so blunt that several strokes are necessary to cut off a Head: They have a wooden Guard adorned on one side, and sometimes on both, with small globular Knobs, covered with a sort of Skin, whilst others content themselves with bits of Rope singed black with the Blood of Sheep or other Cattle, with the additional Ornament of a bunch of Horse Hair, amongst People of Condition thin Gold Plates are usual: To this Weapon belongs a leather Sheath almost open on one side; to which, by way of Ornament, a Tygers Head, or a large red Shell is hung; both which are valuable here. These Sabres they wear when they go out at their left Hip hanging in a Belt, which is girt about their Wastes for that end, or stuck in their Paan, which is round about their Bodies, and comes betwixt their Legs, that they may run the swifter; besides which, they are begirt with a Bandalier Belt, with about twenty Bandaliers. They have a Cap on their Heads made of a Crocodile's Skin, adorned on each side with a red Shell, and behind with a bunch of Horse Hair, and a heavy Iron Chain, or something else instead of it, girt round their Head. Thus appointed, with their Bodies coloured white, our Heroes look liker Devils than Men.

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Their other Weapons are first a Bow and Arrow; but these are not much in vogue amongst the Coast Negroes, those of *Aquamboe* alone excepted, who are so nicely dexterous in shooting, that in Hare-hunting they will lodge their small fine Arrows in what part of the Hare's Body is desired. These Arrows have Feathers at their Head, and are pointed with Iron. The Negroes of *Avinee* usually poison them; but on the Coast that pernicious Custom is not practised, nor do they so much as know what poison is.

Next follows the *Assagay* or *Hassagay*, as some call them, which are of two sorts; the smaller sorts are about a Flemish Ell, or perhaps half an Ell longer, and very slender; and these they cast as Darts: The second, or larger sort, are about twice as long and large as the former, the upper part pointed with Iron like a Pike; some of them are covered for the length of one span or two, though in all manner of shapes. The *Assagay* serves them instead of a Sabre, that having their Shield in the left Hand, they may the more conveniently dart the *Assagay* with the Right: for they have always some Body or other to carry them after them.

Last of all are their Shields, which serve only on a defensive covering of the Body, and not to the offending any Person. I have seen Negroes wondrous dextrous in the management of these Shields, which they hold in their Left Hand, and a Sabre in the Right; and playing with both they put their Body into very strange Postures, and so artificially cover themselves with the Shield, that 'tis impossible to come at 'em. These Shields, which are about four or five foot long and three broad, are made of Osiers; Some of which are covered with Gold Leather, Tyger's Skins, or some other Materials: Some of them also

also have at each Corner and in the middle broad thin Copper-plates fastened on, to ward off the Arrows and the light *Assagayes*, as well as the blows of the Sabre, if they are good, tho' they are not proof against a Musquet Ball.

I think these are all the Weapons used amongst the Negroes, without I should tell you that some of them also are possessed of a few Cannon: 'tis indeed true, but they use them in a very slovenly manner. The King of *Saboe* hath a very small number; with which he has been in the Field, but he never made use of them. Some of 'em after once firing them, have suffered the Enemy to take them, as it happened to the *Commanyschians*; after which those who took them were ignorant of the use of 'em: So that these Monarchs Cannon only serves to shoot by way of of Compliment and Salutation; of which the Blacks are very fond.

Promises create a Debt; and at the beginning of this Letter you have my Word that it should conclude with the Grandeur of their Kings: In pursuance of which, let us see wherein it consists.

The Extent of their Territories is so small, that some of them have not more Land under their Jurisdiction than a single Captain or Bailiff of a Village; and bear the same Name accordingly amongst the Negroes: For before the Arrival of the Europeans in this Country, no higher Title was known amongst them than that of Captain or Colonel, with this only difference, that the one was appropriated to a Country, but the other to a Village. But since their Conversation with us, they, or rather we, make a distinction betwixt a King and a Captain. The first Word by which it was expressed, was *Obin* or *Abin*, which signifies Captain in our Language, but they always understood

stood by it a Commander of a Country, Town or Nation; for our Master of Ships generally assume the same Title; and by the same Appellation would also be applyed to, without any distinction, to our Director-General and Chief of Forts, if we did not better inform the Natives of the difference. Kings are obliged in this Country to preserve their Power by dint of force; wherefore the richer they are in Gold and Slaves, the more they are honoured and esteemed; and without those they have not the least command over their Subjects; but on the contrary, would not only be obliged to pray but pay their Underlings to execute their Commands. But if the Goddess Fortune has endowed them with a rich share of Treasure, they are naturally cruel enough to govern their People Tyrannically and punish them so severely in their Purfes for trivial Crimes, that they cannot forget it all the remainder of their Lives; and this is done with a seeming colour of Justice; for the King having any thing to charge on another, delivers the Matter into the Hands of the *Cabocero's*, and submits it to their decision, who knowing his Mind, are sure to aggravate the Crime as much as possible, and take care that their Judgment be consonant to his Royal Will and Pleasure.

The Kings in their Dwellings, or, if I may so call them, Courts, do not distinguish themselves by keeping any State. There is no Guard at their Palace Gates, nor any Body to wait on them, and when they stir abroad in their Town 'tis very seldom they are attended by any more Company than two Boys, one of which carries the Sabre, the other the Stool or Chair; and if they are met in the Streets, they are about as much complimented as a Cocker amongst us, whom we hardly bestow a Hat upon if we know him to be such. The meanest

est Slave never stirs one step out of the way on their account. But on the contrary, if they are going to pay a Visit to any Person in another Town, or are to be visited by some considerable Man, they always take care to shew their Grandeur, and on such occasions are always accompanied with armed Men; several Shields are then carried for their use, and an Umbrella above their Heads, that the Gentleman's Skin be not darkned by the Sun: Their Wives are then finely dressed with Gold and other rich Ornaments; and have a long String of Gold and *Conte di Terra* or Coral hung about 'em: tho' in their Towns they and all their Wives are so wretchedly habited, that their Cloaths are sometimes not worth one Shilling, nor sufficient to distinguish them from the meanest Slave.

These great Princes are so miserably Covetous, that there is not one of their Subjects so poor from whom they would not catch at a Present. Hence it is that their Majesties Kitchens are not much better furnished than those of the common *Negroes*; Bread, Oil, and a little stinking Fish makes up their Bill of Fare, and Water is their drink for the greatest part of the Day; in the Morning, if they have it, they drink Brandy; and in the Afternoon Palm-Wine: In one Word, their manner of Living is indistinguishable from the meanest amongst them.

At the time when the Palm-Wine comes from the In-land Country, they go in the Afternoons altogether, *viz.* Slaves and all as Companions, to the publick Market-place, where they sit down and drink very sociably; every one that pleases, bringing his own Stool, adds himself to the Croud: Here they tittle till they have even burst the Lice their Head; but when they're a little warmed and their Thirst somewhat slack'd, they drink like *Cabocero's*,

bocero's, whole Bumpers and Pints; for the Calabash out of which they drink holds a Pint, Quart or sometimes a Pottle, which when they come to be merry is half, or perhaps quite filled, which they set to their Mouths to drink, straining to about two thirds through their Beards in order to fall to the Ground, making by that means a sort of Rivulet of Wine on the place where they sit; and this is esteemed a great piece of Magnanimity. The *Europeans* (amongst whom I don't pretend to be singular) are very good at this sport; but 'tis well for them 'tis not *Rhinish* or *French* Wine, for that would be too expensive; and here for 4 or 5 Shillings they may get drunk and throw away large Quantities.

When these drunken Brethren come together they are as Impertinent and Noisie as the Smouse or *German Jews* at their Synagogue at *Amsterdam*. But you must not imagine the discourse to turn on serious Subjects or State Affairs; not in the least; 'tis generally rank Bawdy; of which they are so full, that it continually runs over; and though the Women come amongst them, this is no reason for interrupting the discourse, for they are always ready to bear their part, being very richly furnished on this Head; nor is it ever thought scandalous for them to display this sort of Talent. In short, this is a perfect Babling and Scolding-School, where each Person freely gives his Neighbour his own, as they call it: but in a much better manner than in *Europe*, where Railing is the Business of the private Entertaining Rooms, for here the Persons ex-claimed against are present and consequently may vindicate themselves. But hold, I shall run too far; 'tis fit I tell you that though the Kings live thus in common with their Slaves, yet on very slight occasions they frequently give them broken Heads; from which those only are excepted who have ac-
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quired a Reputation amongst the People: And indeed I have observed that some of these Slaves had more Authority than their Masters; for having long exercised a command over their Masters Dependents, by their own Trading they are become Possessors of some Slaves themselves, and in process of time are grown so powerful, that their Patrons are obliged to see with their Eyes only; and what is yet more, 'tis not seldom that they so obstinately oppose their Masters, that they will not be appeased by any other means than a Present.

A King here is always very ready to be hired to the Assistance of any of his Neighbours in their Wars, because the greatest part of the Money agreed for falls to his share; after the receipt of which he is not much concerned whether the promised Assistance be punctually ready at the appointed time or not; if he has receiv'd the Gold 'tis enough, he always knows how to satisfy his Customers with one Lye or other: in which they are so subtle, that they will, unobserved, defraud even those who are very well upon their guard. Tho' this is an advantageous sort of Trade, they are yet more fond of being Mediators betwixt disagreeing Nations; for on this account they get Money from both Parties, and keep the Breach open as long as possibly they can, in order to get the more Money from each. 'Tis upon these incomes that they chiefly subsist, for their Revenue is very inconsiderable. 'Tis indeed true that they impose a Toll on all Goods passing through their Country; But the Collectors being always some of the Principal Men amongst them, make sure of the largest share of it, and collect so well for themselves, that the King has very little of it. In a word, he is obliged to subsist on exorbitant Fines fraudulently extorted from his Subjects, or
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on the manual Labour of himself and Slaves: Wherefore those Kings are Unfortunate who have but few Slaves, and consequently are not very Rich or Potent. I have known some of these so poor, that they had neither Money nor Credit to command a Bottle of Palm-Wine to treat their Visitants. Hence you may collect how Rich and Potent these Wrens of State are (as Monsieur *Don-dyn* calls them in his Mercury.) But perhaps being already tired with this account of the Pomp and Grandeur of their Wives, Slaves and Household as well as themselves, you would gladly be informed how the Illustrious Princes and Princesses, their Royal Off-spring, are educated. I have formerly given you some general Hints concerning the *Negroe* Children; 'tis then sufficient to assure you that I never could observe the least difference in this particular betwixt the Royal and Common Education. The Princes being arrived at Years of Maturity, to get an honest Livelihood, either Plow the Land or draw Palm-Wine, which I can assure you they are not ashamed to carry to the Market themselves in order to sell it: But if they are not employed in these Occupations 'tis in something else equally consistent with their Character; from whence in process of time they ascend the Royal Throne of their Ancestors. If you reflect on this, 'twill somewhat abate your wonder, how Husbandmen, Shepherds, or Potters, as *Agathocles* was, should ever wear Royal Crowns, as Histories inform us: It daily occurs here; nay, what is yet more, the Throne is often filled with those who when Young, have served us as Foot-Boys, or in a meaner Capacity; wherefore you may imagine we cannot be brought to have a very great esteem for these Potentates: No, I can assure you the meanest of our Factors thinks better of himself than one of these Kings: And

indeed his Authority is much more considerable, if we consider him to exercise that of the Director-General and Council, in whose Name he acts; but leaving that as it is, I had rather refer you to Monsieur *Focquenbrog* than say any more of our Grandeur.

As for the Ladies, the Princesses, perhaps you will be apt to think them too tender for the Fatigues of Agriculture; no, not in the least, they must also lay their Hands to the Plow: But if it happens that one of these Illustrious Ladies is too haughty to stain her high Birth by working like a Slave, she generally takes up a Trade more likely to maintain her gentility, which requires no more than what Madam Nature has liberally bestow'd on her; and if she does not get so much as the Ladies of her profession in *Europe*, she has not such extravagant Wants as they, and is consequently very well satisfied. Several of these are married in their young Days, without the least regard to high Birth or Family, every Body pleasing themselves in their choice, for a Marriage between a King's Daughter and a Slave is not at all thought disproportionate, but is indeed somewhat better than for a King's Son to marry a Slave, which daily happens; since the common Proverb, that the Children follow the Mother is here passed into an unalterable Rule, and consequently the Issue of the former (*viz.* the Princess married to a Slave) are free, and those proceeding from the latter, Slaves. Thus you have a view of the whole Royal Family; it remains now that I should give you some account of the great Officers under the King, which consist of *Brassoes*, or Ensigns, Sabre-Bearers, *Tie-Tie's*, that is, publick Cryers or Proclaimers, Attendants on their Wives, Horn-blowers or Trumpeters and Drummers: Which Offices the following Lines will elucidate.

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That of *Brasso* I have already explained to be a sort of Marthal, who is to charge first in Battle, which if he have but courage enough he always does. The second are the Saber or Sword-bearers; of which these Monarchs have generally about four. Whether these agree with the Antient Armour-Bearers, I can't certainly tell, though I believe them very near alike. This, whatever you may think of it, is no mean Post; for the Gentlemen to whom it is entrusted, sometimes become honoured with the Character of Ambassadors to Foreign Courts: tho' to do Justice, that more properly belongs to the *Tie-Tie's* or publick Cryers, who are also made use of on this occasion, and sent by their Masters on National Errands to Friends or Enemies, their Caps being an effectual free-pass every where, supposing them to be sent by their Master; but otherwise they cannot protect them; they being in effect not unlike our *European* Trumpeters in time of War. Each Town hath one or two of these Officers to cry what is strayed, lost or stolen; and to proclaim the Orders made by the Governours or Kings: besides all which, when sitting in Council, they are obliged when the Voices run too high and confused, to cry out, *Tie-Tie*, or hearken, from whence the Name of their Office is borrowed. They wear a Cap made of a black Apes Skin, whose Hair is about one Fingers length, and in their Hands they have a bunch made of the Hair of an Elephant's Tail, and small Rushes, with which they defend their Master from the Flies. The fourth and last as well as most considerable Officers, are the Attendants on the Kings Wives: their chief Province is to take care that no Strangers pluck the Fruit of their Masters Orchard: Though I am apt to think when these happen to be tolerable handsome Fellows, that they make
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better use of their Posts than their Master of his Propriety. They are also entrusted with all the King's Treasury; of which they carry the Keys, for they are not trusted to any besides them, and consequently they are the only Persons who after the King's Decease are able and obliged to give an account of his Treasury. Besides these, our Monarchs have no other Officers. But I ought also to inform you, they are not Kings alone who are thus served, but every Principal Man has the same sorts of Officers to attend him, being herein equal with the King; or if he is very rich, perhaps he will out-vie him.

I dare say you will not complain that this is too short; if its length is not tiresome 'tis well; I have only the importance of the Subject to plead; in short that it prove agreeable, is the Wish of Yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

Of the Negroes manner of Marrying. The Bride brings no Fortune, and the Bridegroom but a very small one. Wedding Charges very easy. How many Wives they have: What Work they do, and the Idleness of the Men. Merchants Wives live the best. Some drive a Trade with their Wives. The particular Subtlety of the Women. Fines for Lying with another Man's Wife, and how the Cause is tryed. Married People have no mutual Propriety in Money or Goods, nor does the one inherit any Effects of the other, nor do the Children inherit their Parents Goods. How the right of Inheritance devolves. Adultery is severely punished in the In-land Country; each Person there being chiefly his own Judge. Wives not permitted to punish their Husbands for Adultery. How the Men divide themselves amongst their Wives. Fruitful Women Honoured and Respected. Ridiculous Ceremonies on a young Woman's being with Child the first time. What Name they give their Children. Wonderful Separation of the Women of Ante when they have born ten Children. Menstruous Women Unclean. Circumcision usual amongst them; a conjecture from whence they derived that Custom. Of the Unmarried. Early Marriages. Why
Women

Women remain longest Unmarried. Multitude of Women. Common Prostitutes initiated to Trade. Their small hire. How highly they are valued if sound. Unmarried Women are Whores, though not called so. A Description of the common Whores of Ardra.

S I R,

MY last bore date—Since which time I have not received any from you, tho' some Ships have arrived on the Coast since; so that indeed I am in doubt what to conclude concerning you, or what to ascribe your not writing to; whether to neglect, too much Business, or Indisposition: I would not encourage my self to fear the last, and the second is no excuse for not writing to a Friend, which is to be preferred before all Business. Wherefore, I shall take it for granted, that you are guilty of the first till you clear your self very well, and make satisfaction by a full charged Letter.

My former treated of Wars and the Arts of Destruction; and in this I shall touch upon a Subject which supplies the Devastations the other makes; that is, I shall inform you in the first place how their Marriages go here, and of every thing naturally falling under that Head. Marriage here is not over-loaded with Ceremonies, nor have they any Notion of a Previous Courtship to bring on a Match: here are no tedious Disputes on account of Marriage Settlements: But if a *Negro* fixes his Eye upon a young Woman (Virgin, I scarce dare say) nothing is more requisite than to apply to her Father, Mother or nearest Relations, and ask her of them,
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who very seldom deny a Request of that reasonable Nature, if it be but the least agreeable only to the Daughter.

If the young is Woman Marriageable, he takes her Home with him, but if yet too young, he leaves her some time with her Parents; which some are not very willing to, for Reasons hereafter to be told. The Bride brings no other Fortune than her Body, nor does the Man want much; 'tis sufficient if he has enough to defray the Expence of the Wedding-Day; which consists of a little Gold, Wine, Brandy, a Sheep for the Relations, and new Cloaths for the Bride, which are proportioned to the Circumstances of the Bridegroom, who keeps a very exact account of every thing that he bestows on the Bride or her Friends, that if she ever comes to be so far disgusted at him as to leave him, he may demand all again, which she or her Friends must pay to the utmost exactness, together with the Wedding Charges. But if he puts her away, the Account is settled, and he has no pretence to demand any thing of her or her Relations, unless he produce very good Reasons why he left her; in which case the mentioned Disbursements must be refunded.

The Wedding-Day is not accompanied with Feasting or Jollity; the Bride is somewhat extraordinary dress'd for several Days successively with fine Cloaths, Gold and other Ornaments, which are frequently borrowed or hired on these Occasions; not unlike those in *Holland*, who to render their Funeral Feasts the more Splendid, adorn themselves with others Feathers. Each Man marries as many Wives as he pleases or is consistent with his Circumstances, though they seldom exceed twenty, but are commonly contented with a number betwixt three and ten, and those

those who would appear very great, compleat the mentioned number of Twenty. Most of these Wives are obliged to till the Ground, Plant *Milbio* or *Jummes*, or otherwise work for their Husbands, and to take care that he finds something to eat when he comes Home; the best of which is, that they can very cheaply satisfy him: Whilst the Man only idly spends his time in impertinent Tattling (the Womens Business in our Country) and drinking of Palm-Wine, which the poor Wives are frequently obliged to raise Money to pay for, and by their hard Labour maintain and satisfy these lazy Wretches their greedy Thirst after Wine. Tho' others are not quite so beastly, particularly the Traders in Palm-Wine, and Fishermen; the former of which sell Palm-Wine, and the latter either go out to fish, or hires themselves to us to row according as Opportunity offers; and these keep House the most peaceably and pass the most reputably through the World.

Those who are rich, have two Wives perpetually exempted from Labour; the first of which is the Oldest and principal Wife, here called, *Muliere Grande*, or the chief Woman, to whom the House-keeping and command over all the rest is entrusted. The second is she who is consecrated to his God, and thence called *Bossum*; of whom he is very jealous, and so much enraged if any Man kisses her, that if he could do it privately he would so severely punish her that she would not be able to serve him so again: But as for the remainder of his Wives he doth not watch them so narrowly, especially if he can get any Money by them.

These *Bossums* are Slaves bought with design to be consecrated to their God, and therefore generally none of the most disagreeable. With these

A Description of the LET. XII.

these they lye on their Birth-Day or Night, and that Day of the Week dedicated to their God ; so that they are sure of a weekly Favour, supposing the Men in condition ; and 'tis on this account that they esteem their Fortune better than that of other Women.

The Principal Merchants or Traders Wives are the happiest, because not obliged to much labour out of the House, and they are well provided for their Husbands.

Several Negroes are so Brutal that they marry many Wives only to get a good Living by 'em, and to wear gilt Horns. These are truly contented Cuckolds, who give their Wives full order to entice other Men to lye with them; which done, these She-Brutes immediately tell their Husbands, who knows very well how to fleece the Amorous Spark. 'Tis inexpressible what Subtleties these Phadras use to draw Men, but especially Strangers, into the Net ; to those they will pretend they have no Husband, and are yet Unmarried and Free: But the Job is no sooner over than the Husband appears, and gives them cogent Reasons to repent their Credulity.

Others whose Admirers very well know they are married, the better to allure them to their Embraces, will promise, and if required, swear, Eternal Secrecy ; but most of them keep their Words like Women, and are sure not to tell their Husband before they see him ; and indeed 'twould fall very hard upon them if their Husband came to the Knowledge thereof by any other means: Which is some excuse for their disclosing their Lover ; it being highly reasonable and a natural Law, that a Woman should further the Interest of her Husband ; since by this means they avoid the danger of Punishment, which they ought to expect from their Husbands for Concealment.

Ods

LET. XII. Gold Coast of Guinea.

Ods foot, says the German, if this fashion prevail'd in Europe, that a Woman might without fear choose as many Deputies for her Husband as she pleas'd, to what a bulk would Atheon's Corporation grow : But I don't think it very convenient ; for I have been informed that in the Southern Countries, this Society, without the mentioned Liberty, is grown so numerous, that they can scarce pass the Streets without clashing their Horns: But enough of this, 'tis too tender for my rough handling ; wherefore leaving that I shall return to my Subject.

The Fine for lying with another Man's Wife amongst the common People is about four, five or six Pounds Sterling : But the Rich must bleed a greater Summ, especially if he has lain with a considerable Man's Wife ; on which occasion it costs a hundred Pound or two.

These Causes are very accurately pleaded and defended before the Courts of Judicature. I, during my residence, acted the part of a chief Judge on this occasion above one hundred times. You know that to deny is the first Rule in Law ; and the Negroes are so well skilled in this, that they commonly deny the Accusation the first thing they do, and oblige their Accusers to confirm it by Evidence ; which the Woman being most capable of, is obliged to appear in full Assembly, and display the whole Action in its most natural broad Terms and Colours, with all its attending Circumstances of time, place, how the Criminal departed himself, and what he gave her : In a word, without forgetting the least particular. What think you, Sir, is not this a rare Tryal, and very proper for the Ears of those old Gentleman, of which this Assembly or Court is composed, especially considering that besides all this, sometimes the Accused urges in his defence, that

that 'tis true that he was indeed just ready to perpetrate the charged Crime, but timely thinking of the consequences, withdrew without reducing his intentions to Action. In answer to which, the Lady is obliged to declare all particulars, and to give all possible Proofs of his compleating the Fact, in so much that both stick so close to their Assertion, which they back with so much probability, that the old Men are perplexed what Sentence to give without putting the Man to his Oath, and if he forswears it he is clear; but if he refuses that, Sentence passes against him, since on these occasions there are not many Witnesses.

Married People here have no community of Goods; but each hath his or her particular Propriety: The Man and his Wives generally adjust the matter together; so that they are to bear the charge of House-keeping, while the Cloathing of the whole Family is at his sole expence.

On the Death of either the Man or the Wife, the respective Relations come and immediately sweep away all, not leaving the Widow or Widower the least part thereof, though they are frequently obliged to help to pay the Funeral Charges.

Some *Negroes*, besides Wives, have also their Concubines, which they several times prefer before their Wives, and take more care of them; but their Children are esteemed illegitimate, and are not reckoned amongst the Relations.

If a *Negroe* has a Child by his Slave, whether married to her or not, his Heir will look upon it and keep it only as a Slave, on which account those who love their Slaves will take care to make their Children free with the usual Ceremonies before they dye; after which they are in every particular treated as free Persons.

The Children they have by their Wives are indeed legitimate, but all along the Gold Coast never

never inherit their Parents Effects, except at *Acra* only. The eldest Son, supposing the Father a King or a Captain of a Town, succeeds him in his Office only; but besides his Father's Shield and Sabre, he has nothing more to pretend to: So that 'tis here no manner of advantage to be descended from rich Parents, unless (which seldom happens) Paternal Love obliges them to bestow somewhat on their Children in their Life-time, which must be very privately done, otherwise the Relations after their Father's Death will oblige the Children to return it to the utmost Farthing.

The Right of Inheritance is very oddly adjusted; and as far as I could observe, the Brothers and Sisters Children are the right and lawful Heirs, in the manner following. They do not jointly inherit, but the eldest Son of his Mother is Heir to his Mothers Brother or her Son, as the eldest Daughter is Heiress of her Mothers Sister or her Daughter: Neither the Father himself or his Relations, as Brothers, Sisters, &c. have any claim to the Goods of the Defunct, for what Reason they can't tell: But I am of Opinion that this Custom was introduc'd on account of the Whoredom of the Women; herein following the Custom of some *East-Indian* Kings, who (as Authors say) educate their Sisters Son as their own, and appoint him to succeed in the Throne, because they are more sure that their Sisters Son is of their Blood than they can be of their own; for being obliged to trust a Woman no way related to them, if she commit Adultery, the Child may be entirely estranged from their Blood.

In the mentioned *Asiatick* Countries, they are very careful to prevent their Kingdoms, Crowns and Estates descending on a Strange or Bastard Race: and as Honour and Reputation is more valuable than Goods, so I cannot help praising the *Indian* Caution,

Caution, and believe you will declare on my side.

In deficiency of the mentioned Heirs, the Brothers or Sisters take place; but if none of them are in Being, then the nearest Relation to the Mother of the Defunct comes in. But their account of this Subject is so perplexed and obscure, that hitherto no *European* has been able to obtain a clear Description of it, as I am certain they never will; notwithstanding that the *Negroes* are so accurately perfect in it, that they never commit any Error on this Head: Not but that great Disputes arise sometimes amongst them on this occasion; but these are never owing to their ignorance who is the Heir; but happen from the next Heir's being too potent in Men and Arms, and therefore stretching beyond the due Bounds of Inheritance.

I have already told you how many Wives the *Negroes* marry; and herein they place the greatest Glory and Grandeur, as their Riches consists in the Multitude of Slaves, though they frequently conduce to their ruine, because every Man is obliged to make good the Injury which his Slave does; if he is guilty of Theft or Adultery, his Master is obliged to pay the Fine imposed for his Crime.

The *Negroes* are also responsible for their Sons, Nephews, and other Relations; tho' in this case the Relations help each other by a mutual Contribution, each giving something towards it according to his Circumstances; which if he should not do, the Criminal would be condemned to Death or Slavery.

Having at large described the Marriages of the Coast *Negroes*, let us see how the In-land *Negroes* behave themselves in their Marriage-State, and what Punishment they inflict on Adultery; since freed from any Subjection to the *Europeans*, they are more severe on this occasion. He

He who debauches a *Negroes* Wife here, is not only generally intirely ruined, but his Relations often suffer with him: For if the injured Person be a rich and great Man, he is not contented with ruining the Malefactor only, but will not be quiet till he hath removed him out of the way. If the guilty Person is a Slave, his Death is undeniably determined, and that in the most cruel manner that can be devised, besides a Fine laid upon his Master; and the Men here detesting the foregoing fordid manner of trading with their Wives usual on the Coast; a Woman caught in Adultery is also in great danger of her Life, unless her Relations pacify the enraged Husband with a large Summ of Money. But she who lies with her Husbands Slave, is infallibly condemned to Death, as well as the Slave her Paramour: besides all which, her Relations are obliged to pay a Summ to her Husband.

Every considerable *Negroe* is in this case for the most part his own Judge; and is he too weak alone to avenge himself, he calls his Friends to his assistance, who readily lend him their helping-hand, each being sure to get something of the Compensation which occurs.

These *Negroes* are richer than those who live amongst us; and therefore a Person guilty of this Crime is punished with utmost Severity. I have heard of Fines amounting to above five thousand Pounds Sterling paid on account of Adultery. Besides *Acra*, *Apam* and *Coromantyn*, there are very few places on the Gold Coast where I have not lived, and I do not remember in any of them ever to have met with a *Negroe* who was possess'd of so large a Fortune; or with any King but what after having sold all he had in the World to raise such a Summ, would find himself not able to do it: But when I talk at this rate, I would except the

the King of *Aquamboe*, and according to report also him of *Acron*; which two being joined, possess more Gold than all the rest together.

Notwithstanding that in the In-land Country, the Punishment extends as well to the Woman as to the Man; yet it by no means deterrs the Woman from the practice of it: And, indeed, 'tis not much to be wonder'd, if we consider that the Women are of a Nature so much hotter than the Men, and that ten or twenty are frequently obliged to content themselves with one Man amongst them, who is frequently insufficient for one of them: Wherefore they are continually contriving how to gain a Lover, and would rather suffer Death than forbear the delicious Sin: And because the Men out of fear of the Punishment, are not easily enclined to commit this Crime, the Women omit no Stratagem which can allure them. They are so very fiery, than if they can get a young Man alone they will tear the Cloaths off of his indecent Parts, and throw themselves upon him; swearing that if he will not yield to their Desires, they will accuse him to their Husband of Attempts to violate their Chastity. And though the Youth were as chaste as *Joseph*, and but seen in this Posture, it would not avail to alledge that he came there by surprize; not he but the Woman would be believed; and to what a pitch the enraged Hatred, or rather wild Frenzy of a dissatisfied and despised Woman would hurry her, but too plainly appears by numerous Instances.

Others of these warm Ladies narrowly watch the place where the Person on whom they cast their lustful Eye is used to sleep: and if they can surprize him, they steal to and lay themselves softly down by him without his Knowledge; soon after which awaking him, they use all their Arts to excite him to gratify their Passion; and if all
prove

prove in vain, they assure him that they will make such a noise as shall occasion their being surprized together: after which, his Death will be inevitable. Farther to allure him she protests that she is come hither without the Knowledge of any Person, and that she can retire without the least suspicion of her Husband or any Body else: The Youth thus caught, is obliged to satisfy her Lust to free himself of her: If it continues a Secret they continue in the Repetition of their Crime till it bursts into discovery, and they receive their Reward. The Men, who by this means, come to their End, are really to be pittied, and the Women indeed deserve some tender Thoughts; for they being Flesh and Blood as the Men, and liable to the same weakness, 'tis hard the Men should have such a Prerogative over them. If I know you well, I believe that if these poor Wretches Case were left to you and me, we should make good and honourable Provision, that their Grievances should be so far redress'd, as they should remain fully satisfied.

'Tis undeniable that Jealousie is always accompanied with Love; these two Passions so being inseparable, that tho' they produce contrary Effects, yet they seem in reality but the same thing. But however jealous the Black Women are of their Husbands, yet they have no satisfaction to pretend to, if their Husbands by diverting themselves with other Women, rob them of their Right; their only Remedy is to wean him from this Vice, by agreeable soft and tender Means; for none of them, besides his chief Wife, dare pretend to chide him for it: She, indeed, when Opportunity offers, will charge him severely on that account, and threaten him that if he pursues that Course she will leave him: but this must be
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when the Man is in a good Humour, otherwise he won't take it very well.

Before I advance any farther, I ought to inform you, that all I impart to you concerning the In-land Negroes, is not the result of my own Observation, I never having been at those places; but is only collected from the Relation of the Negroes that come from thence: but they are such People, that in this and other things I dare assure my self of the Truth of what they say. However I don't hand it to you as my own.

Each Wife is sure to do her best to please and charm her Husband, in order to be preferred above the rest in his love, and to secure to her self the greatest share of Matrimonial Favours, which chiefly depends on the Man's Pleasure; though they generally settle an equal Distribution (to prevent dispute;) so that each Wife is obliged in her turn. If she whose turn it is, is a Favourite, she lies with her Husband the whole Night; but otherwise when her turn is past, though perhaps equally satisfied with *Tantalus*, she is obliged to retire.

The Wife, who is so fortunate as to be big with Child, is very much respected by her Husband, and waited on; besides which, if it is the first time, rich Offerings are made to the False-God, to obtain her safe delivery. The Ceremonies used on occasion of a Womans being big with the first Child, are very foolish and ridiculous. As soon as they find themselves pregnant, they are brought to the Sea-shore in order to be washed; though before she can get thither, she is followed by a great number of Boys and Girls, who sling all manner of Dung and Filth at her in her way to the Sea, where she is ducked and washed clean. Why this is done I can't tell, unless it be because they vainly believe that if it is omitted, the Mother, the Child, or some of the Relations, will certainly die soon after. As

As soon as the Child is born and the Priest has consecrated it, if above the common Rank, it hath three Names bestowed on it (though always called by one;) the first is that of the Day of the Week on which it is born; the next, if a Son, is his Grand-fathers, if a Girl, her Grandmothers Name; though this is not strictly observed by the Negroes, some of them giving their own or the Names of some of their Relations to their Children: After which their Names increase with their Years; has any Person behav'd himself valiantly in the War, he obtains a Name derived from thence, as he doth by killing a Chieftain of the Enemies: Does he kill a wild Ravenous Beast, he gets a new Name by it. But 'twould be a Days work to recite all their Names and the Occasions of them; 'tis sufficient to tell you, that the number given to some Men amounts to twenty: The chief of which, and by which he is most honoured, is that given him when they are drinking Palm-Wine together in the Market-place. The common Name by which they are called, is one of those given them at their Birth. Some are called after the number of Children that their Mother has born, as the eighth, the ninth or tenth Child; but this is only when the Mother has born above six or seven Children.

In the Country of *Ante* if a Woman has born ten Children, she is obliged to be separated from her Husband, and live in a Solitary Hut remote from all the rest of Mankind, for the space of a whole Year, where she is carefully furnished with all Necessaries of Life; after the expiration of this Term, and the performance of all Customary Ceremonies, she returns to her Husband and lives with him as before: This is a Custom so particular, that I don't know any Nation besides where 'tis in use; and why 'tis practised here I am also

also ignorant, unless it be grounded on some Superstitious Opinion, that it will defend them from some Evil.

When the Custom of Women is upon the Female Sex, they are not only esteemed unclean and separated from their Husband, but they are not suffered to go into another Man's House, at least to lodge, and are consequently obliged to remain in a small Hut near their Fathers or Husbands House.

The Children are not circumcised any where on the Gold Coast, but at *Acra*. But whence the Custom of holding Women unclean, and Circumcising of Children, should be derived from, I own I cannot tell; to carry it up as high as the *Judaick* Times seems to me too farr: Tho' several *Europeans* favour this Assertion, urging, that the *Negroes* still retain several Laws and Customs which favour of *Judaism*, as that last mention'd, the Honouring of the Moon at the time when the *Jews* begin their Festival, the marrying of their Brothers Wife, and several more, which seem the same in effect, as well as the Names, of which here are several which occur in the Old Testament. But all this cannot in the least incline me to their Opinion; I should be more easily persuaded that they had all these from the *Mahometans*, whose Religion is a mere Rhapsody of Christianity, *Judaism* and *Heathenism*; which extending it self from one Country to another, might probably reach hither: this conjecture being considerably strengthened from the Natives of *Ardra* and *Fida*, their being custom'd to Trade several hundred Miles In-land till they come to the *Barbary* Coast; and not improbably to the *Moors* Country. Which being granted, 'tis not Unnatural to suppose they may have learned and brought home some Fragments of their Religion.

But

But to return to our Subject. Several of each Sex here live Unmarried, at least for some time, tho' commonly the number of single Women exceeds that of single Men; and that for Reasons hereafter to be told; and yet very few *Negroes* die, unless it be very young, Unmarried. The Men marry as soon as they can raise Money to defray the Wedding-Charges; which being so very inconsiderable among the common People, they get a Wife very soon. The Children of the Chief or Rich People, whose Relations are inclined to it, and want no Money, are frequently married before they become acquainted with the distinction of Sexes: Further, several Families willing to be more nearly allyed, interchangeably marry their Children as soon as they are born, without any other Ceremony than the agreement of Parents on both sides.

The Reasons why the Women here continue longest unmarried, is, first, because that they live a more free and pleasant Life, than when married, being now at perfect liberty to admit the embraces of any or several Men, if they please. These sort of Women generally marry amongst common People, and seldom content themselves with their Husbands alone.

The second Reason is, the vast Multitude of Women; their number much exceeds that of the Men, which obliges them to stay till they are asked. Tho' this long waiting becomes less Irksome, because it is no manner of Scandal to stay their Appetites as often as they think fit: Nor are they therefore rudely accounted Whores; but on the contrary, are always thought as fitting to be chose for Wives as any other; and accordingly in their Turn get Husbands as well as the rest.

In the Countries of *Eguira*, *Abocroe*, *Ancober*, *Azim*, *Ante* and *Adom*, are several Women who never

never marry, and who only are called Whores; being initiated in that Trade in the following manner.

When the *Manceroes* find they want a common Whore, they go and petition the *Caboceroes* that they will please graciously to buy one for the publick: Upon which they buy a beautiful Female Slave, or else the *Manceroes* buy one themselves. The Woman so bought, is brought to the publick Market-place, accompanied with another already experienced in that Trade, in order to instruct her how she should deport her self for the future: Which being perfectly accomplished, the Novice is smeared all over with Earth, and several Offerings offered for her success in her future Occupation. This over, a little Boy, yet immature for Love Affairs, makes a feint or representation of lying with her before all the People; by which 'tis hinted to her that from this time forwards, she is obliged to receive all Persons indistinguishable who offer themselves to her, not excepting little Boys. Then a little out of the way, a small Hut is built for her; in which she is obliged to confine her self for eight or ten Days, and lye with every Man who comes thither: After which, she obtains the Honourable Name of *Abelcre* or *Abelecre*, signifying a common Whore; and she has a dwelling-place assign'd her near one of her Masters, or in a particular place in the Town, she being for the remainder of her Life obliged to refuse no Man the use of her Body, though he offers never so small a Sum; which seldom amounts to above one Penny; and if any Body is so well pleas'd with his Entertainment, as to give more, 'tis owing to his Civility, for he is not obliged to it.

Each of the above-mentioned Towns, has two or three of these miserable Wretches, according to

to their largeness. The Money that they get they bring to their Masters, who return them so much out of it as is necessary to subsist them in Cloaths and Necessaries.

These Women are very miserable when they have caught any Venereal Infection: From which they seldom escape long free; for prostituting themselves as well to the unfound as found, they are in continual danger; and being once seized by that Distemper it must take its course; for it seldom happens that any Body is touched with any concern for her, not so much as her own Master to whom she belongs: For as soon as the gain begins to cease, they withdraw their Hands, and never so much as take the least care of her; and thus these unhappy Creatures come to a miserable end.

But as long as they are Sound and in their Flower, they are in very great esteem: And 'tis impossible to afflict a Land or Town more sensibly than by seizing these Creatures. For Example, if our Factor at *Axim* have any dispute with his Subordinate *Negroes*, no way will more effectually bring them to Reason than by taking one of these Whores into Custody, and confining her in the Fort: For as soon as this News reaches the *Manceroes* Ears, they go with flying Sails to the *Caboceroes*, and earnestly desire them to give the Factor Satisfaction, that they may have their Whores set at liberty again; urging as a Reason why they request it in such a pressing manner, that during their Imprisonment, those Men who have no Wives, will be put to the utmost necessity for a Woman, and be prompted to run the danger of lying with Mens Wives. This I can assure you of the Truth of by my own Experience, having had more than one proof of it; for at one time securing five or six *Cabocero's*, and at the other

or three Whores, I found hardly any Body besides their own Relations concerned for the former; but on account of the other, the whole Village came upon their Knees; and every Body, though he had no particular Interest in it, was very much concerned for their Liberty.

The Countries of *Commany, Elmina, Fetu, Saboe, Fantyn*, &c. have none of these Whores, and yet a young Rake is not much put to it, for there is no want of Unmarried Women, and they without any distinction, than that of being too young, are almost all Whores, tho' they indeed don't bear that Name, and can dispute the price of their Favours, as not being obliged to bestow them on every Person who asks them, but according to their own Inclination. But indeed, as to the price, they are so very reasonable, that they seldom occasion any dispute on that Head: And if this is not sufficient relief for the young Sparks, there are yet old Matrons who breed up whole Schools full of the handsomest they can find for their use.

In *Fida* and the Country about it, and in all the Land of *Fida*, is a very great plenty of these Whores, and at a cheaper price than on the Gold Coast. In *Fida* I have seen a vast Multitude of Huts, not above ten Foot long and six broad, placed near the great Roads throughout the whole Country; in which these Women are obliged to ply at their appointed Days in the Week for the relief of all Persons: And these Countries being very populous, the Slaves vastly numerous, and the married Women kept up very strict; these Whores on those Days must of necessity be very well tired: I have been assured that some of them hath lain with thirty Men on a Day. If *Livia* was alive, I should ask her whether this is not sufficient to satisfy them; but as being
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my self ignorant, I shall not venture to determine.

What I have related seems indeed incredible; and yet no Body doubts it in the least here: Their common price is three little Shells, called *Boesjes*, and by us *Cawrits*, worth here about a Farthing. This is an established Price; out of which they are obliged to subsist themselves, and besides may work on other Days if they please; for as no Body has any propriety in them here, so they have no Supervisors, nor are they solemnly initiated on the Gold Coast: But 'tis customary for some of the most considerable and rich *Negroe* Ladies, when lying upon their Death-bed, to buy some of these Foreign Female Slaves, and make a Present of them to the Publick; which these tender-hearted Gentlewomen take for a great work of Mercy and Charity, as some People in *Europe* do the buying Masses for the Souls in Purgatory: Which is most effectual I will not pretend to determine; but leaving the latter to take care of themselves, I shall only inform you that these Ladies firmly believe, without the least doubt, they shall receive their Reward for this in the other Life; and the more Whores they buy for the Publick the greater Reward they promise themselves.

The latter end of these Whores is much the same with those on the Gold Coast, wretched and miserable, and rather to a greater degree; they being here obliged to more Fatigue, and consequently sooner infected and worn out, and consequently are smothered in *Acheron's* Pool very young; and seldom arriving to a moderate Age.

Thus I have detained you a tedious while on the Marriages of the *Negroes*, and exposed to your view all our Venereal Ware-houses, and all their contain'd Stores. I should find my self very much

deceived, if my manner of handling this Subject throughout shou'd in the least disgust you : For had I the least Reason to believe you tainted with any obsolete precise Affectation, I would, tho' I had committed a sort of violence on my self, have treated these Matters in a much graver manner : But I cannot believe you so soon or so much altered ; this Subject being naturally somewhat Luscious, I remember that formerly we used to talk on it in a rallying manner, leaving the serious Discussion of it to these sly Hypocrites who had rather act than talk. Still Waters have deep bottoms : And this is the true Reason why being obliged to speak of these Matters, I chose to do it in a sort of Railery, which did not use to prove disagreeable to either of us. And accordingly I cannot doubt your Approbation in your answer to this ; assuring you nothing shall ever be wanting on my part to continue me your Friend.

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A
 DESCRIPTION
 OF THE
 Gold Coast
 OF
 GUINEA.

To which is added

A Just Representation
 OF THE
 SLAVE TRADE,

And a general Account of the Slave Coast, the Country of *Ardra* : Together with a circular *Tour* made by the Author in the Year 1698. to *Rio de Gabon*, *Cabo-Lopez di Gonsalvez*, the Islands of *St. Tome* and *Annaboa* ; and his return to the Gold Coast.

PART II.

A

DESCRIPTION
OF THE
Gold Coast.

LETTER XIII.

How the Negroes deport themselves to the Sick. They do not depend on Medicinal Remedies alone; but make Offerings to their Gods on account of the Sick: What these consist of. Their Gratitude to Physicians; which they frequently change, and renew their Offerings. The Slaves also make Offerings for their European Masters; and the Mulatto Women for their Husbands: which is likewise approved by some Europeans. Their usual Remedies; which though they seem contradictory to the ends for which they are Administred, yet frequently succeed. The great Efficacy of Green Vegetables in Diseases, and even in Wounds. The enquiry after

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after the Cause of any Persons Death. Their Questions put to the Dead and their False-God; with the Responses. An Accident on that account which beset one of the Author's Servants. The Assertion of some who affirm that the Negroes ask Advice of the Devil, confuted: And a relation how their Questions to the Dead are managed. The Shaving of the Women on occasion of the Death of their Husbands: Cleansing the dead Body. A Description of their manner of burying the Dead. Pompous Funerals of the principal People. How they preserve the Corps from rotting several Months above Ground. Living Men sacrific'd for the Dead: The Cruelty attending that Custom, as the Author himself has observ'd. Their building of a Hut on the Grave; and the Opinion of some Writers on that Subject contradicted. The Funeral Ceremonies renewed one Year after the Decease. The Negroes very desirous to be buryed in their own Country, or at least that their Bones may be brought thither; and how that is managed.

S I R,

*S*ince my last, and about a Month past, I was honoured with yours of the 25th—'Tis a common Proverb, that long Fasting never saves Bread; the Truth of which I find at present confirm'd: I can see by your Letter, that you made use of the Pen of a ready Writer, and that the
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Complaints of my last were very reasonable; and cannot but acknowledge full satisfaction without giving you any further trouble in excusing your Negligence. I am glad you and your Lady are well in Health, and pray Heaven you may both so continue for a long Series of Years.

'Tis very agreeable News to me, that you have received mine of— and the rest, which with the four former compleat the Account of that part of the Coast; and are also satisfied with my manner of describing our Trade there, and which is yet more, seem to agree with my Opinion, and promise to propose my sketch of Improvements and Amendments to the Companies Consideration: I wish both you and it a favourable Reception at their Board, and hope they will make such Resolutions as shall undoubtedly tend to the good of that Society.

I am not at all surprized that the Government of the Coast seems very unaccountable to you; I doubt not but every one who hears of it will be touched with your Sentiments of it. I cannot but praise your design, and heartily wish its good Success; otherwise I should be very sorry, not only that I had hinted it to you, but that you should take so much pains to no purpose: However I hope for the best, and that I shall soon be informed of your Progress therein.

The Letters which I have sent you since those you have already received of mine, are five in number. Treating of 1. The Insalubrity of this Country, and wherein it consists: 2. Treats concerning the Nature of the Inhabitants at large: 3. Of their Religion: 4. Of their Government, Wars, Power of their Kings; which is followed by the fifth and last, treating of their Marriages, &c. I hope you have received some of them before now, and that the remainder will follow in due

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due time; but for fear any should unhappily miscarry, I herewith send you the Copies of them.

Death being the Period of all Humane Affairs, I shall conclude my Description of these Nations, with a short discussion of that Subject; after which you will not be troubled with any more than three Letters from me; one concerning the wild and tame Quadrupedes of this Country, the second of the Fowls, Insects and Fishes, and the last of Vegetables: Unless I can think of any other thing, and then you may be sure not to fail of it.

But to return to our Design. Let us examine what Customs are usual amongst the Negroes on occasion of Sickness, Death and Burying.

Any Negroe falling sick here is diligently enough attended, in proportion to his Circumstances: For, as I have formerly hinted, they are all very much afraid of Death; in which they are not much in the wrong, considering that but once to die, is for ever to be buried in Oblivion. Actuated by this Principle, they leave no means untried which may contribute to the extending the Thread of Life to as great a length as possible: And had they the same Notion of the three Fatal Sisters as the Antient Greeks, I doubt not but these would have been the Goddesses to which the greatest part of their Offerings would have been directed.

In Sickness (in which they agree with all the rest of the World) they first have recourse to Remedies: However, not thinking them sufficient alone to preserve Life and restore Health, they apply their false and superstitious Religious Worship, as more effectual to those Ends: And what contributes to the promotion of this Custom, is, that he who here acts the part of a Doctor, is also

a *Feticheer* or Priest; who consequently does not find it very difficult to persuade the Patient's Relations, that he cannot be recovered without some Offerings made to the False God in order to appease him: And they being strongly bent to Superstition, and immediately ready to follow the Priest's Advice, accordingly desire him to enquire of their God what he would please to have. The Priest to be sure is not negligent in this Affair, where the Profit accrues to him; but as soon as possible puts his Cheats in practice; and after his pretended Enquiry, he informs them that they must offer a Sheep, Hog, Cock, Dog, Cat, or whatever he likes best; which sometimes may be, Gold, Cloath, Drink, and other such like good things besides; which are always proportioned to the Ability of the Person to be served; for that alters the measure of these Cheats, who always consider whether the Man be in condition to bear this charge: And herein they are indeed to be preferred to some *Romish* Priests, whose indistinguishingly exorbitant price of Soul-Masses ruins several Families.

Whatever the Priest requires, the *Negroes* freely part with; and he knows to what use to put it. If the Patient shortly after recovers, either by Virtue of Nature's kindly Assistance, or the Efficacy of the Medicines administered, the Priest or Doctor is sure not to remain unrewarded: For whatever Mr. *William Godschalk-van-Fokkenbrog* may pretend, that when cured, the sight of the Doctor and the Devil are equally welcome to them; they on the contrary are very far from Ingratitude on these occasions.

And indeed his Sense turn'd quite contrary, is rather true of them, they being no sooner recovered, but they extol their Physician up to the Heavens.

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But does the Disease increase and the Patient grow worse; fresh Offerings are made, which are more expensive than the former: So that these continue till the Patient is restored to his pristine Health, or dyes.

It frequently happens that one Physician is discharged with a good Reward, and another called in his stead, who begins a-new, and knows very well how to make his advantage of his Patient's Misfortune.

His first business, just like the Physicians in *Europe*, is to condemn his Predecessor's Method, and decry him as an ignorant Pretender: Upon which new and very expensive Offerings are to be made; for this new Comer fearing the Fate of him in whose place he came, endeavours to make as great Advantage as is possible in his time; to this end he makes use of such cunning Frauds, that our *Europeans*, though bad enough, would be put out of countenance by 'em. But pray, Sir, don't take this to be aimed at you: No, it cannot touch the honest Physician, and such I take you for.

This change of Physicians sometimes happens twenty times or more successively, and at a continual and greater charge than with us; the *Negroes* are so strangely bigotted to these Offerings, that they several times force the Priests to make them.

The Boys, which are either Slaves or Servants to the *Europeans*, if they think they have a good Master, will as soon as he is seized by the least indisposition, without his Knowledge, go to the Priests to make Offerings for him, that he may recover his Health: And accordingly we have found upon the Beds or in the Chambers of our principal People, some things consecrated or charmed by the Priest, laid there on purpose to defend their Master from Death: And because they know

know we are always displeas'd at it, they always do it in private, and conceal it so well, that 'tis impossible for us to discover it before the Person is dead, and they have had no time to remove it.

The *Mulatto* Women (of whom I have formerly said something) who would fain pass for Christians, than which they are nothing less, are extravagantly addicted to this Superstition: If one of them is married to or kept by an *European*, who loves and pays her well; if he fall sick she never fails to make rich Offerings to the Priest, with much warmer Zeal and stronger Reliance on the Success of them, than the *Negroes* themselves: But what is most deplorable and detestable, is, that here are even some *Europeans*, who not only think favourably of, and believe this Idolatrous Worship effectual, but instigate their Servants to it; and are likewise grown very fond of wearing some Trifles about their Bodies, which are consecrated or conjured by the Priest.

The chief Medicaments here in use, are first and more especially Limon or Lime-Juice, Malaget, otherwise called the Grains of Paradise, or the Cardamom, the Roots, Branches, and Gumms of Trees, about thirty several sorts of green Herbs, which are impregnated with an extraordinary Sanative Virtue.

The Remedies used here frequently seem pernicious in the case wherein they are given, and yet are found very successful, as an Instance of which please to take one of the most common Medicaments.

In case of a violent Cholick, they give to drink Morning and Evening for several Days successively a good Calabash of Lime Juice and Malaget mixt, and in other Diseases full as contradictory Ingredients. But this is out of my Province to talk

talk of these things: Wherefore, I shall rather leave it to you and others better Judges than my self; and only add, that how contradictory and improper soever these Med'cines may seem, yet I have seen several of our Country Men cured by them, when our own Physicians were at a loss what to do.

The green Herbs, the principal Remedy in use amongst the *Negroes*, are of such wonderful Efficacy, that 'tis much to be deplored that no *European* Physicians has yet applyed himself to the discovery of their Nature and Virtue; for I don't only imagine, but firmly believe, that they would prove more successful in the practice of Physick than the *European* Preparations, especially in this Country, because before they reach us they have lost all their Virtue, and are mostly corrupted: Besides which, our Constitution is in some measure changed here by the Climate; and therefore this Country Remedies, in all probability, are better for our Bodies than the *European*.

Those who are to come to this Country, may, if they please, endeavour to explore these Plants; for my part I shall here take my leave of them, with only informing you, the better to evince the strange Efficacy of these Herbs, that I have several times observed the *Negroes* cure such great and dangerous Wounds with them, that I have stood amazed thereat.

After all the above-mentioned Methods have been tryed and prove ineffectual, and the Patient expires; this furnishes his Relations with fresh business; they are now to enquire into his Death, or why he would dye: For though 'tis probable and apparent that he dyed a Natural Death, occasioned either by Sicknes, extreme old Age, Wounds, or some Mortal Distemper, this will

not satisfy them in the least; it must certainly proceed from some other Cause, according to the Proverb, *Death is never without a Cause*; which is no where in the World better believed than here. Immediately the Priest and the Relations must enquire whether the deceased was ever perjured in his Life; if he was, they believe they have discovered the Cause of his Death, which was a Punishment to the Perjury: But if he be found innocent of this, the next inquest to be made is, whether he had any powerful Enemies, who may have laid *Fetiches* in his way, which might occasion his Death (these *Fetiches* I have before described;) upon which sometimes some of his Enemies are attacked and examined very closely; and if he has been accustomed to such Practices, tho' never so long past, he will hardly come off with a whole Skin.

I cannot here pass by what happened to myself eight Years past, when I was at *Axim*: I was advised, in order to the Advancement of the Companies Trade, to send a Messenger to the King of *Dinkira*; in pursuance of which, I sent one of my Servants with a handsome Present to him, who received him and the Present very civilly, and was very well pleased with both. The *Brandenburghers* had also sent one of their young Men with a Present to him at the same time; whom this King received, as well as his Present, with very great marks of Friendship, he desiring to live in a good Understanding with the *Europeans*. Both these Servants waited at this Princes's Court, expecting that he by the first Convenience should dispatch them both to their Masters; but after residing there in Expectation about six Weeks in vain, he died: Which Accident exposed their Lives to the utmost danger; for the Relations of the Deceased, ridiculously supposing they had

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occasioned his Death, seized and bound them; after which they made enquiry by their Priests whether the Present they brought were not poisoned or conjured: But these Cheats were at this time so honest that in appearance, according to their Religious Rites, they pronounced them innocent and declared them free; upon which they were immediately released, and delivered from their dreaded Death, and afterwards dispatched back to us with Presents. By this you may see how we fall into danger here in this Country, without the least Reason to suspect or fear it. But now to return where I left off.

If there be no suspicion of Poyson, then enquiry is made if his Wives, Children and other Persons about him, and his Slaves, have attended him with due care, or been liberal enough in their Offerings: But if no deficiency can be here found, and consequently the Cause of the Person's Death is yet undiscovered, then they have recourse to the most common and last Refuge, which is always at hand; the Man died because he was deficient in the performance of his Religious Rites; which we have already described at large.

Then the Priest goes to the dead Person and asks him why he died: If you ask who is the Responder, I believe that *Simon de Ures*, who always brings the Devil in for a share of the Play, as very frequently conversing with Men, would say, or rather swear, that he, in the shape of the Deceased or their False God makes the Answer: But if you would have my Sentiments, I really believe the Dead, the Devil, and the False God, are all three equally Dumb, and therefore incapable of answering: But the true Answerer is the Roguish Priest himself only; who informs the Relations as it best suits his Interests,

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that

that his God and the Dead have made such Answers; which to be sure, as before, are those which, agree best with their Ends, and seem to have the greatest appearance of Truth. This decisive answer of the Priest passes for unquestionable Truth; and according to what he says they always adjust their Affairs.

But now I remember, that I have found it in a certain Author, or rather more than one, laid down as a positive Assertion, that the *Negroes* in doubtful Cases directly apply themselves to the Devil and ask Advice of him, governing themselves according to his Answer: But on my own Experience, I can assure you that 'tis utterly false and groundless; and what is most commendable in them, is, that they do not desire such a near Acquaintance with the Devil; and all their Questions of Moment in time of need, are address'd to their False God, or rather in effect to their Priests, without ever so much as thinking of the Devil or his Attendants; much less in hidden or doubtful Cases do they ask Advice of him, or oblige themselves to square their Affairs to the Rule of his Answer.

The customary Questions to the Dead are put in several Manners: For Instance, some Men take the dead Body in presence of the Priest upon their Shoulders; and then 'tis asked, Did not you dye for such a Cause? If he did, the Men who hold him, by I know not what hidden Impulse, are obliged to incline the Body towards the Querent; which is taken for an affirmative Answer: otherwise they stand still.

As soon as the sick Person is expired, they set up such a dismal Crying, Lamentation and Squeaking, that the whole Town is filled with it; by which 'tis soon published that some Body is lately

lately

lately dead: besides which, the Youth of the Deceased's Acquaintance generally pay their last Duty of Respect to him, by firing several Musquet-Shot.

If the Deceased be a Man, his Wives immediately shave their Heads very close, and smear their Bodies with white Earth; and put on an old worn-out Garment; thus adjusted they run about Street like mad Women, or rather She-Furies, with their Hair hanging upon their Cloaths; withal making a very dismal and lamentable Noise, continually repeating the Name of the Dead, and reciting the great Actions of his past Life: And this confused Tumultuary Noise of the Women lasts several Days successively, even till the Corps is buried.

If a principal Man is killed in Battle, and his Companions have no Opportunity, by reason of the continuance of the War, to secure, hide or bury his Body (for the Funeral Rites must be performed in their own Country) his Wives are then obliged in all that interval, to be in Mourning, and a shorn Head, though they permit the Hair to grow again where Modesty does not allow me to speak more plainly.

A long time after, perhaps ten or twelve Years, as Opportunity offers, the Funeral Ceremonies are renewed, with the same Pomp and Splendour as if they had died a few Days past: On which occasion also his Wives again put on their Mourning, cleanse and adjust themselves as before.

Whilst the Women are lamenting abroad, the nearest Relations sit by the Corps, making a dismal Noise, washing and cleansing themselves, and farther performing the usual Ceremonies: The distant Relations also assemble from all Places, to be present at these Mourning Rites; he that is negligent herein being sure to bleed very freely if he cannot urge lawful Reasons for his absence.

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The Towns People and Acquaintance of the Deceased, come also to join their Lamentations, each bringing his Present of Gold, Brandy, fine Cloath, Sheets, or something else; which 'tis pretended is given to be carried to the Grave with the Corps; and the larger Present of this Nature any Person makes, the more it redounds to his Honour and Reputation.

During this Ingress and Egress of all sorts of People; Brandy in the Morning and Palm-Wine in the Afternoon are very briskly filled about; so that a rich Negroes Funeral becomes very chargeable: For after all this, they are richly cloathed when put into the Coffin; besides which several fine Cloaths, Gold Fetiches, high-prized Corals, (of which I have several times spoken) Conte di Terra, and several other valuable Things are put into the Coffin to him, for his use in the other Life, they not doubting but he may have occasion for them.

The value and quantity of his Coffin Furniture, is adjusted in proportion to what the Deceased left his Heir, or perhaps to the Heirs conveniency. All this being over, and the Relations and Friends met together; after two or three Days the Corps are buried; before which a parcel of young Soldiers go, or rather run, continually loading and discharging their Musquets, till the Deceased is laid in the Ground: A great Multitude of Men and Women follow without the least Order, some being silent, others Crying and Shrieking as loud as possible, whilst others are laughing as loud; so that all their Grief is only in appearance.

As soon as the Corps is in the Ground every one goes where they please, but most to the House of Mourning, to drink and be merry, which lasts for several Days successively; so that this part of the Mourning looks more like a Wedding than a Funeral.

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They sometimes keep a King or a very great Person a whole Year above Ground; and to prevent Putrefaction, they lay the Corps upon a wooden Utensil like a Grid-Iron; which they put over a very gentle clear Fire, that by slow degrees dries it: Others interr their Dead privately in their own Houses, though they give out that they preserve the Corps in the former manner, and that in due time they will see the Funeral Rites solemnly performed. The Day being come when the King is to be publickly buried, publick notice thereof is given, not only to the People of his own Nation, but other Countries; which occasions such a vast Concourse, as is really surprizing, each being curious enough to come to see the Funeral Solemnities; and it is certainly very well worth while; since on this occasion every Body is as richly habited as possible, and one may see more Pomp and Splendour in one Day, than at other times in several Years.

In such Funerals as these, several Slaves of the Deceased are killed and sacrific'd on his account, in order to serve him in the other World; as are also and especially the Bossums, or those which he in his Life had dedicated to his False God, being one of his Wives, and one of his principal Servants: But what is most abominable, is that several poor wretched Men, who through Age or Inability are become incapable of Labour, are sold on purpose to be made Victims in these accursed Offerings.

'Tis a most deplorable Spectacle to see these miserable Creatures killed in the most barbarous Manner in the World; what with Hacking, Piercing, Tormenting, &c. they endure a Thousand Deaths.

'Twas not without the utmost Horrour that I saw eleven Persons killed in this manner; amongst which

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which there was one, who after having endured a great deal of exquisite Torture, was delivered to a Child of six Years of Age who was to cut off his Head, which it was about an Hour in doing, not being strong enough to wield the Sabre.

These Human Sacrifices are in use amongst those *Negroes* who are not fully subject to our Government, and live very distant from our Forts: But where we have any Authority we don't suffer it, though they will privately remove to other places in order to perpetrate this Villany.

The *Negroes* generally build a small Cottage or Hut, or else plant a little Garden of Rice on the Grave, into which they throw several worthless Goods of the Deceased, but not Household Stuff or other valuable Moveables, as Authors would have it: there is no such Custom at present: and I believe, if I can judge of their Nature, never was in use, unless in the Days of *Methusalem*, which is a little too far for either they or me to look.

At *Axim* and other places, they place several Earthen Images on the Graves, which are wash'd one Year after the Funeral; when they renew the Funeral Ceremonies in as expensive a manner as at the interment it self.

The *Negroes* are strangely fond of being buried in their own Country; so that if any Person dies out of it, they frequently bring his Corps home to be buried, unless it be too far distant; in which case they bury him there; and if he have any Friends or Acquaintance there, they cut off his Head, one Arm, and one Leg, which they cleanse, boil, and carry to his own Country, where they are interred with fresh Solemnity, as creditably

as

as suits with the Circumstances of the De-funct.

I have here sent you what is most remarkable and observable in the Sickness, Death and Burial of the *Negroes*; and not being willing to overcharge this Letter with Trifles, I have for that Reason omitted whatever I thought less Material. The Ship which is likely to convey this is just upon sailing: Wherefore I am forced to break off sooner than I intended, desiring you to cast a favourable Eye on the post, and expect a larger account on another Subject from Yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

Describing the Tame and Wild Quadrupedes; and first the Tame, viz. Bulls, Cows, Sheep, Goats, Horses, Asses, Hogs, Dogs, Cats, Rats and Mice. After having treated of the Nature of these, the Author passes to the tame Feather'd Kind, as Hens, Ducks, Turkeys and Doves: After which he comes to the Wild Beasts. A compleat Description of the Elephant, and some Writers on that Subject charged with Errours. Of the Buffelers, Tygers, Wood Hounds or wild Dogs, Caymans, wild Boars; several sorts of Harts, Hares, Porcupines, Hedge-Hogs, Sluggards, wood or wild Rats, Bonteers, Civet Cats, wild Cats, Musk-Mice, Berbe's, Squirrels, Kokeboes, Leguanes, Arompo's; several sorts of Apes, various Kinds of Lizards, Salamanders: And a large Account of the Camelion, extracted from Monsieur de Bruyn's Travels; with the difference betwixt those of Africa and those of Smirna.

S I R,

Pursuant to my Promise in my last, to give you a Description of the Animals of this Country, I intend in this to treat of the four-footed Beasts and tame Birds; the Insects and wild Fowl being reserved to another Opportunity: I am very sorry that for want of a good Drawer I cannot send you the Draughts of all of them;

'tis true I had one here who drew several of them after the Life, which I shall send you; but not long since uncontrollable Death took him away from us, and prevented at least half my design: If this unhappy Accident had not prevented me I had expos'd to your view an agreeable Variety of strange Animals; most of which are yet unknown: Wherefore, if possible, I would beg of you to send me one from Amsterdam, with an Assurance that he shall meet with a very good Reward here, and be better paid for one half Years Work, than he is for three Years in Holland: I doubt not but you can easily remove his prejudice against this Country, and assure him withal, that we will not detain him one Day longer upon the Coast, than he himself pleases to stay; but that as soon as his Work is done, he shall at Pleasure retire. If you, Sir, please to take this trouble upon you, I am your Security, that you shall have no Cause to complain of us in this part of the World.

Beginning to describe the Animals of this Country; the first which offer themselves to our view amongst the tame Kind are the Horned Cattle, such as the Bulls, Oxen, Cows, Goats, &c. *Dinkirka*, *Asiante*, *Akim* and other In-land Countries abound with great numbers of these; but by reason of the distant Situation of these places, only a few Bulls and Cows are brought to the Coast: But at *Axim*, *Pocquesou*, *Elmina* and *Acra*, great quantities are bred, and more especially at or about *Acra*, because the Opportunity is there very convenient to bring them from the Countries of *Aquamboe* and *Lampi*.

In all other places of the Gold Coast we only find Bulls and Cows; for the *Negroes* are ignorant of the way of Gelding Bullocks into Oxen. At *Axim* these Cattle have indifferent good Pasture, and

A Description of the LET. XIV.

and accordingly thrive and fatten very well, as also amongst the *Brandenburghers* at *Pocqueson* and *Acra*: But at *Elmina* and the Circumjacent Country they are always dry and lean, and consequently don't prove very delicate. This is the only place by reason of the *Negroes* Ignorance where the Cows are Milked; but they yield such a quantity of wretched Milk, that twenty or thirty are scarce sufficient to supply the Director-General's Table.

These are so very light and small that one of the best Cows in her full growth doth not weigh above two hundred and fifty Pounds, though by their bulk, they might reasonably be thought to weigh one half more: But all Animals in this Country, whether Human or Irrational; however they may be indifferent large, yet are very light; which I am apt to think proceeds from their sorry Food, which instead of a firm, produces only a spongy, loose and tough Flesh. Hence all their Beef is of an ungrateful taste: notwithstanding all which, about twelve Pounds Sterling is commonly given for one of these Beasts.

The Calves, which might reasonably be expected to be good, are but very indifferent by reason of the poor Milk they suck from the Cows; so that both Beef and Veal prove here but very sorry Meat.

There are great numbers of Sheep, if I may so call them, all over the Coast; but yet they are very dear. These sort of Cattle are shaped like ours in *Europe*, from which they differ only in size, being not above half as big: They have no Wool, but that want is supplied with Hair; so that here the World seems inverted, for the Sheep are hairy and the Men woolly; that Excrement in the *Negroes* being more like Wool than Hair.

Our

LET. XIV. Gold Coast of Guinea.

Our Mutton here do's not bear the least similitude to that of *Europe*; this being very dry, infomuch that a nice Eater will very seldom eat of it, and the common People, who are not very good at distinguishing Tastes, are obliged to forbear it because their Purfes will not reach it. Well, let them be as bad as they will, the price is generally about seven or eight and twenty Shillings Sterling. If any Person is a great lover of Mutton he may improve to a tolerable degree, by gelding a young Ram and fattening him with fryed Barly Meal; after which, though he is not comparable to *European* Mutton, yet a curious Palate may just bear it.

Goats are here in innumerable abundance. They differ from those in *Europe* chiefly in shape, being very small, but much fatter and more fleshy than the Sheep; for which reason some Men prefer them, especially the He-Goats; which get young, in a short time grow bigger and very fat. The price of a full-grown Goat is here about twelve or thirteen Shillings *English* Money.

I cannot omit a ridiculous Opinion of the *Negroes* concerning the Goats: They tell us, and also believe themselves, that in the beginning of the World there was a certain Goddess who used to anoint her self with *Odoriferous* Ointment and Oil; which the He-Goats perceiving, applied themselves to her, desiring that she would please to anoint them with the same Ointment; which she seemed to consent to: but indeed instead of the *Odoriferous*, designedly took a Box of stinking Ointment; with which she anointed their Bodies; whence they smell so strong to this Day. The He-Goats knowing no better than that it was the true Unguent, were very well pleased with it, and their breed continuing in the same Opinion, whenever it rains, fly always to shelter themselves some-

somewhere, lest the Water shou'd wash off their delicious Scent. What think you of this, Sir? dare you affirm that Beasts in former Days did not speak after such convincing Proof as this?

You must not expect that their Horses shou'd be like *Sejanus's* Horse, or *Alexanders's Bucephalus*; And as their Riders have no reason to fear the Accident occasioned by the former, so they must not expect the Courage of the latter. They are somewhat more like the Northern Horses in size, though nothing near so well shaped. On the Coast we have none; but there are great Numbers in the In-land Country; they are very ill shaped: Their Heads and Necks, which they always carry downwards, are very like those of an Ass; they go as if they were falling, and will not stir forwards, unless forced on by blows; without which they would move but very slowly: They are so very low that a tall Man sitting upon their Backs may very near touch the Ground with his Feet. But I shall say no more of them.

There are also Asses enough here; which are somewhat higher than the Horses, and in their kind handsomer. We formerly had three or four on the Shore, but they do not live long, for want of good feeding, as I suppose: I do not find that the *Negroes* use them to carry Burthens, but only to ride upon; for which purpose indeed they are as good as the Horses here.

Nor is there any want of Hogs in the least; but those bred by the *Negroes*, are really worth nothing, the Flesh is so flaggy and the Bacon so sorry; but those which we fatten our selves may pass for tolerable ones, though they are not comparable to those of *Fida*; which for the delicacy of the Taste and firmness of their Bacon, are not only as good as the *European* but better: A Hog
of

of ninety Pounds weight is here sold for about three Pounds Sterling; notwithstanding they are so indifferent as I have told you.

To compleat our Tame *Quadrupedes*, I shall touch upon their Dogs, Cats and Rats, &c.

The *Negroes* are great Lovers of Dogs-Flesh; hence it is that those who bring a Dog here may sell him dear enough; the *Negroes* willingly giving a Sheep for him, if any thing large; and some will add something to boot, in order to put him into their Barking or Dog-School: out of which they sell their Puppies at the dearest rate. They prefer Dogs-Flesh for their eating to that of Cattle, and accordingly esteem a Meal of that the best Treat they can take or give.

In Process of time our Dogs alter strangely here, their Ears grow long and stiff like those of Foxes; to which colour also they encline: So that in three or four Years they degenerate into very ugly Creatures; and in three or four Broods their barking turns into a Howl.

The Cats are also esteemed useful by the *Negroes*; but I never found that they eat them, unless forced thereto by Necessity, as some of our Slaves being under Confinement often kill and eat of them, if they can catch 'em: But we do not find that the Cats are subject to change like the Dogs; on the contrary they continue the same.

To augment the Plagues of this Country, it is pester'd with such prodigious Numbers of Rats and Mice, but especially of the former, that they are not a little formidable, and do us no small Injury, gnawing and stealing all they can come at.

Taking our leave of the *Quadrupedes*, 'tis now fit we say something of the Tame Fowl; whose Species are so few that they will not take up much time; they consisting of Hens, Ducks, Turkeys

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Turkies, and Pigeons; the two latter being in our Hands; for that the *Negroes* have not any.

The most common are the Cocks and Hens, and therefore deserve the first place: They are in great plenty all over the Coast in time of Peace; for in War time, as if these Animals were resolv'd to have no share in the publick Calamity, there is scarce any of them to be had, and the Proverbial Advice of our *Boors*, *Take care of your Hens, the Soldiers are coming*, seems to be very well followed here; for as in time of Peace four of them may be bought for about four Shillings and Sixpence; so in War time, 'tis well if we can get two for that price.

At *Axim* these Fowls are very fat and good, though small; but about *Elmina* and other Places of the Coast, they are so dry and lean, and contain so little Flesh, that a good Stomach would require something else to make up a Meal, after eating three of them.

Next are the Ducks, which have been but few Years known on this Coast. I cannot tell from what Country they were brought; but they have no manner of Affinity with those of *Europe*, nor indeed are they much like them; being one half larger, and of another colour, commonly white, or black, white and brown mixt. The *Drakes* have a large red Knob on their Bills, almost like the *Turkies*, only it does not hang so loose, but firmer, and is very like a *Cherry*: These Ducks ought to be eaten young; for if they are old they are tough and insipid.

There are no *Turkies* amongst the *Negroes*, but a few kept here for the Director-General; and their Flesh is no very great Delicacy.

We have great number of *Pigeons* at some of our Forts; all which are of the common Species of *Field* or *wild Doves*; which when young afford

afford those who love them a good sort of Food.

These are all the tame Animals which I find in this Country; our next Task is to consider the Wild Beasts.

'Tis but reasonable that I should begin with that wonderful Beast the *Elephant*; who is endowed with so many different, good and remarkable Qualities, that to rob him of the first place amongst the Beasts is a piece of Injustice. I shall not recite a great many Particulars concerning him; either because I cannot relate them upon my own Observation, or that several have done it already: Besides which some Authors have allowed themselves to tell us several very strange and ill digested Stories concerning its Copulation, Pregnancy, bringing forth its Young, its Age, changing its Teeth, and several other Follies; and it is not without Reason that I call them so. For as far as I can learn no Man in the World ever saw how they engendred, nor can tell how long they go pregnant, in what separable Places they cast their Young, or whether they change their Teeth or not. These are all wild Guesses; of which we can get no Information by tamed *Elephants*: And therefore this Knowledge must come out of the Woods; but how they come to converse so long with these wild Beasts there as to obtain such an accurate Account of them: I can scarce believe any Body except good old *Pliny* can pretend to it. The Famous Writer concerning all sorts of Books and Histories, says, according to my best remembrance, in one of his Books, that *Pliny* has long since been a Fabulous Writer: But that at present several of his Relations have been confirmed by the Discoveries of judicious Travellers.

R

Notes

None, I believe, will deny that *Pliny* describes some things truly; but on the other side, is beyond contradiction, wild, groundless and false. The foremention'd famous Author, has frequently been too credulous on account of what he hath heard or read concerning Foreign Countries, as a great many Examples in his Works clearly prove; which is no small Fault in an Author; for in my Opinion, at least, it seems inconsistent with a good Writer, to lay down as Truth all which he can get by hear-say of other Countries; for he ought first to consider whether the Relater of such strange Things ever had a good Opportunity of being well informed concerning them. But this carries me wide from my Subject; we shall let *Pliny* alone, and return to the Elephant, whom we find here in *Africa* to be a Beast of twelve or thirteen foot high, and consequently much less than those in *East-India*, since the Writers concerning that Country assure us, that its height there amounts to more Cubits: besides this difference, they do not differ in their Nature or Shape from those in other Places.

These Beasts prove very prejudicial to the Fruit-Trees, especially Orange-Trees, *Banano's*, and another sort of Figs; of the last of which they eat both Fruit and Stem.

The *Negroes* also affirm, that the Elephants meeting any People in the Woods never offer any violence to them; but that if the shot levell'd at them misses, they grow very wild: But I have observed directly the contrary of one of them in our Garden at *Elmina* the last Year; of which I have enough to relate to fill a whole Letter: Wherefore I beg your Patience till I have dispatched this and two more; when I intend to entertain you with an intire History of our Elephant and Tyger-Hunting; not doubting but that Account will

will afford you something uncommon and agreeable: Wherefore suspend your Curiosity so long; and permit me at present to recite what the *Negroes* and others affirm on their own Knowledge; that they follow Men into the Water, where they put them into no small fright by their pursuit. At *Rio de Gabon*, four, five, and more Elephants have frequently passed by me and my Company without offering us any Injury, but we were not courageous enough to present them with a few Bullets; though very well stored; for they are very difficult to be killed, unless the Ball happens to light betwixt the Eyes and the Ears; to which end the Bullet ought to be Iron also: Their Skin is as good Proof against the common Musquet Lead-Balls, as a Wall; and if they hit the mentioned place becomes intirely flat.

The Country here where the greatest number of Elephants are found, is chiefly that before we come at the Gold Coast; and is from the Multitude of their Teeth which are there traded for, properly called the Tooth, or Elephant's Tooth Coast, extending to the Gold Coast, and takes in the Country of *Avine*, *Jummore*, *Equira*, *Abocroe*, *Aucöber* and *Axim*; several Elephants being daily killed in the said Places; and the wilder and less inhabited the Lands are, the larger Quantity of Elephants and wild Beasts are found.

Ante also doth not want these Beasts; there being not only in the In-land Country Multitudes of them shot, but besides that they come daily to the Sea-shore, and so near our Forts, that they are in sight of our People, and do a great deal of mischief.

In the Tract of Land betwixt *Ante* and *Aera*, there are a few, tho' not so many as in the former Countries, because this place hath long been reasonably well peopled, except the Country of *Fetu*, which for five or six Years past hath lain almost waste:

Wherefore there is a much larger number of Elephants there at present than formerly.

A great part of the Country about *Acra* lying waste and uninhabited, a great quantity are annually killed here. In the Year 1697 one of an uncommon Magnitude was killed near *Acra*, just by our Fortrefs, and no doubt but that he was at least full-aged, his two Teeth weighing two hundred and twenty Pounds; from which you may infer that he was not very light himself.

In *Ardra* and *Fida* there are none, though in my time one was there killed, and the *Negroes* affirmed 'twas what had not happened in sixty Years before; for which reason I believe he had accidentally strayed from some other Country: For the In-land Countries of *Benin*, (which borders on *Ardra*) *Rio de Calbary*, *Camerones*, and several other adjacent Countries, are so incredibly overcharged with these Beasts, that it is to be admired how the Inhabitants dare live there.

The vast Numbers of Teeth traded for in these Countries, clearly evince the great abundance of Elephants here; but whether all those are taken from slaughtered Elephants, or some of them are found in the Woods, or elsewhere, I cannot determine: Though I am apt to think that here they come by them both ways; from whence it should seem, that (as some tell us) the Elephants change their Teeth; but this is utterly contradicted by the great difference betwixt the Teeth themselves, some of them weighing one, two, or three pounds, and others progressively heavy till they amount to above one hundred pound weight: nor is it in the least probable that a solid Body composed of such hard Substance as Elephants Teeth, can, in about twenty Years time grow from one to a hundred pound weight: how this happens to encrease I must own I am ignorant. But I have dwelled too long

long on this Subject; 'tis now time to take leave and turn to a Beast, which, though vastly different, yet in size resembles the Elephant most of any here; I mean the Buffel or Buffeler, which is to be found all over *Guinea*, but in such small Numbers, that scarce one is seen in three or four Years; but since I shall have an opportunity to speak of a place where they more abound, I shall say no more of him at present, than that their Flesh is very good Meat, and leave the rest to that opportunity.

Tygers, not very unlike the Buffelers in size, tho' they very much differ in Savage Fierceness, are here incredibly numerous, of 4 or 5 sorts, which differ as well in their size as spots. Whether Leopards and Panthers are a Species of Tygers, I will not venture to determine, since I have not yet met with any Body who could herein satisfactorily inform me: Turning to *Pliny*, I found him so ignorantly mistaken, that I am resolved in my Description of Animals not to name him. The *Negroes* distinguish the Tygers by several Names; but how to translate them into our Language I cannot tell: wherefore passing over the several Species of them, I shall only inform you that they are all Savage, Fierce, Voracious Beasts; by means of which daily Tragical Accidents happen.

They spare neither Man nor Beast; but as long as they can satisfy their Appetites with the Flesh of Brutes they will not make any attempts on Mankind: but that being deficient, the first of Humane Species that comes in his way is certainly dead. But of this more hereafter; so I shall at present only tell you that however fierce this Beast is, the young Ones may be brought up so tame that you may play with them, as with a Dog or Cat; like the last of which they are bearded.

I have seen about eight of these tame Tygers brought up at *Elmina*; of which the Director-General has at present two; but I have observed that in all of them their Fell Nature returns in time upon one occasion or other; and that, tho' never so tame, they are not to be trusted without great circumspection.

Next the Tyger in fierceness is the Jackall or wild Dog; which is mostly found about *Acra* and *Aquamboe*, though there are some now also hereabouts: This Beast is so bold, that it seizes and devours whatever comes in its way, whether Man or Beast, such as Cows, Hogs, Sheep, &c.

At Night they come under the Walls of our Forts at *Acra* to seize our Hogs, or snatch a Sheep out of the Stall; by which means several of them are caught in the following manner: Our Garrison lay several well-loaded Musquets with the Lock covered with a small Box; to which a Cord is fastened with a piece of Mutton, and so placed, that they no sooner attempt to seize it than the Musquet goes off; and they, in the reward of their Thievery get three or four Bullets in the Head: This Expedient seldom misses, if due care be taken in laying of the Musquets.

The Cayman, better known by the name of Crocodile, claims the next place in our Description of rapacious Beasts; for so I call the Crocodile also, not because I have observed him to be so; not having ever heard, during the whole time of my residence here, that they devoured either Man or Beast; but because I have both read and believe several Relations of their voracious Fierceness.

All the Rivers in this Country are pestered with vast Shoals of them, especially at *Lama* and *Boutry*; at the latter of which I have seen fifty on one Day; and amongst these some that I guessed to be about twenty Foot long. The

The Crocodile is already described by several Authors: wherefore I shall only add what they have forgotten or omitted. Their Bodies are covered with such a hard Skin and square Scales, that 'tis impossible to kill them with a Musquet-Ball; and the Caps which the *Negroes* make of it are as hard as Bone, and cannot be cut through with one stroke of a Hanger, being very like the Land-Tortoise-Shell. Their Bellies are softer, which therefore they do not frequently expose to danger; so that they can hardly be shot dead at any other place than their Heads. On very hot Days when the Sun shines very warm, great numbers of them lie basking on the Banks of the Rivers; and as soon as they perceive any Men near-hand, they steal towards the Rivers and plunge themselves into them with great violence, immediately sheltering themselves under Water. These Creatures do not seem swift enough to run after, and overtake Men, who are flying from them by Land, supposing them not to steer a crooked Course to avoid them; though it may be possible; I shou'd not much fear them on Land, any more than I shou'd trust them in the Water; tho' indeed I never heard any mischief they did there.

Their colour is dark Brown, and they may pass for very ugly Beasts.

And as for their Crying and other Subtleties to catch Men, I believe it as much as the *Jews* do the Gospel.

The fierce wild Boars are reckon'd among the rapacious Beasts; and indeed those in *Europe* very deservedly: But here on the Gold Coast we have very few; and these not near so wild as in *Europe*: I have several times eaten of them here, and found them very delicious and very tender Meat, the Fat being extraordinary fine.

A Description of the LET. XIV.

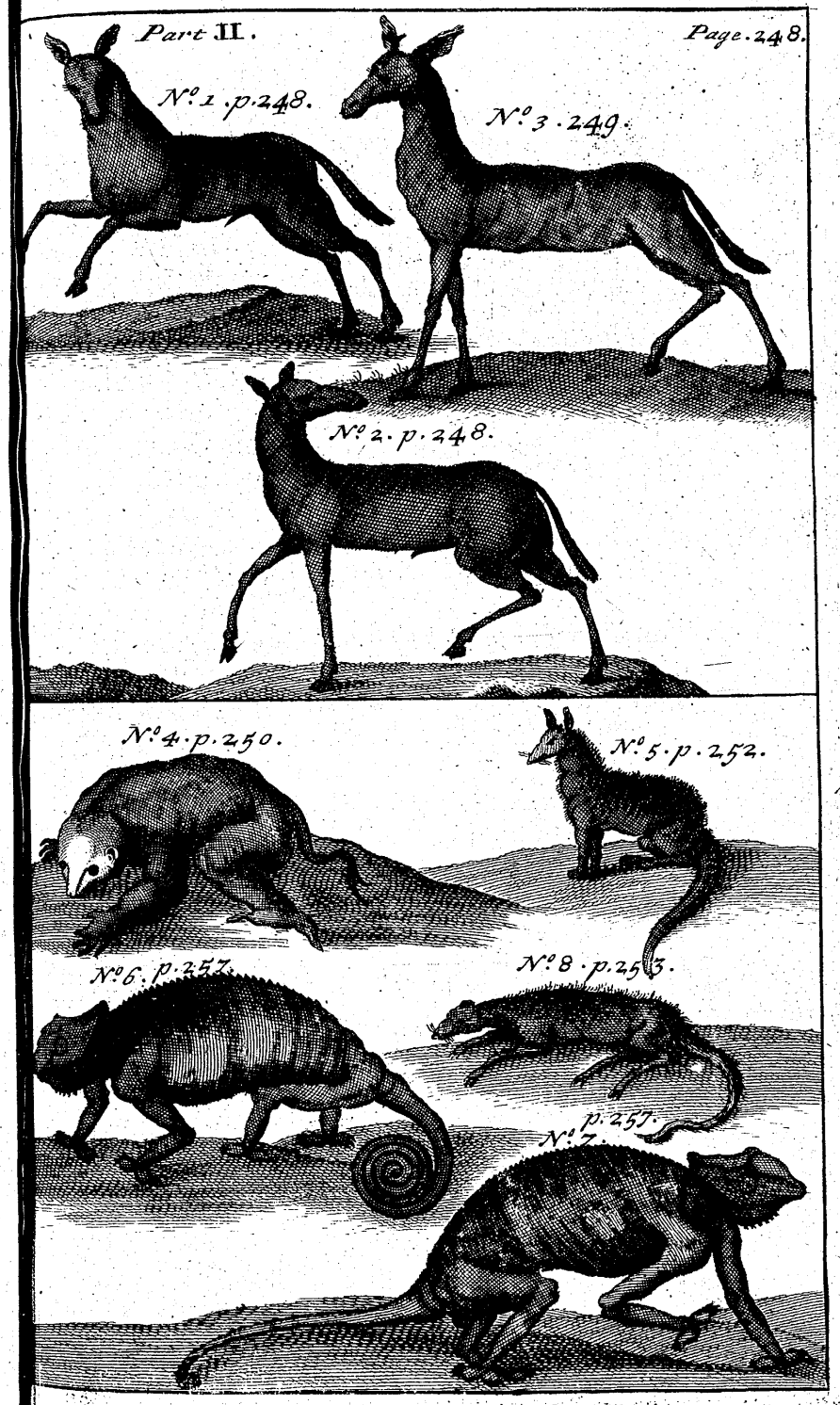
Next these voracious Beasts we come to a milder sort of wild Beasts ; amongst which I shall first treat of the Harts ; with which Species this Country most plentifully abounds ; they being found all along the Gold Coast in incredible Numbers, especially at *Ante* and *Acra*, where we sometimes see droves of one hundred together.

The *Negroes* tell us that these Beasts are so subtle, that in all marches they detach one of their number as a Centry to watch whether any Man be near, and advertise the rest ; for the Truth of which I will not be obliged, but remember to have read something of that Nature of those of other Countries.

There are about twenty several sorts of these Beasts here, some as large as small Cows, others no bigger than Sheep, Cats, &c. most of them are red, with a black List on the Back, some of them red beautifully streak'd with white : All of them are very good to eat, but more especially two sorts ; which we also esteem very delicate : The first sort are of a pale Mouse-colour ; of which I have here sent you two Draughts, No. 1 and 2. and though they are both of one Species, yet they differ somewhat in their shape ; the Feet of one being a little higher than those of the other, though the Beasts are both of the length of about two Feet.

There is also a sort not above half so big, of a red colour ; which are extraordinary beautiful Creatures ; they have small black Horns and little Legs, indifferent long in proportion to their Bodies ; but so very small, that some of them are not bigger than the small part of a Tobacco-Pipe : one of which I have sent you set in Gold for want of Drawing ; and therefore hope your favourable Acceptance.

No.



LET. XIV. *Gold Coast of Guinea.*

24)

No. 3 represents a Hart about four foot long, of a slender shape; his Feet are very long; he hath a long Head and Ears; is of an Orange colour streak'd with white: And these are all the Drawings which I could get of these Beasts.

These Harts are swifter of Foot than most Men know; but that sort of which you have the Foot are extraordinary swift, and strangely agile in leaping, for such small Creatures: some that we have caught I have seen leap over a Wall of ten or twelve Foot high. The *Negroes* call this the King of Harts.

At *Apam*, *Acra* and *Fida*, there is a sort of Hares not unlike ours, which plentifully abounds at these three Places; but with reference to this I have sufficiently detained you in my Letter describing *Ardra*.

Here are also Porcupines; but no great number, or at least very few of them are brought to us: They grow to the height of two, or two feet and a half, and bite so sharp, that no Wooden work can withstand them.

I once put one of them into a Fat, not doubting but I had very well secured him; but in one Nights space he eat his way through, and that at the middle where the Staves were most bent outwards.

This Beast is so daring, that he ventures to attempt the largest and most dangerous Snake: Of which more hereafter. When he is provoked he shoots his Quills (which are about two Spans long) at both Man and Beast, with such violence, that if they happen to hit on a Board they stick in it. The *Negroes* and some Whites highly value its Flesh as very nice Food.

I have here also seen a sort of Creatures not unlike our Hedge-hogs, only they cannot Roll themselves as ours are accustomed to do.

No.

No. 4. Is a Draught of a Creature, by the *Negroes* called *Potto*, but known to us by the Name of Sluggard, doubtless from its lazy sluggish Nature; a whole Day being little enough for it to advance ten Steps forward.

Some Writers affirm, that when this Creature has climbed upon a Tree, he doth not leave it until he hath not only eaten up the Fruit, but the Leaves intirely; and then descends fat and in very good case in order to get up into another Tree; but before his slow pace can compass this, he becomes as poor and lean as 'tis possible to imagine: And if the Trees be high, or the way any thing distant, and he meets with nothing on his Journey, he inevitably dies of Hunger, betwixt one Tree and the other. Thus 'tis represented by others, but I will not undertake for the Truth of it; though the *Negroes* are apt to believe something like it.

This is such a horrible ugly Creature, that I don't believe any thing besides so very disagreeable is to be found on the whole Earth; the Print is a very lively Description of it: Its Fore-feet are very like Hands, the Head strangely disproportionately large; that from whence this Print was taken was of a pale Mouse colour: but it was then very young, and his Skin yet smooth; but when old, as I saw one at *Elmina* in the Year 1699. 'tis red and covered with a sort of Hair as thick set as Flocks of Wool. I know nothing more of this Animal, than that 'tis impossible to look on him without Horror, and that he hath nothing very particular but his odious Ugliness.

There are a sort of Beasts which lurk in the Fields here, like Rats, but bigger than Cats; we call them wild Rats: They are continually amongst

amongst the sowed Corn, and do a great deal of damage.

Their Flesh is by some *Europeans* and the *Negroes* held a great delicacy; and indeed nothing hinders its passing for such but its disagreeable aspect and shocking Name, which create some aversion in the Eater: But those who can step over this, like it extraordinary well; and to remedy as much as possible its ugly Figure, some cut off the Head, Feet and Tail, before they bring it to the Table; and then it certainly passes on those who do not know what it is, for a very grateful Dish; for they are fat, tender and very agreeable.

There is also another sort of wild Rats, which are chiefly found at *Axim*; they are as long as the former, but their Bodies are very slender, and they are otherwise called *Boutees*: very few besides the *Negroes* eat these. They do an incredible deal of Damage to the Stores of Millet and Rice, that the *Negroes* have laid up in their Houses; and in one Night spoil more sowed Corn, than 'tis possible for one hundred Domestick Rats to do; for they are not content to satiate themselves, and carry off some with them, but they besides spoil all where they come.

Here are three or four sorts of wild Cats; of which the Civet-Cat is one; which at present is so well known in *Holland*, that I need only acquaint you that they are brought to be sold to us very young, and then we give about eight or nine Shillings sterling for one.

A large share of Trouble and careful Attendance is requisite to breed them up: Their Food is Pap boiled or made of Millet, with a little Flesh or Fish. They produce Civet when even very young; of which that of the Males is better than that of the Females, because the latter cannot avoid urining into the Civet Bag, which spoils it.

A Description of the LET. XIV.

I can say nothing particular of the remaining wild Cats, but that they are spotted like Tygers, and are as fierce, doing a great deal of Mischief amongst the Hens where they can come at them.

I have seen very small Mice, which afford a pleasant and Odoriferous Musky Scent, but cannot find that they have any Bags like the Civet Cats; which inclines me to believe that the pleasant Odour proceeds from the Skin.

Here are yet three or four sorts of small Quadrupedes; one of which you have drawn, No. 5. it being almost a sort of Cat, only its Snout is much sharper, and the Body is smaller, and spotted like the Civet Cats. The Negroes call it Berbe, and the Europeans Wine-bibber, because 'tis very greedy of Palm-Wine.

The second sort are not much bigger than a Domestick Rat; of a red and grey colour, mixt with small white specks in their Hair; the Tail being of long Hair, so speckled, and about three Fingers broad; so that it very agreeably may reach from behind to their Head: These are also called Wine-bibbers, tho' the Name of Squirrel would fit them better.

The third sort, when full-grown, are about as big again and red. This is a very mischievous Creature, and bites very violently; and flies at Man and Beast without any distinction if driven there-to by necessity: 'Tis called Kokeboe, and is a cruel Persecutor of Cocks and Hens, though not in the same manner as Mr. Focquenbrog informs us.

They have no need of so much Subtilty, being swift enough to catch the Hens and strong enough to carry them off when they have them. I have had several, but never found any of them with red Buttocks, though I have diligently enough examined them. What

LET. XIV. Gold Coast of Guinea.

What Focquenbrog says farther, concerning this Animal, I dare not confirm; not only because I have not found it so my self, but never yet saw the European or Negroe who agreed with him.

The remaining Beast or Beasts, for there are more than one sort of them, we are here so little acquainted with, that I shall pass them over without any Description, and endeavour to give you an account of an amphibious Animal, that lives as well in the Water as on Land: This is the Leguaen; it is shaped almost like a Crocodile, but seldom exceeds four Feet in length; its Body is black speckled, with round sort of Eyes, and the Skin very tender. He injures neither Man nor Brute, the Hens only excepted; among which he sometimes makes a great Slaughter. Several Europeans eat their Flesh, and all unanimously agree that 'tis much finer Meat than Cocks or Hens.

No. 8. shews you an Animal who keeps in the Woods; his Body is long and slender; to which is joined a long Tail; at the end of which is a hairy sort of Brush: He is of a pale colour, somewhat inclining to brown; his Hair is long and thin. The Negroes call him Arompo or Man-Eater, because his Food is dead Men, to come at which he greedily grubs out the Earth of their Graves, as if he had notice of some Persons there hid.

The Negroes report that having dug to a dead Body, he does not immediately fall on it, but goes round it several times; to what end I cannot tell; but they explain it, that he thereby hints the unlawfulness and a certain sort of impossibility of seizing another Man's Goods, without doing something, or giving himself some trouble on that account first.

The

The Mystery of this is not hard to unravel. I am apt to think that this Beast is seized with a fear natural to all Brutes; and therefore only looks round about to see if there be any Man likely to force his Prey from him.

'Tis time we say something concerning the Apes, which are here above one Hundred Thousand in Number, and of so many various Species, that 'tis really wonderful as well as it is impossible for me to describe them all; wherefore I shall only lightly touch on some of them.

The first and most common sort, are those we call *Smitten*, of a pale Mouse colour, and grow to a wonderful size. I have my self seen one of five foot long, and not much less than a Man: they are very mischievous and bold. It seems incredible what an *English* Merchant here affirmed to me for Truth; that behind the *English* Fort at *Wimba* (where there is a terrible number of these Apes; that are so bold, that they will attack a Man, as he related) amongst others they fell upon two of their Companies Slaves, which the Apes had over-powered, and would have poked out their Eyes, if they had not been timely rescued by some *Negroes*; for they, to compleat their design, had gotten some Sticks ready.

You, as well as my self, are at Liberty what Credit to give to this Story. But indeed these are a terrible pernicious sort of Brutes, which seem to be made only for mischief.

Some of the *Negroes* believe, as an undoubted Truth, that these Apes can speak, but will not, that they may not be set to work; which they do not very well love: This is their Opinion of them.

As the former sort of Apes are very ugly, so the next are exactly like them, only four of them put together would not be so large as the

the other; and their best Quality is that they are so docile that they will learn whatever they are taught.

The third sort are very beautiful, and generally grow to the height of about two feet; their Hair is as black as Pitch, and above a Fingers length: They have a long white Beard; whence they are called bearded little Men, or bearded Monkies. Of their Skins are made the *Tie-Tie's* Caps; mentioned in another Letter of mine. The *Negroes* sell these Monkies to one another for about eighteen or twenty Shillings; and when they bring them to us we do not refuse them at that price.

There are besides this, two or three sorts of Monkies, each a like handsome, but one half less than the other, with short Hair of a mixt colour, partaking of grey, black, white and red; and for the most part they have a white Breast and Beard. But hold, instead of a Sheet or two of Paper I could fill a whole Book in describing the various sorts of Apes; which I cannot think worth while, and so had rather dispatch this Subject out of Hand; only informing you, that of the smaller Apes there are not above twenty sorts: All which are very fine; but what is most unhappy, so extraordinary tender, that 'tis very rare that we can rear any of them, much less bring them to *Europe*.

I must yet add, that their thievish Nature, which seems to come into the World with them, is common to all of them; and I have seen them go very subtilly to work in the stealing of Millet and Fruit: In each Paw they take one or two Stalks of Millet, as much under their Arms (if I may so call them) two or three in their Mouths; and thus laden they march away, continually leaping upon their hind Legs; and if they are pur-

purfued they hold that in their Mouth fast, but throw away the rest that it may not hinder them in their flight.

But their carrying so much *Milbio* or Millet together, is not to be compared to their nice Curiosity in stealing it; for every Stalk of Millet they pluck is narrowly examined; and if they don't like it they throw it away and pull another: So that this delicacy of theirs, occasions more damage than their Thievery. And now I shall bid the Apes farewell.

Here are every where Thousands of Lizards; especially all along by the Walls of our Forts; whither they come in quest of Food, which chiefly consists in Spiders, Worms, Flies, and other such like. There are various Species of them; some of the largest having a Tail about a foot long, and a hand broad; of a dark Colour, and half their Head red: The rest are about the same size, and differ only in Colour.

They are a'most all of them ugly and that to a shocking degree, except those that follow, which may pass for somewhat more tolerable.

These are chiefly a sort about half as big as the other, and are green; next to which is another sort one half less than the last; they're of a grey colour, and creep all up and down our Chambers cleansing them from all small Vermin: These we call Salamanders.

That the Lizards forewarn Men against Snakes and other venomous Creatures, I believe to be as true as that the Salamanders continue alive in the Fire: Unless one wou'd affirm that this Report is owing to the Antipathy betwixt the Salamander and the Fire, that being much of the coldest Nature of all the Lizards; and this Opinion I could easily subscribe to, at least for so long till such are found, which according to the Antients live in the Fire.

To conclude this Letter, I shall add two small Animals; which former times have presented us with large, but very wild Accounts of: The Draughts of which you have No. 6 and 7.

The peculiar Natural Colour of the one is Green speckled with Grey; and the other Green, and Fire-colour and Grey mixt together. These Animals are very rare, and deserve a more particular Description.

Several have already undertaken it, but amongst them all I like none better than Father *N. N.* and Monsieur *Cornelius de Bruyn* in his Travels in *Asia*. What he hath told us I must entirely confirm, without being able to add any thing; these here being exactly of the same Nature with those he describes: Wherefore not being able to present you with a better Description, I shall give it you in his own Words, somewhat abridged.

Whilst I (saith he) with great satisfaction, not much encumbered with the pressing Necessities of Life, passed my time at *Smirna*, I had an opportunity of getting some Camelions into my Hands; and being curious to discover how long they would live, I commonly kept four of them in a large Case, and sometimes let them run loose in my Chamber, and frequently brought them into the great Hall of the House where the Wind breezed through from the Sea-side, when they seemed brisker than before, and opened their Mouths to imbibe the fresh Air.

'Tis firmly asserted by Naturalists, that these Creatures live on Air: And indeed experience confirms it in some measure; for I never saw mine eat or drink any thing except a few Flies; of which hereafter.

'Tis also true, that they frequently change their colour; I have my self seen their Colour alter three or four times in half an hour, with-

out any colour being thereabouts; which I soon drew both in Miniature and Oil-colours.

The Colour which they chiefly change to, is a very fine Green spotted with Yellow, as beautiful as any Pencil can express it; sometimes also it is spotted with brown spots: And thus is the whole Body adorned, Tail and all. Sometimes, they change to a brown Colour like that of Moles.

Their ordinary Colour is grey, or rather pale Mouse colour; the Skin very thin and almost transparent: they mostly change to a Lizard Colour. But as to their changing to the Colour of all Things, which are placed near them, Experience has informed me that the Naturalists are here in the wrong, for they do not change to red, nor several other colours; though I must own that I have observed sudden changes in them on that account.

I never could keep them alive above five Months, and most of them dye in four. I was very curious to know what their Intestines consisted of: Wherefore I opened one; in which I found some Eggs, about as big as those of small Birds, being all joined together as if in a Thread, but no Guts or any thing else. The Tongue was the most remarkable of all, being as long as the whole Animal. With this they catch Flies, as they tell us; which is done in the following manner: The Camelion holds himself very still, and when a fly comes in his way, he darts out his Tongue with utmost swiftness, grasps them with the sharp point of it, and draws them in; to which purpose his large wide Mouth, which he opens, is very convenient.

If this Beast is desirous to descend from any height lower, he very carefully advances, first one Foot and then the other; which are afterwards

fol.

followed with the same Caution by the hind Feet, his Tail curling about one thing or other in the mean while; by which he can hold fast; which continues as long as he finds any assistance by it, and then falls flat to the Ground. Their march is very slow, and their size as expressed in the Print.

Some would have it that the Camelion mostly keeps his Mouth open; but I have very seldom observ'd it, and scarce ever when I did not carry them to a place where they could have the Pleasure of imbibing the Air; then indeed they stretch their Mouths wide open, and discovered by their Motion and frequent changing their Colour, the Pleasure they were sensible of. Their Eyes are round, very black and observably small; but what is most remarkable, is, that they can direct one of them to one side, and the other to another: so that at once they can look upwards and downward.

Thus far Monsieur de Bruyn; to which I shall only add the difference which I have observed betwixt those of *Smirna* and this Country; which chiefly is first, that they here live as many Years as Monsieur de Bruyn says Months; but then we put them in a Garden upon one of the Trees; upon which they continue sitting some time before they descend. They have also several times been sent to *Europe*, and got over alive.

The second difference is, that I have not observed any of these here with their Mouths open, and consequently have not seen the Tongue or Fly-catching; which yet does not dis-engage me from believing Monsieur de Bruyn: But on the contrary, I take it for undoubted Truth what he says on that Head; for his Description being so exact, 'tis probable enough that he observed it.

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In all other Particulars they entirely agree; so that I neither can or will say any more of them, than that Monsieur de Bruyn might better have compared their Eggs to those of Lizards, than of small Birds; for I have observed in all *Quadrupedes* and creeping Animals which do not bring forth their Young, but lay Eggs, for instance, Lizards, Camelions, Leguanes, Snakes, and Tortoises; that their Eggs are not covered with any hard Shell, but rather with a thick Flesh, which is pliable and weak. What do you think, Sir, is not this Letter fairly lengthened? I think it is: Wherefore 'tis high time to end the same; having at present nothing more than that I am with all my Heart, Yours, &c.

LET

LETTER XV.

Treating first of the Feathered Kind, viz. of two Species of Pheasants: Partridges; Wild Ducks of two sorts; Turtle Doves, crooked Bills, Snipes, and other Edible though unknown Birds: Of Crown Birds, beautiful green Birds, blew and white Herons, * Portugueze, Eagles, Kites; a certain River-Bird, very fine; Crown-Birds on the Gold Coast; Pokkoe, a large Fowl so called by the Negroes, and valued for his Ugliness; as also another about the same size, but handsomer. Of four Species of Granivorous Birds; a small beautiful River-Bird, Parochites, Parrots, † Star-Birds. † In Dutch Stier or Stervogel, Of Frogs and Toads, some of which are very large: Of the great numbers and various sorts of Snakes, some of which have two Heads. Of Scorpions; a sort of Scolopendria, or many-footed Worms, and several other Species of Insects. Of Bees. Multitudes of Ants, and their strange Nature. Of the several sorts of Fish, as Brasilian Cod, Jacks, Plaife, Flounders; a Fish called Sisie Pampher by the Negroes; C---coverer, and several other large Fish; several sorts of Bream, Stompnenses, or flat Noses, Boardmanetjes or Pouts, Mackrel, Saffer, Aboei, Ray, Soles, Dabs, Lobsters, Crabs, Prawns, Shrimps, Sprats,

A Description of the LET. XV
Sprats, Karmou, Mullets and Batavia :
Also three voracious Fishes, viz. Noordkapers,
Sword-fishes, and Hays or Requiens.

S I R,

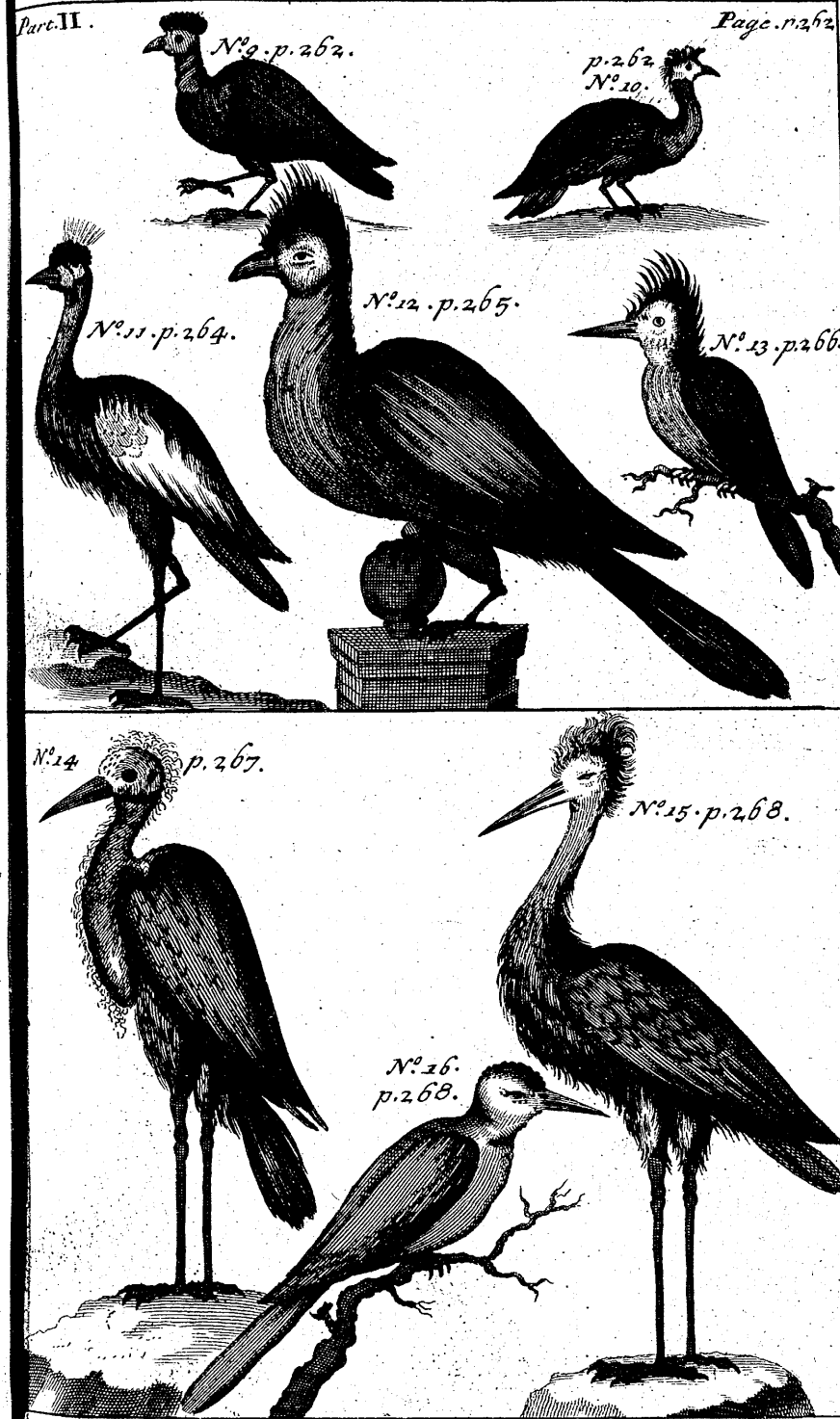
I N my last having at large described the Wild
Quadrupedes, and Tame Fowl ; it remains
that I should treat of Birds, Reptiles, Insects
and Fish.

To begin our Account of Birds, with those
which are edible ; I shall bestow the first place on
the Pheasant, expressed in the Print, No. 9 : Of
which vast numbers are found about *Acra*, in the
Province of *Aquamboe*, in and about *Apam* in the
*Acra*se Country ; being extraordinary Beautiful,
and about the size of a Hen ; their Feathers
speckled with a bright blew and white, encircled
with a Sky-coloured Ring about their Necks,
about two Fingers broad, and adorned with a
very fine black tuft on their Heads : In a word,
it is as Beautiful a Bird as Nature furnisheth
among the Terrestrial Species, and next to Gold
(which I always esteem the most precious) is
the most charming Rarity that *Guinea* pro-
duces.

No. 10 presents you with the drawing of a
Bird, which we here call the *Fidase Pheasant*, be-
cause they are most frequently observed in that
Country, though they are besides sometimes
caught on the Gold Coast.

This Bird is almost as big as the former, tho'
not near so Beautiful. His Body is grey and
white, a little speckled with blew : His Head
is bald and covered with a hard Callous Skin,
which is all over knotty : his Bill is Yellow ;
from whence to the Head grows out on each side
a red Jollop.

To



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To the Pheafants it will be proper to add the Partridges ; of which there is a vast quantity all over the Gold Coast, though we have no great numbers of them to eat, by reason of the want of Sports-Men : But at *Fida* they are as plenty as can be desired, and at a very low price ; and when in season are very good Food.

Nor do we want wild Ducks, which are here very delicate, and only differ from those in *Europe* by being somewhat smaller.

There are here two sorts of them ; of the first of which, during the whole time of my Residence on the Coast, I have seen but two, which were shot by the Director's Trumpeter : In shape and size they were not unlike other Ducks ; but they were of a very Beautiful green Colour, with fine red Bills and Feet : Their Colour was so deep and charming, that if they had been alive and to be sold, I should not have boggled to have given ten Pounds Sterling for them. It is remarkable that before nor since that time none of that Species have been seen.

And for about four Months past, I have seen but one of the second sort ; which was also shot by one of the Garrison, and was shaped like the former : His Feet and Bill were yellow, and his Body adorned with an equal mixture of green and grey ; but not near so fine as the former.

There are here two, or rather three Species of Turtle-Doves ; the first are small, of a bay Colour, and eat very well, being much tenderer than the second ; which are of a much brighter Colour : The third sort being as tough and large as these, are of a very beautiful Green ; their Bills and Feet are yellow ; they have a few red Feathers, and their Eyes are encircled with large white speckled Rings ; some of which are intermixed with blew.

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There

A Description of the LET. XV.

There is a very large Rock above our Fort at Axim, two or three Musquet-shot from the Ramparts; which is very thick grown with Underwoods, where Thousands of these two last sorts of Turtles harbour, and by reason the Rock is so closely covered with those Plants, we can catch but very few; for if we shoot them, and they fall down, they are never found. Every Evening they come there to Roost, and in the Morning take their Flight in quest of Food.

Crooked-bills and several sorts of Snipes are very common here; several of them prove good Food, but most are so tough that they are not very much valued.

We have here also Multitudes of all sorts of large and small Birds, which are shotten and eaten; but besides that we are unacquainted with them, they are not distinguished by any particular Names.

As for those which are not edible, but are only kept for Beauty and Rarity (supposing them to be caught.) The most common you have in the Print, No. 11. Of which there are several at Fida, and in the whole Country of Ardra, and also few at and about Acra.

Their Legs and Body are about the size of a Stork, and they are called Crown-Birds, from the great yellowish Tuft or Crown intermixed with speckled Feathers, strutting like Hogs Bristles; with which their Heads are adorned: Their Bodies are chiefly covered with black Feathers, and their Wings furnished with large, red, yellow, white and black Quills: Their Heads are beautified with Purple Spots, half a Thumbs breadth on each side, and the fore-part of their Head is very closely covered with a perfect black downy sort of Feathers; which at a distance seems to be black Velvet,

These

LET. XV. Gold Coast of Guinea.

These Birds seem to be in great esteem in Europe, since we are incessantly solicited by some Gentlemen to send them over: and I have been told that they presumed to present one of them to the King of England, who was also pleased to accept of it. But for my part I cannot perceive any such extraordinary Beauty in them; for besides their Head and Neck there is nothing very rare; the rest of their Body being rather disagreeable than fine.

But the Bird of which I have sent you the Draught, No. 12. on the contrary is not less beautiful than rare; for though most of the other Birds are to be found all over the Coast, I never saw this any where but at Apam, where I am apt to think there are great numbers of them; because sending out two Days successively in a short time I had one brought me shotten Dead; for otherwise they are not easily taken.

They are very like a Parrot, having exactly such a Bill, which is dark yellow; the Breast and whole under-part of their Body is of a very fine green Colour; the upper-part grey, red, sky-colour and deep blew, very agreeably intermixed: The Head, Neck and Tail, which are all green, render this Bird very Charming; the Feathers rise on his Head like a Comb; he hath large Eyes, above and below which are two the most beautiful red Rays that can be imagined. To conclude, this Bird is not to be paralleled for Beauty.

Here are two sorts of Herons observable, the blew and the white; both which we might have placed amongst the edible Fowl, since several here eat them.

In these Parts is also an unknown Bird, as big in the Body as a Goose, mostly white, which we call Portugueze; which is also eaten by some few.

Nor

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Nor are Eagles wanting here, such as are in Europe, or at least not very different from them.

Here is also another ravenous Bird on the Coast, very like a Falcon, and tho' but a little bigger than a Dove, yet he is so bold and frong that he attacks and flies away with the largest Chickens.

The third sort of Birds of Prey on this Coast, are the Kites; these steal all they can discover and carry off, besides Chickens, whether Flesh or Fish; and that so boldly that they frequently sieze the latter in the Hands of the Negroe-Women as they are going along the Street or sitting in the Market.

No. 13 represents a Fowl which harbours near Lakes and Rivers; and may very well pass for a fine Bird: He is about as large as a Chicken, the upper-part of his Body black or brown speckled with white, and the under either deep yellow or red; he hath also a Tuft of speckled Feathers rising like a Comb; and his Bill in proportion to his Body is extraordinary thick and long.

In the next Leaf I have presented you with a Fedase Crown-bird; and wish I could also send you a Draught of the sort found on the Gold Coast, and then you would observe a great difference; it being twice as fine, and of ten various Colours, as green, red, blew, sky-colour, brown, black, white, &c. and what is very observable, they have a long Tail; out of which the Negroes pull the Feathers to wear on their Heads. We call them Crown birds, because some have a beautiful Blew, and others a Gold-coloured Crown or Tuft on their Heads. Monsieur Focquenbrog mentions Peacocks that he saw at the River Boutry, which can be no other than these Birds; for here are no Peacocks on the Coast.

No.

LET: XV. Gold Coast of Guinea.

No. 14 delineates a Bird, which though ugly enough, may be esteemed rare; for I dare averr that the whole World doth not produce his like: Nor can he, I am certain, be more naturally or lively expressed than in this Print; and yet the Pencil seems to have flattered him, for he there looks handsomer than he really is.

He is exactly of the size of a Goose; his Wings are extravagantly long and broad, covered with dark coloured Feathers: the under-part of his Body is over-spread with Ash-coloured Feathers, if I may so call them; for it is really difficult to distinguish them from Hair. Under his Neck he hath a Crop or Maw about a Span long and as thick as a Man's Arm; which looks like a red Skin: In this he hoards his Food, as the Monkies do in their Alfoaches. His Neck, which is pretty long, and the red Knob in the Nape, is furnished with Feathers as well as the under-part of the Body; his Head, in proportion to his Body, is much too large, and excepting a very few Hairs he hath, is very bald: His Eyes are large and black, his Bill extraordinary thick and long. His Food is Fish; of which he devours as much at once as would suffice four Men: He catches the Fish thrown to him very nimbly, and throws them down whole into his Crop. He is a great lover of Rats, which he also swallows whole; and which we have often obliged him to vomit; for as he runs on the Out-works of the Castle, to divert our selves, we cause him to be brought above; when, as tho' he designed us a Service, he brings up a half-digested Rat out of his Crop and lays it at our Feet.

It is agreeable enough to see a little Boy, or our Dogs set on him; upon which he will very strangely arm himself for opposition, pecking and striking them with his Bill very artificially, and they

A Description of the LET. XV.

they repulging him, which was like two pieces of Wood stroke against each other, or a pair of Snappers.

These being all his good as well as bad Qualities, I leave you to judge whether he is handsome or ugly, though I cannot doubt but you will declare him the latter: The Negroes call him Pokkoe.

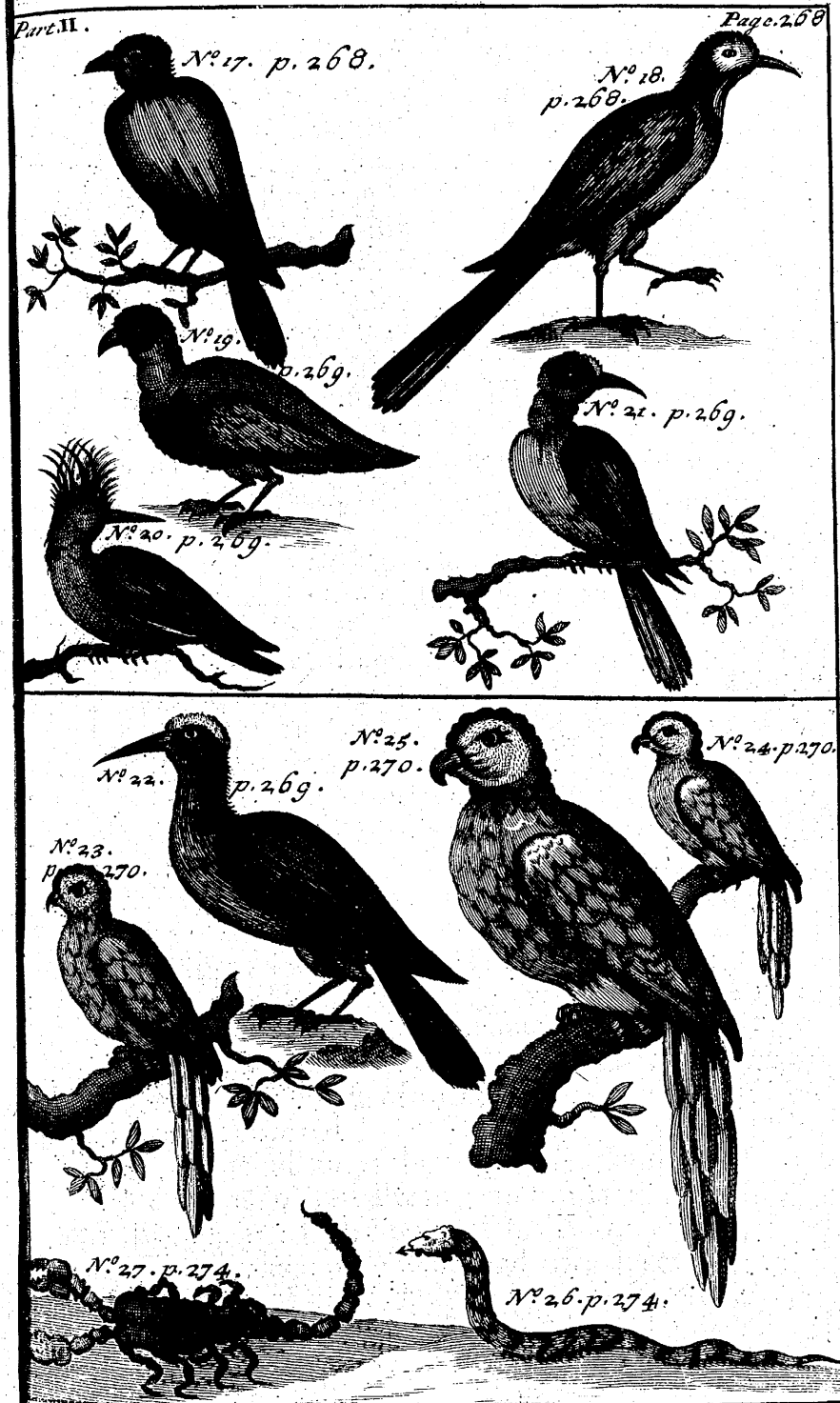
No. 15 is a Bird in size somewhat like the former, though his Neck is much longer. When he stands on his Feet and stretches his Neck upwards he is much above a Man's height. Our People shot him by the River of Apam, and we found his Feathers black, white, red, sky, and several other Colours intermixed all over his Body: his Eyes are large and yellow. This is all that I have observed of him; he may very well pass for a fine Bird: His Name is equally unknown to me and the Negroes.

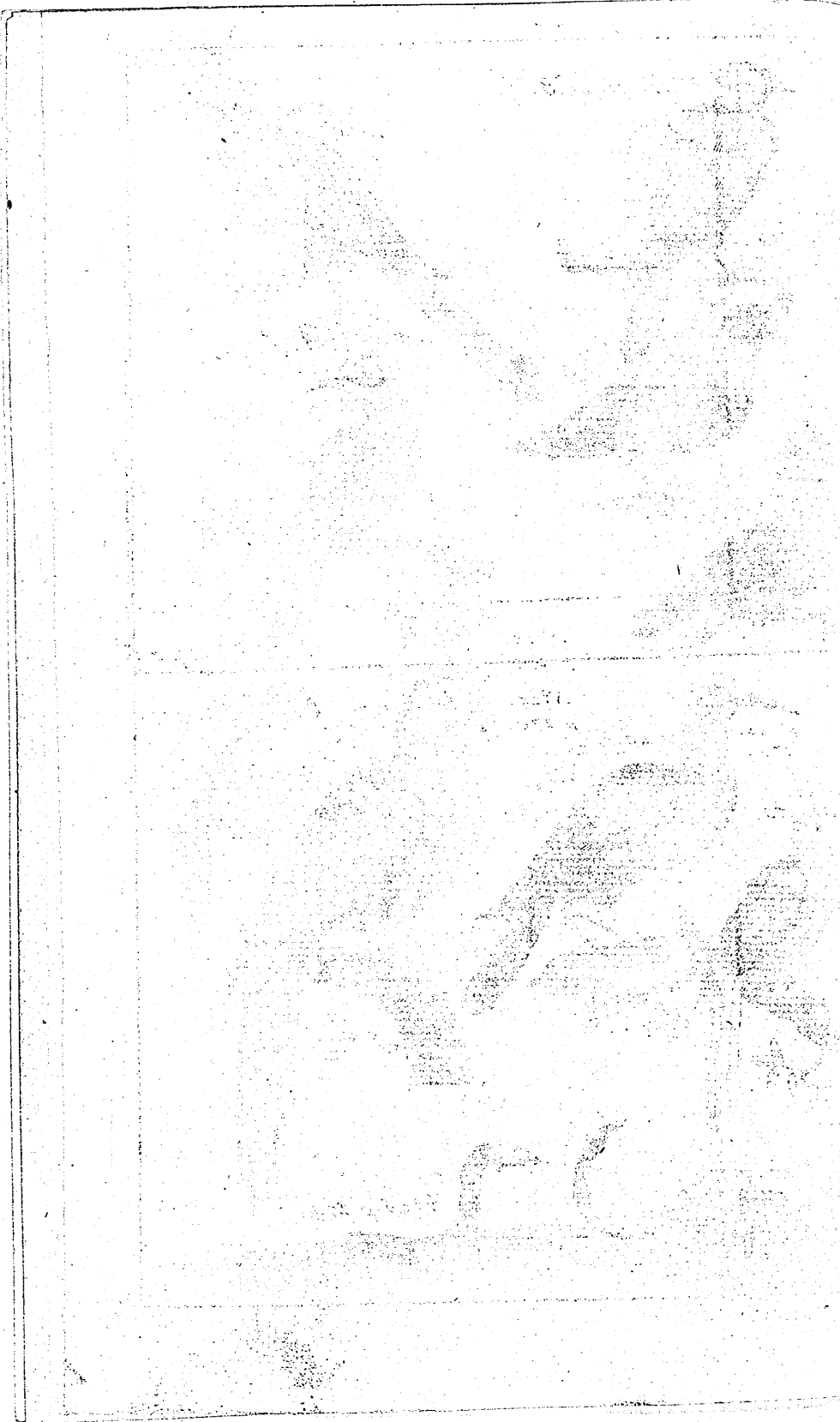
No. 16 is a granivorous Bird, shaped as the Print represents him; his Bill being long and sharp, his Body chequered with yellow and light blew Feathers; a black Semicircle about his Neck, a long Tail composed of yellow, blew and black Feathers, and a few Feathers on his Head.

No. 17 represents a Bird shaped like the former, and of the same Species; from which he chiefly differs in that his Bill is thick, short and black; the under-part of his Body black, his Back of a beautiful Yellow, and his Feet as well as Bill black.

No. 18 is also a Bird, not very different from the first in any thing else, except that grey and yellow are intermixed amongst his Feathers; he hath a sharp Bill, and in proportion to his size, extraordinary long Feet and Claws.

No



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No. 19 is a Bird not above half so big as the precedent, and shaped almost like a Sparrow; his Colour renders him very beautiful, his Head and Breast being as black as Jett, his Wings and Feet grey, the rest of his Body of a bright red; and it is indeed pity we cannot keep these Birds alive.

But No. 20 far exceeds all the other in Beauty. He always harbours about the Rivers, fattening himself with small Fish. His Wings and the upper-part of his Body are entirely blew, somewhat inclining to Sky-colour, as are also the Feathers of his Neck which are pretty long, and the Tuft on his Head; his Breast is of a dark yellow, mixed with some blew and red Feathers; his Feet and Bill of a bright red and very thick and long.

This Bird was drawn by the Painter during his Sickness, and very unwillingly; which is the reason that he hath not expressed the variety of his Colours; otherwise he would have appeared one of the most beautiful small Birds, which not only *Guinea* produces, but several other Countries afford.

No. 21 expresses another granivorous Bird, shaped as the Print describes; his Breast, the under-part of his Body and Neck is of a reddish yellow; his Head is intirely black, except a beautiful yellow spot on the fore-part; the upper-part of his Body and Wings are black, and his Tail is composed of black, yellow and red Feathers intermixed.

No. 22 is about as big again as the former, hath a beautiful red Breast, and under-part of his Body; the upper-part of his Body, Wings and Tail as black as Pitch, and the upper-part of his Head of a bright Yellow, and shaped as the Figure expresses him.

No.

No. 23 and 24 express two small Parrochites, or *Guinea Sparrows*; not that here are none like those in *Europe*: but on the contrary, we have here vast numbers of the same Species, without the least difference; but these are also called Sparrows, for what Reason I cannot tell.

The whole Coast, but more especially the lower part of it, as *Moure*, *Cormantyn*, *Apam* and *Akra* very plentifully abounds with these Birds: They are of a green colour, mixed with a beautiful red, and some of them have also a few yellow and black Feathers. Their Bill like that of Parrots is red and crooked.

They are very beautiful little Creatures; and daily, or when ever opportunity offers, we send great numbers of them to *Holland*; where they bear a good value. We generally buy them here at the rate of a *Rycksdollar per Dozen*: But most of them commonly die in their Passage to *Holland*; notwithstanding which, a certain Author hath adventured to tell us that they live thirty, forty, or more Years; but that must be *once on a time*: For at present of one hundred that we send over scarce ten survive.

No. 25 represents a Parrot, though I might have spared that unnecessary pains, because you daily see them in *Holland*; but he is such a faithful Animal, that I could not deny him a place here.

We have them all over the Coast, but not many, and most of them come from far In-land Countries. Those of *Benin*, *Calbary*, and *Cape Lopez*, are here most valued, because far-fetched; though their Admirers are not aware that they are much older than those we catch here, and consequently not so docile; but these Men, like Ladies, admire what comes from afar.

All

All the Parrots here on the Coast, as also on the Promontory of *Guinea*, and the mentioned places, are blew.

It would be to wash an *Æthiopian*, or at least an unnecessary Task, to say much concerning these Birds, since they are so common in *Holland*, that they are there much less esteemed than here, and bear a less price also; for I believe very few in *Holland* would give three, four or five Pounds sterling for a babling Parrot, which is very frequently done here.

These, Sir, are all the Birds which I can present you the Draughts of, but you must not thence infer that there is no greater variety of Species: On the contrary, I dare averr that these do not amount to a fifth part of what I have seen, to pass by those which never occurred to me.

Those which for want of a Painter I could not send, are in their kind all extraordinary beautiful: Wherefore I am not a little concerned that I cannot get them drawn.

But I must have patience till I hear what answer you please to send to my request: Wherefore to conclude this Discourse of Birds, I shall yet add one; of which I remember to have read wonders: His Feathers are represented like Stars, his Voice as loud as that of a Bull; and we are told that when the *Negroes* are travelling, if they hear him on the left Hand they quit their intended Journey, and return home: How far this Relation agrees with Truth, I leave you to judge.

This Bird is about twice as big as a Sparrow, his Feathers are not in the least like Stars, though indeed he hath a few small Specks, which they will so construe; but if that be allowed there are a great many Star-birds in the World.

His

His Voice or Lowing is hollow and piercing ; but to compare him to that of a Bull, is to assert, that a Bell of one Hundred Pound will give as great a Sound, as that of ten Thousand Weight.

As to what concerns the third part of the account of him, I have not much to offer against it; for as the World, with respect to Human Life, is liable to a perpetual change; and what at present is one thing, may in one hundred Years be altered to another: So I can easily believe that the *Negroes* were formerly Superstitious enough to put a stop to their Travels and return home upon hearing this Bird on the left Hand, since at present they don't take it for a good Omen; but now they never break off their Journey on that account, unless it be some extraordinary Bigots, with which all Parts are stored: But from them no rational Character can be drawn.

Having said enough of this Bird, and the whole Feathered Kind; I shall in the next place say something of Reptiles, and whatever approximates to that sort of Animals: Of which I can only impart two Draughts, which shall follow in their place; but first of the Toads.

Toads and Frogs are as numerous here as in *Europe*, the last being also of the same size; but the first are not only in as great abundance and shaped like ours, but they are in some places of a terrible largeness.

At *Adja*, an *English* Village, betwixt *Moure* and *Cormantyn*, I have seen some as broad as a common Table-Plate. When I first saw them I took them for Land-Tortoises; of which we have also some here; but was soon convinced of my Error by their leaping. The *English* Factor told me that a vast Number of them harboured about

about that place. They differ from other Toads only in largeness, which renders them very hideous.

The Toads here, as well as in other places, are mortal Enemies to the Snakes, and we have been Eye-Witnesses of several Engagements betwixt them.

Here are great Quantities and Variety of Snakes; some whereof are hideous great; the largest of those taken in my time here was twenty Foot long, though In-land I believe there are yet much bigger: And we have frequently found in their Entrails not only Harts and other Beasts, but Men also.

Most of them are venomous; but the following are so to an extraordinary degree; and therefore very dangerous. These are scarce a Yard long, about two Spans thick, and variagated with white, black and yellow.

I was once in the utmost danger of my Life by one of these Serpents; for as I sat at *Axim* by a Rock, which was over-grown with Trees and Under-Woods, one of these poysonous Animals was got very near me; when by a great chance I was aware of him just time enough to escape the evident Danger.

The Snakes infest not only the Woods, but the Dwellings of the *Negroes*, and even our Forts and Bed-Chambers, where I have often killed them.

Several Persons besides my self have seen a dead Snake with two Heads; whether both was serviceable to the Body, as some affirm, since the Snake, as I told you, was dead, I could not determine; nor could I obtain any satisfactory account from the *Negroes*.

Of all the various Species of Snakes, I have caused only one to be drawn; but as soon as

another Painter comes hither, I shall have opportunity to present you with more: For besides that we can cause them to be taken every Day, we have also a reserve of some of their Skins stuf and kept; one of which is fourteen Foot long, and within two Foot of his Tail hath two Claws; which helped him to erect himself and contributed to his more expeditious march. His Head is like that of a Pike, and stock'd with much such another row of Teeth.

The Snake which the Print No. 26 expresses, is about five Foot long; as thick as a Man's Arm, variegated with black, brown, yellow and white Streaks very agreeably mixed.

The most curious part of this Reptil is his Head, which is very broad and flat. He injures neither Man nor Beast, any otherwise than by a very small Horn, or rather Tooth, which irregularly from the upper Jaw strikes through his Nose, and is white, hard, and sharp as an Awl; and the Negroes going bare-foot very often insensibly tread on them, by reason that when these Creatures meet with any repast, they so satiate themselves, that they fall into such a sound Sleep, that it is no small Noise that can awaken them: Wherefore they are very easily taken or killed.

Next to this Serpent, No. 27, is a large Scorpion; of which I need not say any thing, since he is incomparably well drawn as big as the Life; though I have seen them here as big as small Lobsters, being also furnished with such Claws and Feet, and their whole Bodies covered over with long Hair.

Very few are ignorant how pernicious this Animal is to Mankind. Some of them have a small Bladder full of Poyson, of a half Fingers breadth at the end of their Tails, which they spurt out when they strike either Man or Beast; and this is unavoidably fatal. This

This here represented had a Bladder as big as a white Pea, full of Poyson.

The Scorpions, in my Opinion, ought to be reckoned amongst the number of Insects, as well as the Millipedes, or Hoglice, which are called Centepees by the Portuguese, and are here found to be prodigiously numerous; and though their sting is not so dangerous as that of the Scorpions, yet it is certain it occasions a very sharp pain for three or four Hours; after which it ceases without leaving the least relick of uneasiness.

No place in our Ports is free from these Vermin; the longest of which are about a Span; they are flat and red interspected like other Worms, having two small Horns or rather Claws, with which they strike. The Feet are on each side of the Body, and are 30 or 40: their exact number I cannot inform you of.

If I should treat of all our Insects, and describe each Species of them; such as the Bees, Crickets, Caterpillars, Grasshoppers, and above twenty sorts of Worms, Ants and Beetles, I should fill two Quire of Paper; in order to which I should want nothing but a perfect Knowledge of that Subject.

I wish Mr. *Leeuwenhoeck* that great Naturalist had opportunity to do it; for I believe he would meet with more Rarities here than in all other Parts of the World. I have sent you herewith, as a Specimen, a Boxful, containing above a hundred of the most rare Species of them; be pleased to rest contented with them, and a Description of a couple of Insects which I have not there sent; and first of the Bees.

The Excellence of the Guinea Honey is very well known to many; here are prodigious Quanties of that as well as Wax, about *Rio de Gabon,*

Gabon, Cape Lopez, and farther in the Gulph of *Guinea*; both which we have also on the Coast, though not in such plenty.

Considering the strange Nature of the Ants, those Enemies to Man and Beast, I cannot avoid treating of them at large.

These Vermin make Nests about twice the height of a Man, of the Earth, which they turn up in Fields and Hills; besides which they build large Nests in high Trees: From which places they sometimes come to our Forts and Chambers in such prodigious swarms, that they frequently oblige us to quit our Beds in the Night time; they are strangely rapacious, and no Animal can stand before them. They have often in the Night attackt one of my live Sheep, and that I have found a perfect skeleton in the Morning, and that so nicely done, that the best Master of the dismembring Art could not succeed so well, it being impossible for Human Hands to have done it so artificially.

It is but one of their Diversions to serve Chickens and other Fowl in this manner; nay as swift as the Rats are they cannot escape them; and 'tis pleasant to observe that as soon as one of them assaults a Rat he is inevitably gone, for attempting to run away he is attacked by several others, till so many fall upon him that they overpower him, and they are sure not to leave him till they grow to a Body strong enough to remove him to a safe place.

Really if one considers the practice of those Vermin, it would prompt one to conjecture that they had a sort of Language current amongst themselves; for I have several times placed a Worm or Beetle where only one or two of these Ants were, who immediately departed and returned in a minute, bringing with them above

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a hundred, and if they were not enough, in a moment more were called: After which they seize their Prey, and march off with it in good Order, all mutually assisting each other in the carriage of the Burthen.

These Pismires are of various sorts, great and small, white, black and red; the sting of the last inflames to a great degree, and is more painful than that of the *Millipedes*: The white are transparent as Glass, and bite so forcibly, that in the space of one Night alone they can eat their way through a thick wooden Chest of Goods, and make it as full of Holes as if it had been shot through with Hail-shot.

That the Ants have a King, which is as large as a Crey-fish, as Monsieur *Focquenbrog* is pleased to tell us, is what I don't know, and consequently dare not averr.

Having thus, in my Opinion, particularly enough treated of the Animals which fly in the Air as well as those on the Earth; it remains only to finish this Letter in running through those who inhabit the Sea and Rivers.

The want of Flesh and other necessary Provision in this Country, renders the Sea considerable as the principal Support of Human Life; without which it were impossible to subsist here: For not only the *Negroes*, but most of the *Europeans* live only on Fish, Bread and Palm-Oil. So that it is a very great Happiness, and particular Providence of God, that the Sea and Rivers here seem earnestly to contest which shall produce the best Fish.

Both afford very good and delicious Fish: the principal of which I shall here exemplifie. First, the Sea here produces a Fish as large as our common Cod, which is here called *Brasilian* Cod, being extraordinary fat and delicate; after which follow

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The Jacks or Pikes great and small, which in their season are very fat and good and not so hairy as in *Holland*.

Here are also Plaice and Flounders; and tho' the first but seldom appears, yet the second are extraordinary plenty, though neither so thick nor so good as ours in *Holland*; from which they also visibly differ in shape.

There is another sort of small flat Fish here, which in delicacy surpasses all the rest on the Coast: These Fish are here called *Pisicampbers*.

Which are also followed by another as flat, but rounder, distinguished by the obscene Name of *C—coverer*.

Here are Half-Koords, Corcoado's, Giltheads, and other large Fish, as black and white Carabins, which are cheap and good Food for the meaner sort of People.

Here are Bream in very great plenty, of three or four sorts; two of which especially are very fat and delicate, which are commonly called *Jacob Evertxen* and *Roojeud*.

Amongst the middle-sized Fish, are first the flat-Noses, so called from their very flat Snouts; they taste like our Haddock.

The second sort, which are much less, are a sort of Pouts, called by the *Dutch* *Baardmannetjes*, from their Hairs like a Beard hanging at their Chops.

We have sometimes Mackerel, though but very few are caught; but vast Shoals are taken of the *Saffer* or Kings-fish, as the *Dutch* call it; which in their season are extraordinary fat and good, tasting like Eels: Guttred and dryed they are eaten instead of Salmon.

Amongst the small Fish, the first which occurs is the *Aboei*, somewhat like our Trouts, but
much

much firmer and more delicate; they are taken here by Thousands.

Ray or Thorn-back both great and small, is here very good and in prodigious plenty.

Soles and Dabs are here extraordinary; the first exceeding ours in *Holland*.

Nor is here any want of Lobsters, Crabs, Shrimps and Prawns: We have also Thousands of two sorts of Sprats, great and small; both which are very fat when in season, though the former so stringy that they are not much esteemed; but the last are very agreeable Food, and very good either pickled like Herrings or dryed like Red-herrings; both which ways we yearly preserve great Quantities.

The River-Fish, besides those which come out of the Sea and stay in Rivers, are of three sorts. First, *Carmou*, a white Fish, the largest of which Species are about three quarters of a Yard long, and of the thickness of a Man's Arm; they are so far from being too lean, that they would be very delicious if not too fat and oily.

The second is the Mullet, which differs from the former only in that it is less and hath not so thick a Head; but is full as good Food as the other.

The Rivers produce a third sort of Fish here called *Batavia*; the largest of which are indifferent good, if they don't taste muddy, which they are very apt to do: Some of us have (though very erroneously) taken them for Pearch, which they are not in the least like.

I could specify several other Fish, but I content my self with touching upon the principal Species; and assuring you that a lover of Fish, as I reckon my self, may here meet with full satisfaction: He may make a satiating Fish-Meal at five or sixpence charge; and a Soldier, or
those

those who cannot afford to run so high, may eat their fill at half that price. I would be here understood to speak of the general course of the Market, for sometimes there is at least one half difference as well in the price as goodness; and it is really very melancholy to see how the miserable meaner sort subsist when there is no Fish, which commonly happens in the ill Weather, or Winter, as it is here called; for at other times one sort of Fish or another being in season there never is any want.

However I shall yet add a Description of three Species more, that are found on this Coast; which by reason of their Rarity I cannot omit.

The first and largest are called there and elsewhere by the *Dutch*, *Noordkapers*; I shall speak more particular of these in another place, and at this time only hint, that on the Coast in fine Weather, when the Fisher-men are in the best of their Captions, these Fish come towards the shoar, and, as the *Negroes* assure us, so frighten all the Fish, that they immediately take their flight, and even the next Day not a Fish is to be seen in the Sea; so that they doubtless pursue them very close.

The second are the Sword-fish, so called by reason of the flat Bone about a Yard or an Ell long, and a hands-breadth, which they have at the end of their Snout: This Bone is furnished with about seventeen, nineteen, or more sharp Teeth, about a Fingers length on each side, and mostly rugged, and one more on one side than the other. He is seven, eight, nine and sometimes ten feet long, though he is also extraordinary thick. How these Fish wage War against Whales and other very large Fish, I cannot inform you; for I shall not say any thing tending that way, because I never saw any such thing,
nor

nor have been at the place where any of these skirmishes have happened; and out of an apprehension that I should never return, I am not very solicitous to visit them, esteeming it much better to stay at home.

The third sort are *Hayes* or *Requiens*, by some (though utterly wrong) named *Sea-Dogs*; for they are not in the least like them. They are very thick as well as very long, some of them betwixt twenty and thirty foot; their Head is broad, flat, and their Snout very sharp-pointed; as to the rest they are very ugly. This Fish is the *Negroes* best and most common Food. They are daily taken on the Gold Coast in great shoals. The *Europeans* never eat them, by Reason of the toughness of their Flesh; to remedy which the *Negroes* lay them a rotting and stinking seven or eight Days; after which they are greedily eaten as a delicacy, and a great Trade is driven in this Commodity to the In-land Country.

The *Haye* doth not spawn like other Fishes, nor lay Eggs (as the *Tortoise* do) but casts its young in the manner of *Quadrupedes*.

These Fish do no manner of damage on the whole Gold Coast; but at *Fida* and *Ardra*, where the Slave Trade is managed, they are extraordinary ravenous, and in my Opinion fiercer than the most voracious Animal in the World.

If any Person fall over-board he is infallibly dead, unless (which very seldom happens) none of these Fish are near, or he is immediately helped up.

When dead Slaves are thrown over-board, I have sometimes, not without horrou, seen the dismal Rapaciousness of these Animals; four or five of them together shoot to the bottom under the Ship to tear the dead Corps to pieces, at each bite

A Description of the LET. XV.

an Arm, a Leg, or the Head is snapt off; and before you can tell twenty they have sometimes divided the Body amongst them so nicely that not the least Particle is left; nay, not so much as any of the Intrails; and if any one of them happen to come too late for his share, he is ready to eat up the others, and they attack one another with the greatest violence in the World; and mounting their Heads and half their Bodies above the surface of the Water, they give one another such forcible blows that they make the Sea around to tremble.

When the *Haye* seizes his Prey he is obliged to turn himself on his Back, because his Mouth is placed far behind and low: wherefore he cannot come at any thing upwards.

When we sometimes take one of these Fish and hawl him on board with a Rope, we are always obliged to keep at a distance; for besides his sharp Teeth, he strikes with his Tail, which is prodigious strong; and whoever comes near him loses either an Arm or a Leg, or at least hath it broken to pieces.

I take the Reason why they don't fall on Mankind on the Gold Coast to be that they can here easily satiate themselves with smaller Fish; which is wanting at *Ardra* and *Fida*: Wherefore rather than starve they devour Human Bodies; which I am apt to think relish very well, since when our Ships depart from those places, they sometimes follow them for three Weeks or a Month, waiting for more Slaves to be thrown over-board.

Notwithstanding the rapacious Cruelty of these Fish, yet some Persons told me as a certain Truth, that at *Cape Vert*, where they are ravenous enough, it happened that one of our Masters, either by Misfortune or Necessity (I forgot which) was over-board, and not being able

LET. XV. *Gold Coast of Guinea.*

to swim very well, was in danger of drowning, but that a *Haye* in the very lucky Minute, softly caught him by the Leg, and carried him on board one of our Ships. If this be true, it is a greater miracle than *Arion's* engaging the Dolphin by his melodious Harp to waft him safe to Shore, since the *Haye* saved the Man without any inducement: but to believe this to be true requires a strong Faith; notwithstanding that to engage me to it, the very Man, the particular Day and Place are named: But two Reasons strongly oppose the Truth of this Story; first, the innate Cruelty of this Fish; secondly, that whilst on his Belly he cannot take any hold; so that he must have lain on his Back ere he could have seized this Master; after which he must have swam in that posture. But you'll say perhaps that in his Youth he had learned to swim on his Back (as our Boys commonly do,) in order to practice it upon occasion. What shall I say, my Friend? Nature is very stupendious in her Operations; let us leave this Story there; and as to the rest be assured that I passionately desire always to remain, Sir, Yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

Treating of Trees and other Plants; as first of the Palm-Trees, and their Fruit, and other Properties: Of four sorts of Palm-Wine. Of Coco-Trees, wild Coco's or Palmeto's. Oranges and Lemon-Trees; their Numbers and Virtues, and where abound most. A copious Description of the Papai-Tree, and its Fruit; also of the Tree called Pisang, distinguished into Bakovens or Paqrovens and Banana's. What sort of Fruit the Cormantyn Apples are, and why so called. Of Pomgranates and Vinous Grapes: Of several sorts of wild Trees; some of which are very high and large: amongst others the Capot-Trees, why so called. Where Wood fit for fine Works is produced. Of the Fruits of the Earth; and first of the Corn, or the greater or lesser sort of Milbio or Millet, Rice, Jambes and Potatoes. Of all sorts of Beans. A large Description of Anana's; concerning which some Authors are contradicted. Of Water Melons, a very fine Fruit. Of Malaguetta otherwise called the Grains of Paradise, or Guinea Pepper. Piement, Tarragon and stinking Tobacco: Of which the Negroes are great lovers. Of the manner of boiling their Salt.

S I R,

S I R,
 THIS shall only discharge the promise of the former, to say something concerning the Trees here and their Fruit, as well as the Corn and Plants of this Country: In which, to avoid all Circumlocution, as the *Coco* in the *East-Indies* by way of excellence is numbred amongst the first Trees; so with equal justice the Palm claims the preheminance here; since with the help of Bread and Fish it subsists most of the People on the Coast.

The first produce of this Tree is its Nuts; which roasted when young taste very deliciously, and when old are covered with a red Husk or Shell, black on the hinder-part, and contain the Palm-Oil, which is obtained by contusion and expression as that of Olives. This Oil is naturally red, but if kept some Years turns white: It is a little nauseous first to New-Comers here, but for him that is used to it, is no despiceable Sauce; besides that it is very strengthening and healthful; and I am inclined to prefer it in several Dishes before Oil of Olive.

After the Oil is expressed the Pulp serves the Negroes for a delicacy; and if kept till old is extraordinary good to fatten Hogs, and render their Flesh very firm.

The second Fruit it yields is the Wine it self: To obtain and draw off which, when the Trees are old enough to be cut, they are bereft of all their Branches, and rendered intirely bare; in which condition having remained a few Days, a little Hole is bored in the thickest part of the Trunk; into which is inserted a small Reeden Pipe; and that thro' the Palm-Wine drops into a Pot set under to receive it: but it distils so slowly, that in twenty four Hours scarce a Pottle of

of Wine issues from one Tree : In this manner, proportionable to the goodness of the Ground in which the Trees is planted, it yields Wine for twenty, thirty, or sometimes more Days ; and when it hath almost run its last, they kindle a Fire at bottom, in order to draw more Wine with the greater force.

This Wine being drank fresh or under the Trees, as our Phrase runs here, is very delicious and agreeable ; but withal so strong, that it unexpectedly steals to the Head, and very speedily intoxicates : But that which the Peasants bring daily to the Shore is not worth much, because it is impoverished and adulterated ; and I believe it is not so much coveted by the meaner sort and the Negroes for its agreeable taste as its inebriating Quality ; with which it is plentifully endowed, though very much vitiated by a pretty large mixture of Water.

The Tree thus drained of its Wine, is fit for nothing but firing ; but when green, its Leaves are used to make Ropes, Nets, and other necessary things.

There are four sorts of this Tree ; each of which hath a particular Name : We have already spoke of the right and genuine Palm-Wine.

The second sort of Palm-Wine is drawn in no Country besides that of Fantyn, and is called Quaker ; for what reason I have already informed you in another Letter. This sort exceeds the other somewhat in pleasantness of Flavour, and very much in strength ; half so much of this as of the other being a dose scarce to be carried off ; and the Trees from whence it is drawn are not above half as big as the right Palm-Trees.

The third sort is drawn at Ancober, Abokroe, Axim and Ante, though but in very small Quantities at the last ; and goes by the name of Pardon :
So

So that you may easily believe no Villany here can be committed so great, but that Pardon is easily attainable, if the Person be in the good Graces of the God Bacchus.

This Wine, though of a very different, hath yet as pleasant a taste as the former, but not so strong.

These Trees are not cut, but the Wine is drawn out of them whilst growing, as the Suri is drawn out of the Coco-Tree in the East-Indies ; with this difference, that after the Wine is there drawn off the Trees remaine alive ; whereas they here wither and dry : The Reason of which I believe, that in India they don't draw off all the Wine at once, but leave a remainder for nourishment to encourage the farther growth of the Tree ; whereas here they force out the least drop : whence the Tree, utterly deprived of all its moisture, must needs intirely wither and dye.

The fourth kind is produced in the Countries of Ante, Jabi and Adom ; and is of a very different Flavour from all the other three, and utterly void of all manner of strength ; but when drank fresh tastes like Milk ; and nine or ten Hours after it is drawn is not fit to be drank, nor is it good for any thing. This is called Crissia.

The Negroes report that drinking much of this Wine, causes the virile Member to grow to a large size ; which is indeed credible, by reason that the Negroes are in no place on the Coast so subject to this Distemper as in the mentioned Countries. The Wine is drawn from these Trees as already you have been informed the Pardon is, that is, whilst growing.

The Trunk of the Palm-Tree is in circumference about an ordinary Mans height, and about as tall as he also. That called Quaker is not above half so big. Both shoot their Branches up-

upwards; some of which are in length twenty foot or above. These Branches call'd here and elsewhere *Bamboes*, are used for covering of Houses, for Hedges and on several occasions. On each side of these *Bamboes* grows small long slips, which are their Leaves.

The *Pardon-Trees* grow like the *Coco-nuts*, though on a much thinner Stalk. The *Crissia-Trees* grow also in the same manner, though they very remarkably differ in height and thickness of the Trunk, this not exceeding the fourth part of the height of the *Pardon-Tree*; and out of every Plant of this sort shoot generally four, five or more Stalks: from all which Wine is drawn.

The perfect mature Age of a *Palm-Tree* is ten, twelve, or more Years; and then but ten, fifteen, or at most twenty Gallons of Wine are drawn off; notwithstanding which, this Wine daily comes in such prodigious plenty to the Shore that it is really to be wonder'd at: and from hence we may naturally infer that there must be many Thousands of these Trees growing in this Country, or the Wine will soon be at end. An Anchor of five Gallons is commonly sold for about two Shillings and three Pence *English Money*; though at some times and places it is one half cheaper than at other.

Next the *Palm*, the *Coco-Tree* ought indisputably to take place. How beneficial these Trees are to Mankind, is known to many, and may be seen in several Descriptions of *East-India Voyages*. But here, through the Ignorance of the *Negroes*, no other advantage results from them than the Fruit, I mean the Nut; the Kernel of which as well as the enclosed Milk is very pleasant to the taste.

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These Trees shoot up in this Country to the height of thirty or forty, and sometimes fifty feet: Their Branches and (so called) Leaves, are like those of the *Palm*, excepting that the *Coco-branches* are not so long, or fit for the uses the other are employed in. These Trees bear their Fruit in the fourth or fifth Year, and live fifty Years and longer.

The wild *Coco trees*, otherwise called *Palm-trees*, grow also here, and bear a Fruit, which but very few of the *Europeans* eat, though the *Negroes* do. This Tree is very much thicker than the genuine *Coco*, especially in the middle, where he is of a surprizing greatness; and what adds to the odness of the Figure, is, that the top and bottom are one half smaller. At the top grows a Fruit, which seems to be the Pith of the Tree, and is called *Palm-Cabbage*, because it hath a sort of *Cabbage* taste.

In the Country of *Axim* are vast Quantities of sweet as well as sour Oranges: The sweet are pretty good, but the Garden of *Elmina*, which is extraordinary full of them, hath some, which for agreeable taste fall very little short of those of *China*.

In the other Countries there are very few or no *Orange-trees*; notwithstanding Monsieur *Focquenbrog* hath been pleas'd to averr, that they grow in great Multitudes along the River *Boutry*; in which he is absolutely mistaken, for I have several times sail'd along that River, and never found any, nor according to the report of the *Negroes* were there ever any: There are a few indeed on the Hill near our Forts, but not one on the mentioned River side.

Lemon-trees, which are here called *Bramba's* grow all over the Coast, especially at *Moure*, where they are press'd; and which place, if the Season

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A Description of the LET XVI.

Season be not unufually dry, is able annually to deliver above two hundred Aums of Lime-Juice. About twenty or twenty five Shillings *English* Money, is the price of an Aum of Lime-Juice, or pickled small Lemons.

The *Guinea* Lime-Juice and pickled Lemons are too well known and esteemed in *Holland* to require me to infist any longer on that Head.

Some Authors have said a great deal concerning the Papay-tree, but without due examination: We are told that they have neither Branches nor Leaves, and that it does not grow above Man's height, &c. But to refute these and some other Opinions, that are cherished, I need only describe the true and natural shape of this Tree.

His Trunk, being several foot thick, is composed of a spongy Wood, or rather Root, which it most resembles: It is hollow, and may very easily be cut through the middle with a Hatchet. The Fruit at first grows at the top of the Trunk, without any Branches; but as the Tree grows older it shoots out Branches also towards the top, which resemble young Stocks; on which the Fruit also grows. At the very top of the Trunk, and of the mentioned Branches, shoot other small Sprigs almost like Reeds, a little crooked and hollow; and at the extremity of these Sprigs grow very fine broad Leaves, frequently cleft, not very unlike Vine-Leaves, excepting the size only.

Some Papay-trees run up to the height of thirty foot, which is considerably more than a Man's height. The Fruit, or what is properly called the Papay, is about half as big as the Coco-nut, of an oval shape, green without and white within; but with Age they turn very red within, and abound with numerous white Kernels, which are the

LET. XVI. *Gold Coast* of *Guinea*.

the Seed from whence they are produced. The Papays taste rather worse than better than Pom-pions.

There grow Multitudes of Papay Trees all along the Coast; and these are of two sorts, viz. the Male and Female, or at least they are here so called; on account that those named Males, bear no Fruit, but are continually full of Blossoms, consisting of a long white Flower; the Female also bears the same Blossom, though not so long, nor so numerous.

Some have observed, that the Females yield their Fruit in greatest abundance when the Males grow near them: You may, Sir, believe what you please; but if you don't, I shall not charge you with Heresie.

So much hath already been written concerning the Pisang-tree, which is divided into *Bakovens* and *Banantes* or *Bananas*, that it seems hardly worth while to detain you on that Head any longer, than to confirm what others have said, as that its Fruit, especially the Bakovens, are very good, that they bear in a Year, though but once in all, for then the Stock is cut off; and from the Root there shoots out five or six fresh Stocks; so that this Plant may pass for a perpetual Almanack, as being indeed endless.

The Stock of these Trees, if they deserve that Name, grow to once and a half or twice Man's height. Those who are of Opinion that the Leaves of this Tree were the Leaves with which our First-Parents covered their Nakedness, are not so much out of the way, partly because these Leaves are long and broad enough for that end, and partly by reason they are called Fig-Leaves; and these Trees bear the Name of *Indian-Figs*; though I must own besides that they are very unfit for cloathing or covering, for a touch of the

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Finger makes a hole in them: Wherefore they would hardly serve a live Body.

Here are also several other fruitful Trees, but their Fruit is not only unknown to us, but eaten by very few: Wherefore I shall say very little concerning them. And first, we have here a sort of Fruit, like our two sorts of Plums, blew and white, in shape as well as colour; but they are not very well tasted, as being very sweet, mealy and dry.

But I ought not to forget the *Cormantyn* Apple (so called, because it most plentifully abounds in that Country) which is as big as a Wall-nut, with its green Husk on; its Rind is yellow somewhat inclining to red: In the Core are four large, flat, black Kernels, which are surrounded by the Pulp or the Fruit it self; which is red and white, and of a sort of sharp, sweet taste, but most inclining to acid. It is a very agreeable refreshing Fruit, and very comfortable for the sick, especially those afflicted with the Bloody-Flux, for it is very astringent, and boiled with Wine and Sugar, is not only more useful, but more agreeable than Tamarinds.

I have also seen a few Pomgranates in the Gardens of *Elmina* and *Moure*; but before they come to Maturity they rot or fall off; so that they scarce come to any thing.

I must not pass over the *Mourese* Vine: *Mourese*, I call it, because, except that at *Moure*, there is not one on the Coast. This produces Grapes twice a Year, commonly in *August* and *January*; and would doubtless yield a vast Quantity, if pruned in a proper manner and season by a skilful Hand; but being entrusted to an ignorant *Negroe*, not half the Grapes come to perfection, but wither or rot before they are half ripe: And it is farther to be feared that the
Vine

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Vine it self, by this miserable lopping, will run to utter ruine.

It yields a blew Grape, which is substantial and very well tasted, and not so juicy as ours in *Holland*: But I doubt not, if carefully look'd after, but that they would be as good, if not better than the best in *Europe*, since they are already better than the *Dutch* ones.

It is observable that Vines will not grow any where here but at *Moure*; tryals being made at *Elmina* and other places, but without any success.

To the best of my remembrance this Vine was first planted by the *Portuguese*, who brought it first from *Brasil* some Years past; and the Fruit thereof is so very agreeable to the *European* Inhabitants, that it is to be wished more could be planted and raised at other places; for at present no Body is the better for it, except the Factor at *Moure*, the Director-General and the Gentlemen at his Table; and scarce one of one hundred that comes here can obtain the favour of seeing it.

These are all the Fruit-Trees of *Guinea*, I mean that part called the *Gold Coast*: I shall then next advance to the Description of the Wild-trees. Before which I cannot help taking notice of another Mistake of Monsieur *Focquenbrog's*: He was very much in the wrong to tell the World that at *Elmina* and several Miles adjacent there grows neither Leaf, Grass nor Tree. This is utterly false; for besides the Trees round about *Elmina* and on the Hills, the Banks of the fresh River, but half a Mile distant, are furnished with great numbers of very fine lofty Trees: From hence and several other particulars it plainly appears that Gentleman was too partial in his Description of this Coast. It is indeed true,
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that the Country about *Elmina* is more bare of Trees, than other Places; but not so bad as to deserve such a wretched Character.

To return to my Subject, I averr that the whole Coast is filled with high and low Trees; and the charming shady Groves, serve to render the Malignity of this place more supportable; and so delight those who take their progress into the In-land Country, that they oblige them intirely to forget the intolerable badness of the Ways.

Here are some which naturally grow up in such a surprizing manner, as even Art it self must blushing own it could not have contrived any thing like it; others grow so thick and their shady Boughs are so wide extended that they form intire Alleys; which afford an amazing satisfaction to any who are enclined to take the Pleasure of walking.

I remember to have formerly read in *Olearius* and other Writers, of Trees large enough to shelter two thousand Men; and the Tree of which Father *Kirchen* (a Person, that, in my Opinion, should advance nothing but Truth) writes, that in its Fruit or Shell (I think it was a Chestnut) it could lodge a Shepherd and his whole Flock, must not be very small, but may very well pass for a wonder in Nature; but after all it is not in the least to be compared with the Trees of this Country. I have seen some here that twenty instead of two Thousand Men might stand under, supposing them close to one another: and if these Authors mean so, I don't scruple to believe them; nor I believe do you. But to pass over this; it is certain that here are extraordinary high and large Trees; which may be concluded from the great *Canoas*, of which I formerly wrote to you; and since these Boats must be made

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made of a frait piece of Wood equally thick all over, and that very few Trees grow directly so, what I offer is not incredible, that the mentioned *Canoas* do not amount to above half the bulk of the Tree.

I have seen some of these Trees so high, that their tops and branches growing out of them were scarce to be reached by a common Musquet-shot. They are here called *Capot-trees*, because on them grows a certain sort of Cotton here called *Capot*; which is very proper for filling of Beds, especially in this Country, where Feather-Beds are much too hot.

The Wood of this Tree is light and porous, and scarce fit for any other use than making of *Canoas*.

The Tree which our Country-Men at the latter end of the fifteenth Century, found on *Ilba del Principe*, or Prince Island, which was four and twenty fathom in compass; was, I doubt not in the least, this *Capot-tree*. There is also one at *Axim*, which ten Men would have much ado to grasp; not that the Body of the Tree is so bulky; but it is so vastly extended by its prodigious Sprouts which closely surround it.

If we had any *Romish* Priests in this Country, we could give them some of these Branches to build them small Oratories: And then the thorny prickles, with which this Tree is abundantly stored, would serve to correct and chastise their unruly Flesh, and save them the charge of buying Whips.

But to let the Priests alone, and to return to our Subject; we have here several Trees which furnish very fine working Wood. First of all in the Country of *Aute*, near the *Brandenburgher* Fort *Acoda*, or *Dorothea*, and behind our Fort *Lydsæmbeyd* at *Apam*, is yellow Wood; of which

which very fine Chairs and Tables are made. At *Rio de Gabon* there is also red and yellow Wood, very proper for the same use; besides which, if any Persons applied themselves to fell it, there is very good Wood for the making of Rudders, small Masts and other Naval Necessaries: And I am apt to think, that here are good large Mast-trees, or at least such grow here, out of which they might be made, if not for great Ships, yet for Barks, Yatches, and other small Craft.

To compleat this Discourse of Trees; I ought to tell you that the *Negroes* in all Parts of this Country have selected and consecrated some particular Trees, under which they perform their Religious Worship; which are generally such in whose Production Nature hath displayed her greatest Perfections.

I have long since treated concerning the *Negroes* Idolatry in this particular: Wherefore it is unnecessary to repeat it here. But taking leave of the Trees, I come next to the Fruits of the Earth; amongst which first of the Corn here called *Milbio*.

The large *Milbio* is by most taken to be the *Turkish* Wheat; which is so well known in *Holland* that it is not worth while to describe it.

The *Milbio* is here sowed and reaped twice every Year; the first Harvest is generally in *August*, and the other at the latter end of the Year, though but small: For the *Negroes* don't sow much against this time, because it is not reasonable to expect much Rain; without which this Grain will not come up well.

It were to be wished that Corn were to be produced in our Country with as little trouble as here: One, or at most, two Men can Manure and Plow as much Land as one Plow can turn up in *Holland*

Holland; besides which the Corn here very speedily takes Root.

When grown up, the Stalk is once and a half or twice Man's height; on which one, two, three and sometimes four Ears of *Milbio* grow; each of which contains about three or four hundred Grains: So that the Millet here encreases vastly more than the *European* Corn.

When the Millet is first reaped, in time of Peace, a thousand Stalks may be bought for about a Crown *English*-Money, and in some Countries for about one third or fourth part less: The Corn of these thousand Stalks being separated from the Stalks makes about five Bushels, which is a Sack and a half.

The Grain of *Milbio* is white and red; the white is the most beautiful, but the red is by most People held for the best. When this Corn is beaten small, and cleansed from the Bran, it makes indifferent good Bread, but somewhat heavy for want of Yeast. If the Millet here were ground, boulded and baked like our Corn in *Europe*, it would doubtless become very good Bread. But wanting all these Conveniencies, and Leaven being not us'd, the Bread here is very clammy and heavy. This shall suffice you for the great Millet or *Turkish* Wheat.

The second sort of *Milbio*, called by the *Portuguese* Maiz, is a Grain like the Coriander-Seed, and is made into Bread as well as the other, and very much resembles our slighter sort of Rye: It tastes very well, and is very nourishing: It grows in the same manner as the great *Milbio*, only the Stalk is not so thick, nor the Ears covered with Leaves as the other is: Wherefore it is much more exposed to the granivorous Birds than the larger, and is not sown near so much as that; for which reason it is one half dearer.

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The great as well as small *Milbio* is sowed all along the whole Coast; but least of all at *Axim*: wherefore it is always dearest there. The Country of *Ante*, in fruitful Years and time of Peace, produces prodigious Quantities: I have seen it bought, and have also bought my self, one Thousand Stems or Stalks for six, seven, eight and nine *Takoes*, each *Takoe* amounting to about four pence farthing *Englisb-Money*, and a Sack amounting at highest not to two and twenty pence. Thus Corn, in time of Peace, is the cheapest of all Provisions; but in War-time it sometimes rises to an incredible Price: I have known a Thousand Stalks sold for an Ounce of Gold, which is somewhat less than four Pounds sterling.

To which the lazyness of the *Negroes*, which is so great that they seldom sow more than what is like to be consumed that Year, contributes very much, as also the great number of *Englisb Slave-Ships* which yearly come to this Coast; for these not being so well victualled as we, they are obliged to buy *Milbio*, which yearly carries off many Thousand Sacks.

This Corn generally betwixt *February* and Harvest, rises from one Crown to one Pound sterling the thousand Stems.

Next the Tillage of Corn follows that of Rice; which is not common all over the Coast; nor is there any, or at least but very little; on the Shore of the Gold Coast any more than at *Axim* or *Ante*: But on the higher Part of the Coast it grows in such prodigious plenty, that it is easy to load a Ship with it, perfectly cleansed, for one Penny or less the Pound: Whilst at *Axim*, *Ante*, *Abocroe* and *Ancober*, the foul and unsifted bears about the same price.

It is no small Happiness for the *Negroes* of *Axim* that their Soil is so proper for Rice, which in some

some measure softens their want of *Milbio*.

Next Rice, by reason of its great advantage to the Inhabitants, is the Fruit called *Jammes*. They grow under the Earth like Turneps, and are about two Spans long, and as much in the grasp or thickness. They shoot out a long green Leaf almost like that of *French Beans*, with little prickles. This Leaf the *Negroes* so order that it climbs up Stakes appointed for that end; and by it they can determine when the Root is come to Maturity; at which time they dig it out of the Earth.

It is Snow-white within; and is roasted or boiled and eaten by the *Negroes*, as also by several *Europeans*, as Bread. Its taste is not disagreeable, being much like that of our Earth-nuts; and though not quite so sweet is dryer and firmer.

In the Country of *Ante* there grows abundance of *Jammes*, but *Saboe* is the Country which produces them in greatest plenty; whence, when in season, they are sent by Thousands to several other places. Those who buy them at *Moure* give about fourteen Shillings a hundred, and sell them again at other Places to good Profit.

The second Subterraneous Fruit here is called Potatoes; which, like the *Jammes*, also sends forth a green Leaf that runs along the Ground; Some Branches of which cut off and planted in the Ground, in a short time grow Potatoes: But the *Jammes* never grow without some of the Fruit it self be planted.

These Potatoes are of an oval shape, commonly like the large long Turneps with us: They, as well as the *Jammes*, are perfectly white within, and boiled or roasted are also eaten for Bread; especially at *Fida*, where they are the *Negroes* ordinary Diet. They are sweet, and eat much better than *Jammes*, tasting very much like our boiled Chesnuts

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The Country of *Saboe* produces the greatest Quantities of this Fruit, and next to that the Country of *Ante*; of which we may say (considering it as part of the Coast) that it wants nothing necessary to Human Life.

It is told me as Truth, that before the *Portuguese* came to this Coast, the *Negroes* subsisted themselves with these two Fruits, and a few Roots of Trees; they being then utterly ignorant of *Milho*, which was brought thither by that Nation.

I am more strongly induced to believe this, because in the Promontory of *Guinea* there are at this time Countries where no *Milho*, or at least very little is cultivated: And the Inhabitants live on the two mentioned Fruits, but more especially *Jammes*.

Thus having described the four Fruits, most necessary to the support of Mankind; it is now proper to give an account what this Country yields besides for Food, which mostly consists in several sorts of Beans: The first of which are not unlike our Garden-Beans in Figure and Taste.

The second sort are a size larger; their Cods are about three Quarter of a Yard long; and the Bean of a bright red colour.

The third sort is almost like those small Species, called in *Holland* the Princesses Beans, only they are of a deep red: These are not only very good and nourishing but very fine Food.

All these Beans grow like *French-Beans* with us, either propt up or creeping up by a Hedge.

But those which follow, grow in a very different manner: As first, a sort of small Beans here called *Foootjes*, which, like the Potatoes, run along the Ground; are enclosed in long slender Husks; and when young and green are extraordinary good eating. Here

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Here are also Beans which grow on Trees, as big as Goose-berry Bushes in *Holland*. These are shelled like green Peas, so that a large number goes to make up a Dish; but they are neither sweet nor soft.

Here is also another sort called *Gobbe-gobbes*, which grow two together in a Cod under the Earth, and shoot out a small Leaf above the surface of the Earth; these are the worst of all the sorts of Beans, and yet they are eaten by several.

The second sort of subterraneous Beans, have been known to us but a few Years, and are called *Angola* Beans, by reason they were transplanted from thence to this place. They are a very agreeable sort of Food, if fryed, as we commonly do *Chef-nuts*.

The last sort, which also grow under the Earth, are the best of all; but indeed they can hardly pass for Beans, partly because they don't grow in Cods, and partly because they are not eaten as the others are: So that *Earth-nuts* would be a more proper Name for them; for they are eaten raw out of Hand, and taste not much unlike *Hasel-nuts*. But they are commonly broken in pieces, soaked in Water, and then squeezed in a Cloath; this Liquor boiled with Rice, every where in this Country passes for Milk, and if helpt with a little Sugar, Cinamon and Butter, it would not easily be discovered to be any thing else by those who are unacquainted with this Dish.

Of such Fruits as may satisfy a delicate and luxurious Palate we have very few here. The *Anana's* are by many valued as an extraordinary Fruit; and their Nature and Beauties have been at large described: But for my part, not to despise it, I never could yet find the Delicacy in it that is pretended.

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Notwithstanding which, I shall take the pains to speak of it at large, that you may judge how far those are in the right, who have already written so much concerning it.

Besides *Linschooten* and others, *Simon de Vries* in his *Curious Observation on the wonderful Things of the East and West-Indies*, has alledged several Authors; but I need only give a plain and true Account of the true Nature, Shape and Properties and manner of growing of the *Anana's*, to shew whether he is in the right or not.

The Plant somewhat resembles the great Houleek, or *Semper-vivum majus*, which we sometimes find amongst the curious Botanists in *Holland*, from which it yet differs in the following Particulars: the *Anana's* shoot their Leaves (or that which is taken for them) upwards, being neither so broad nor so thick as the other; besides which the Leaves are furnished with sharp Prickles on each side; and are also of a deep yellow colour, and somewhat enclining to green, whereas the *Semper-vivum* is of a very beautiful green.

Betwixt the *Anana's* Leaves, before the Fruit appears, grows a Blossom about as big as a Man's Fist, which is very green, but adorned with an extraordinary beautiful red Crown, and surrounded with small Leaves, that render it very agreeable to the sight. This Blossom by slow degrees grows into an *Anana*; which at first is green, accompanied with yellow Leaves, but in ripening changes to a perfect yellow; and when we eat the *Anana's*, the mentioned Leaves with which it is surrounded are cut off with the Shell. The Crown, or at least a part of it, remains firmly fixed to the Fruit, though changed to a yellowish colour. Before and round about the *Anana's*, small Sprigs shoot out, which are planted to continue the Species of this
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Vegetable. Thus much may suffice for the Plant.

The *Anana's*, or Fruit, is about a Span long, and about the same thickness: but as it happens to other Fruits some are large and others small.

Most of the Authors *de Vries* cites agree in the taste of this Fruit; to which I can easily subscribe, taking the Liberty to add, that though it may for a little while seem a delicacy, yet if frequently eaten it will soon nauseate. It proves most agreeable and healthful when eaten with Cinamon, Sugar and Wine, like Straw-berries; for it is too hot to eat alone: Wherefore *Monardus* was mistaken in ascribing to them a cold Quality; when, indeed, it inflames to that degree, that its sharp Juice causes those to spit Blood who eat them too freely. But though this sharp hot Juice forces Blood from the Throat and Gums; yet that they are so corrosive as to dissolve a Knife that remains stuck in it but half an hour, is so ridiculously false, that if instead of half an Hour, the Knife remained a whole Year, it would not be dissolved. It is indeed true, that the Knife will be blunted; which also happens in the cutting of a Citron, Lemon, Orange, Backoven or Banana's, and more especially the last Fruit, if it is not thoroughly ripe: So that this acidity cannot justly be appropriated to the *Anana's* only.

I cannot quit this Subject without noting a gross mistake of the before-mentioned Authors. *Linschooten* first tells us, that the *Anana's* grow a fathom above Ground; and others inform us, that they grow half under. But both are miserably in the wrong: This Plant really not being above one foot and half in height, and the Stalk half a foot; which together amount to two foot, which

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which is far short of a fathom and more, if they make it grow so much under Ground.

All the pains I have thus far taken in the Description of the *Anana's*, was a force I put upon my Inclinations; and if any one please to assert that this Plant in *Asia* or *America* is of a different Nature, they are at liberty to do it: Whilst I am abundantly satisfied from Travellers in both those Parts of the World that there is no real difference.

Next the *Anana's* I shall place the Water-Melons; about which, though much the nobler and more agreeable Fruit, I shall not detain you so long. The immature and yet small Water-Melon is white within and green without; but when ripe its green Coat is speckled with white, and its internal whiteness somewhat intermixed with red; and the more it participates of the latter, it is by so much the riper and more agreeable; at which time, if eaten, it proves very delicious, watry, refreshing and cooling.

This Fruit is less prejudicial to, and much more proper for a Feverish Person than the *Anana's*. When green it is eaten as Salade, instead of Cucumbers; to which it is not wholly unlike; being also furnished with such Kernels: which when ripe are changed black, and are then fit to plant.

The Water-Melons grow in the same manner as Cucumbers, but bear a different Leaf. They are about twice as big as our Melons; and if the *Negroes* were not too idle, this Fruit would be very plenty here: But at present they are only cultivated by some of our chief Officers; so that the Comonalty reap but small advantage thereby.

They are in their prime in *July* and *August*, and in fruitful Years we have them twice.

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These are all our best Fruits in this Country; but that I may be able to say that I have omitted nothing whether good or bad, I shall not pass over the following Species.

The first of which is *Malagueta*, otherwise called Paradise-Grains or *Guinea Pepper*; a Fruit which is generally known. It grows on Shrubs in red Shells or Husks, which at a distance afford a very pleasant Prospect. Within these Husks is contained the *Malagueta* separated into four or five divisions, and covered by a white Film. This *Guinea Pepper* grows also in a different manner, not unlike large Grass Reeds.

Here grows also a Fruit on Shrubs, which in taste and figure resembles *Cardamum*; which I doubt not but it is.

At *Benin* and In-land, there is Pepper in figure like that of *East-India*.

The last sort of Pepper called here *Piment*, and in *Europe Spanish Pepper*, grows here in abundance on Shrubs, almost of the same size, though somewhat lower than our Goose-berry Bushes in *Holland*.

This *Piment* is of two sorts, viz. great and small; both of which are first green, but afterwards change colour, the small to a beautiful red, and the large to a red and black; and are both very pleasant Objects.

This Fruit is much hotter than common Pepper, especially the smaller sort, which is not above one fourth part of the size of the other; in recompence of which the Trees on which it grows are about six times as high and wider extended than the other.

Piment pickled in Vinegar and Lime-Juice (but best in the last) is valued by several as a good corroborative to the Stomach, and very wholesome.

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This

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This Country produces none of those green Herbs common in Europe, except Tarragon and Tobacco; of both which here is great plenty, especially of the last, which stinks so abominably that it is impossible for one that is even not very nice to continue near the Negroes when they smoke this Devilish Weed; which yet agrees very well with them.

Some of them have Pipes made of Reeds, which are about six foot long; to the end of which is fixed a Stone or Earthen Bowl, so large that they cram in two or three handfuls of Tobacco; which Pipe thus filled they without ceasing can easily smoke out; and they are not put to hold their Pipe, for being so long it rests on the Ground.

All the In-land Negroes take this Tobacco, but those who live amongst us and daily converse with the Europeans, have Portuguese or rather Brasil Tobacco; which, though a little better, yet stinks to a great degree.

Both the Male and Female of the Negroes, are so very fond of this Tobacco, that they will part with the very last Penny which should buy them Bread, and suffer hunger rather than be without it; which so enhances the price, that for a Portuguese Fathom, which is much less than one pound of this Trash, they will give five Shillings, or a Gold Quarter of a Jacobus.

Let us therefore rather praise those Smoakers (my good Friend) who take the noble Spanish or Virginia Tobacco; but as for those stupid Wretches who content themselves with the Amorsfort Weed, I heartily wish, as a Punishment of their depraved Taste, that during their Lives they may never smoke better than our Negroes, and Brasil on Sundays and Holidays; yet under condition they be obliged to keep Company with

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with each other, and be banished the Company of genteel Smoakers. But this by the way only.

The Tobacco-Leaf here grows on a Plant about two Foot high, and is of the length of two or three Hands breadth, and the breadth of one, bears a small Bell-flower; which when ripe turns to Seed.

To conclude, I will add a Fruit which grows in lofty Trees, is rather larger than a Wall-nut, and furnished with much such a Shell: The Kernel is divided into several parts; of which some are red others white.

Not only the Negroes, but also some of the Europeans are infatuated to this Fruit: We call it Kool or Cabbage, and the Negroes Boesi: It is chewed in the Mouth; and after the Juice is sucked out, the remainder is spit out.

Its taste is very harsh and almost bitter, and draws the Chewer's Mouth almost close: And its sole Virtue is Diuretick; but its Admirers pretend it helps to relish the Palm-Wine: Though both Reasons are not sufficient to engage me to the use of it. It is commonly eaten with Salt and Malagueta.

If I had been obliged to bestow a Name on this wretched Fruit, I should rather have called it the African Beetel or Anca, which would have been much properer than Cabbage; since whatever I have heard concerning the Indian Beetel or Anca, exactly agrees with the Taste and Virtue of this Fruit.

I might very well leave off here, as not conscious of any important Omission in the Description of the Gold Coast of Guinea: But lest you should accuse my Performance, as Spiritless, Insipid and Saltless, I shall make bold in the Conclusion of this Letter, to set as much Salt before

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fore you as will stock you for House-keeping for one Hundred Years: What think you, is not that enough?

It is not to be imagined what vast Riches the Negroes get by boiling of Salt; and if they were always, or for the most part in Peace, those who follow that Employment would in a short time amass unweildy Summs; for all the In-land Negroes are obliged to fetch their Salt from the Shore; from whence it is easie to infer that it must cost them very dear: Wherefore the meaner sort are obliged to make use of a certain saltish Herb instead of Salt, which their Purfes will not reach.

Some Miles Inland beyond Ardra, from whence most of the Slaves are brought; one, nay, sometimes two Slaves are sold for a handful of Salt: So that Human Flesh is there very cheap.

The manner of Salt-boiling is as follows. Some boil the Salt-Water so long in Coppers till it comes to Salt; but as this is the most tedious, so it is not the most profitable way, and is practiced only where the Land is so high that the Sea or Salt-Rivers cannot possibly flow over them: But at other Places where the Sea or River Water frequently over-flows, they dig deep Pits to receive the mentioned over-flowing Water; after which the freshest and finest part of the Water is dryed up by the scorching Heat of the Sun. I know this contradicts the Hypothesis of a certain Author, but he ought to know also that the Ground being here saltish and nitrous, a small quantity of Water will make better Salt, and that quicker than a great deal; which renders this place the more fit to produce a great deal of Salt in a small time.

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In other places they have Salt-Pans, where the Sun dryes up the Water, so that the trouble of boiling is unnecessary; no pains being required except that only of gathering it out of the mentioned Pans.

Those who are either unable or unwilling to buy Copper-Boilers, or when the Sea Water requires such tedious boiling as would burn them: These, I say, use Earthen-Pots, which they set ten or twelve next another; thus making two rows, being all cemented together with Clay as if they had been done by a Brick-layer; and under the mentioned Pots is something like a Furnace of Fire; which is continually supplied with Wood. This is the most laborious way and produces neither so much Salt, nor so much expedition as the other.

In all Parts of this Coast, except Acra, the Salt is very white, but more especially in the Country of Fantyn, where it almost excels even Snow it self.

Thus much for this time, and when another opportunity offers, perhaps I may present you with an Account of the Country of Ardra; though I will not assure you of any thing, but that I am really Yours, &c.

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LETTER XVII.

Which, by way of Supplement to the former, describes first a Snake taken at Axim, that was twenty two foot long; also another not much less at Boutry. A strange Engagement betwixt a Snake and two Porcupines at Moure. Another Accident with a Serpent which blinded an European with his Venom. The Tygers here; a Boy torn in pieces by them. The Author's Tyger-Hunting, and how he came to kill him at last. A Description of the Jackals. A remarkable Adventure with an Elephant killed at Elmina. A Description of a certain Spider which the Negroes call Ananse, and imagine that it created the first Man.

S I R,

IN my former Letters, I have several times promised you to speak more particularly concerning this, or t'other Animal; and more especially our Elephant and Tyger-Hunting. All which Promises this shall discharge; but first of all I am enclined to say something concerning the Serpents or Snakes.

About eleven Years past the Negroes of Axim took and killed a Snake that was two and twenty foot long; which being opened a full-grown Deer was found in his Intraills.

About the same time another was killed at Boutry, not much shorter than the former; in whose Body a Negroe was found. Some

Some of my Servants once going to the Country beyond Mouree, found a Snake seventeen foot long, and very bulky, lying about a Pit of Water, perhaps to divert himself; near which were two Porcupines; betwixt which and the Snake began a very sharp Engagement, each shooting very violently in their way, the Snake his Venom and the Porcupines their Quills of two Spans long, for with such they were armed. My Men having seen this Fight a considerable time, without being observed by the furious Combatants (in the Heat of the Battle) after having loaded their Musquets, let fly upon the three Champions to so good purpose that they killed them all, and brought them to Mouree, where they were devoured by them and their Comrades as a very great delicacy.

Whilst our Fort was repairing at Mouree, the Work-men perceiv'd a great Snake behind a heap of Stones; to get him from thence, they removed many of the Stones so that half his Body was cleared; a Mason, the forwardest in this Enterprize, laid hold of his Tail, designing to pull him out from betwixt the Stones; but finding that impracticable, cut off as much of his Body as was in reach with his Knife; and believing he had disabled him from doing any farther mischief, without the least shadow of fear removed the remainder of the Stones; but as soon as the Snake was at liberty to turn himself, he clung about the Mason (who thought to have caught him in his Hand) and spit his Venom all over his Face: Which proved so forcible that the Fellow at that very instant became stark blind; in which condition he remained some Days, but was at last restored to his sight. This I have frequently observed, especially in Negroes, who upon being struck by a Serpent have

have swelled extremely but soon asswaged and returned to their former Estate : So that I am apt to think that the poisonous Nature of Snakes is very different, the bite of some being Mortal, others only Wounding ; and that there are another sort which are as harmless as those of *Fida*.

Of this last Species is that which hangs in the Director-General's Hall, which is fourteen foot long, and was taken in our Garden at *Elmina* by an *Ardrase* or *Fidase* Slave, with his bare Hands without any Stick or Weapon, and by him so brought alive into the Castle. We found at the lower part of his Belly two Claws like those of Birds ; which, I suppose, served him either to erect himself upright or to leap. But of him enough, since I have already said something of him in my last Letter but two. Wherefore we shall now apply our selves to the

Tygers, which here do the most mischief, and are extraordinary fierce. Some Years past a Boy that belong'd to our Factor at *Sacondee*, going but a little way from the Factory was killed by one of them.

At the same time and place a *Negroe* going Inland with his Hatchet in his Hand to cut some Wood, met a Tyger which fell upon him, but he being a dextrous Fellow, so well defended himself with his Hatchet that after a long scuffle he conquered and killed the Tyger ; but did not come off unhurt, for his whole Body looked as if some Body had begun to flea him.

In the Year 1693. when I commanded in the said Fort, some of my *Kabriets* (for so we call Sheep) as well as those of my Neighbour the *English* Factor, were for several Nights killed by a Tyger ; which at last grew so bold that he came at three in the Afternoon to the lodge
and

and killed a couple of Sheep. I perceived him time enough, and assisted by my Gunner, two *English*-Men, and a Party of *Negroes* all armed with good Musquets, I pursu'd him, and in a short time overtook him, though not so soon but that he had opportunity to fly to a small Thicket of Under-woods, which we immediately beset : My Gunner adventured into the Thicket to find whereabouts he lurked, but in half a quarter of an Hour came running back like a distracted Man, having left his Hat and Slippers behind him after being also bitten ; but to his very good Fortune the Tyger intending to have seized him was so affrighted by the falling Branches, that he gave him opportunity to make his escape ; and the Tyger kept the Wood.

One of the *English*-men impatient at waiting so long, resolved to march into the Wood with his Musquet, if possible to dislodge him. The Tyger, which was but too soon aware of him, suffered him to approach close to him, upon which he fell upon him with extreme Fury, seizing him with his Feet by the Shoulder-blade, and fixing his Teeth in his Side, and would, without doubt, immediately have torn him in pieces, if by crying out he had not drawn me with a Party of *Negroes* to his assistance ; which obliged the Tyger to quit his Prey.

Notwithstanding which he was so miserably handled that he lay senseless about half a Day, which was partly occasioned by the Venom of the Bite, and partly by the Fright.

The *Negroes* were so terrified at the ill success of this Enterprize, that utterly bereft of all courage each quitted his Post where he was appointed to watch ; which afforded the Tyger an opportunity of escape, which he soon attempted ; but in his flight out of the Thicket happened something very odd. The

The Under-Factor of the *English* Fort had long called out and promised me (for this Adventure happened just under that Fort) that he would come to my assistance, and the very moment the Tyger quitted the Wood, being as good as his Word, he came with his Musquet in his Hand. But the Tyger seeing him alone before him, made to him; upon which the *English*-man instead of coming to us, run as fast as his Legs would carry him back towards their Fort; but affrighted and tired with hard running he fell over a Stone about half a Musquet-shot from home. The Tyger had already overtook him, when we stood trembling at a distance imagining he would immediately tear him in pieces; but he coming up to him, instead of attacking turned from him and took his flight forwards In-land, soon getting out of our sight.

I can give no other Reason why he did not fall on the *English*-man, than that perhaps he was afraid of us who followed him with a great Cry, if possible to terrifie him; for it was not practicable to shoot at him, by reason he was too near the *English*-man, and we might as well have chanced to have hit the one as the other: Or perhaps the Beast thought he had Honour enough by having his Enemy under Foot; with which he being satisfied, retired.

Thus ended this Chace, and I don't desire such another; for I have several times been in danger that the *Negroes* by their Random-shot shou'd hit me instead of the Tyger.

This Tyger was not hereby deterred from coming again some Days after, and killing some Sheep, which provoked me to attempt another way to catch him that I had seen in the Country of *Ante*.

I

I caused a parcel of very thick Pallisadoes to be cut; of which I made a sort of Cage of twelve foot long and four broad, covering it also on the top with Pallisadoes; to bind which the firmer I laid a thousand pound Weight of Stone on it, to prevent his breaking out above. Then I caused a double Plank Door to be made for my Cage, and in one of the Corners I made a lesser Cage, which took up one fourth of the room of the whole; in which I placed a couple of small Hogs: after which I set the Door like our Rat-Traps in such a manner that the Tyger could not come in to seize the Hogs without throwing it down and shutting himself in: When it would be impossible for him to come at the Hogs by reason of the Pallisadoes which fenced them in their little Cage.

This Stratagem succeeded so well that three Days after I had finished my Trap I caught the Tyger in it at Midnight. But instead of roaring, as I imagined he would, immediately he set his Teeth at work, if possible to eat his way out of Prison; which he had certainly done if he had had but one half Hours time; for he had soon rent the inner from the outer Door, and eaten the Pallisadoes half through when I interrupted him in his work; and not to dally with fruitless shooting, I clapt the Muzzle of my Musquet loaded with three Balls betwixt the Pallisadoes; at which he furiously caught, and so furnished me with a very favourable opportunity to dispatch him at one shot; by which I punished his Thievery and Murder.

We found him about the size of a common Calf; well provided with large Teeth and Claws.

This Tyger-catching obliged us with a Feast of eight Days; for by the custom of the *Antese* Country

Country, he that catches a Tyger is privileged for eight Days to seize all the Palm-Wine which is brought to the Market, without paying any thing for it; which accordingly we did, and the whole mentioned eight Days were spent by the *Negroes* in shooting, dancing, leaping, and all manner of publick Jollity.

The Country of *Axim*, but much more that of *Ante*, is full of Tygers. They frequently in the Night-time come not only under, but also into our Forts, and do a great deal of mischief, making no difficulty of leaping over a Wall of ten foot high.

Before I leave this Subject I cannot help refuting the Opinion of some People, that the Tyger is so afraid of Fire, that without any other Arms than that alone 'tis possible to drive him away. I was once of this erroneous Opinion my self, but have been convinced of the contrary by experience.

For after having received a Visit or two from a Tyger; to affright him for the future, I kindled a great Fire where the Sheep used to sleep in the Night; but not sufficiently relying on that, I ordered five of my Servants to lye by the Fire, with loaded Arms: But notwithstanding all this the Tyger came in the Night and killed a Sheep between my two Lads, who were fallen asleep, and was moving towards the Fire, when my Servants awakened with the Cry of the Sheep immediately flew up, intending to let fly at him, but he immediately run away.

From hence it appears that the Tyger is just as much afraid of Fire, as the Devil of the Cross; and this Accident confirms the Report of the *Negroes*, that this Beast will never attack a Man when he can come at a Beast, for otherwise he could more easily have fell on my two Boys than a Sheep. Next

Next the Tyger in fierceness is the Jackal or wild Dog; of which I have already spoken in the Description of *Acra*. I had an opportunity of gratifying my Curiosity with a sight of it in the Year 1700. when the present King of *Commany's* Servants having shot one, were so civil as to bring it to the Castle: He was as big as a Sheep, with longer Legs; which in proportion to their size were very thick; whence you may judge of his Strength: He was covered with short Hair, which was spotted; his Head was very large, flat and broad, provided with Teeth, each of which was a Fingers breadth and more: So that in all probability his greatest Strength is lodged in his Mouth and Legs; joined to which he also hath terrible Claws.

I will here present you with an Example of the fierce Boldness of this Brute which happened at *Acra*; where one of these Beasts by Night boldly came into a *Negroes* House, and took away a Female *Negroe*; which he flung upon his Back, and held her fast with one Leg, intending to proceed on his Journey with his Prey halting upon three Legs: But the Cries of the poor Captive waked a parcel of *Negroes*, and brought them to her relief; which they soon effected, and found her only a little hurt by the Claw with which he held her fast.

I shall now add something concerning the Elephant; of which I have in one of my former Letters told you that unprovoked he very seldom falls on Mankind, but when urged to it falls on with wondrous Fierceness. Both which I shall here confirm by a couple of Instances; and shew you how difficult it is to kill them.

Beyond *Axim* a *Negroe* that was accustomed to the Elephant-Chace, and had killed several, endeavouring to shoot at one, but missing his shot

shot by a flash in the Pan, the Elephant grew so enraged, that he pursu'd, set on him and broke him and his Musquet to pieces.

The second Accident is more remarkable, and may serve as an instruction to others that for the future they be not too rash.

In the Year 1700. in December at six in the Morning, an Elephant came here to *Elmina*, walking easily along the Shore under the Hill of *St. Jago*: Some *Negroes* were so bold as to go against him without any thing in their Hands; in a sort to welcome and bring him in. He suffered them to encompass him, and very quietly went along with them to just under Mount *St. Jago*: Where one of our Officers belonging to that Hill, and a *Negroe* which came down with him, fired on him immediately; and the Officer's Ball hit him above his Eye. This and the following shot which the *Negroes* poured on him were so far from provoking him that they did not move him to mend his Pace in the least, he only seemed to threaten the *Negroes* betwixt whiles, but still let them alone.

It was surprizing when he threatned to fall on the Men, to see him prick up his Ears; which were of a prodigious size: However he went on, and lastly stept into our Garden, expecting perhaps civiler Treatment there.

This extraordinary Accident, and our own Curiosity, drew the Director-General and my self into the Garden; and we were soon followed by some of our People. We found him standing in the midst of the Garden; where, before our coming, he had broke down four or five Cocotrees; which number, either to divert himself or shew us his Strength, he augmented with five or six more in our presence. The Strength which he seemed to use in breaking down a Tree may
very

ery fittly be compared to the force which a Man exerts in order to knock down a Child of three or fours Years old.

Whilst he stood here above one hundred Shot were fired at him, which made him bleed to that degree, as if an Ox had been killed. During all which he did not stir, but only set up his Ears, and made the Men apprehend that he would follow them.

But this sport was accompanied with a Tragical Event; for a *Negroe* fancying himself able to deal with him, went softly behind him, caught his Tail in his Hand, designing to cut a piece of it off; but the Elephant being used to wear a Tail, would not permit it to be shortned in his Life-time: Wherefore after giving the *Negroe* a stroke with his Snout, he drew him to him, and trod upon him two or three times; and, as if that was not sufficient, he bored in his Body two holes with his Teeth, large enough for a Man's double Fist to enter. Then he let him lye without making any farther attempt on him; and stood still also whilst two *Negroes* fetched away the dead Body, not offering to meddle with them in the least.

From both these Instances it is sufficiently clear, that unprovoked they do not often hurt any Body; but that they grow very fierce when shot at and missed doth not so plainly appear, since this Elephant suffered above three hundred shot to be made at him, without any sign of being enraged or resistance: But as the same Actions have not always the same Success, I should be loth from hence to advise any Person rashly to fire at an Elephant, since this vast number of Shot which were thundred at him were not sufficient to fetch him down; and those who pretend throughly to understand the Elephant-shooting

shooting told us, that we ought to have shot Iron-Bullets, since those of Lead are flatted, either by their Bones or the toughness of their Skin.

This seems probable; for after his Death we found of the vast Quantity of Shot levelled at him very few had passed the Bone into his Head. Some remained betwixt the Skin and the Bone; most of them, and more especially the small Shot, was thrown of by his Hide as if they had been shot against a Wall. The Bullets were certainly too small, since what the *English* Factor told me, was confirmed by others, that as he was in the River *Gamby* in a *Canoa*, he killed an Elephant, which pursued him, with one Shot only. For to imagine that none of the Balls hit him in the proper place is not very reasonable, since in such a great number at least one must hit right, as appeared after his Death.

After the Elephant had killed the *Negroes* (which happened not above sixteen Paces from us) and had been about an Hour in the Garden, he wheeled about as if he intended to fall on us, which made all that were in the Garden to fly, each endeavouring to secure himself by getting away; but the greatest part made to Mount *St. Jago*; thinking indeed, with Reason, that if they could reach that, they should be safe: but the Elephant followed no Body out of the Garden, which was very fortunate; for otherwise amongst such a number of People he had undoubtedly made a great slaughter, since no Body by swift running could have escaped him; which I believe on Horse-back is scarce to be done.

We all flew out of the Garden, as I have told you, through the Fore-door, and the Elephant took to the Back-door; which, whether in his way, or whether it was too narrow for him to pass, I can't tell, but he flung the Door, tho' a brick and half thick,

thick a good distance; which I had the good fortune to see a good way off, but could not observe that to do that he very much exerted himself, but rather seemed only to touch it lightly.

After which he did not pass through the Gap where the Door had been, but forced through the Garden Hedge, going very softly by Mount *St. Jago* towards the River, where he bathed himself in order to wash off the Blood with which he was besmeared, or to cool himself after the heat occasioned by so much shot.

After having refreshed himself a little in the River, he came out and stood under some Trees where were some of our Water-Tubs; where he also cooled himself, and broak them in pieces, as he did also a *Canoa* which lay by them.

Whilst the Elephant stood here the shooting began to be renewed, till at last he fell down; after which they immediately cut off his Snout, which was so hard and tough that it cost the *Negroes* thirty Stroaks ere they could separate it, which must be very painful to the Elephant, since it made him roar; which was the only Noise I heard him make: After this he died under the mentioned Tree; confirming the report of the *Negroes*, who tell us that whenever an Elephant finds his Death approaching, if able, he always gets under a Tree or into a Wood.

For the Truth of which, though I will not be obliged to answer, it hath yet thrice happened at *Elmina*: And at *Gabon* I found a dead Elephant in a pleasant Thicket; of which more hereafter.

The Elephant was no sooner dead, than the *Negroes* fell on him in Crouds; each cutting off as much as he could; so that he furnished a great many as well Whites as Blacks with Food enough for that Day.

He was not very large; his Teeth not weighing above four and thirty pound. Thus we had the Diversion to have a near view of an Elephant, and to see him partly exert his strength; and the Pleasure had

A Description of the, &c. LET XVII

had been much greater, if not allayed by the misfortune of the poor *Negroes*, though it was his own fault. Hence we began to reflect to what danger we had exposed our selves by venturing so near the Elephant; for had he but once grown furious, his rage would doubtless have cost several Mens Lives, and perhaps we should have fallen the first, not being so swift of foot as the *Negroes*; besides, all making one way, we should have been in the way, and obstructed one anothers flight.

Upon this consideration we resolved never for the future to come so near an Elephant; to which I would not advise any Man who hath the least tenderness for his Life.

Whilst I am writing this, an Accident that happened to me at *Mouree* occurs to my Memory; which obliges me to add what follows. Going to my Chamber at Night in order to go to Bed, I found an hideous great Spider against the Wall. On account of the strangeness of the Spectacle, I called my Sub-factor, and both my Assistants to see it. We found his Body long, and his Head sharp, broader in the fore than hind-part, but not round as most sort of Spiders are. His Legs were as large as a Man's Finger, ten in number, being hairy, and the thicknels of a little finger.

The *Negroes* call this Spider *Ananse*, and believe that the first Men were made by that Creature: And notwithstanding some of them by Conversation with the *Europeans* are better informed, there are yet a great number, that remain of that Opinion; out of which Folly they are not to be reasoned. This is the greatest piece of Ignorance and Stupidity that I have observed the *Negroes* guilty of; which I have once already hinted to you.

Be pleased, Sir, to take this Letter as a Supplement to the Description of the Gold Coast; on which Subject you are to expect no more. And what rests is that you continue always assured, of,
Sir, Yours, &c.

A

A
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
Slave Coast.

LETTER XVIII.

Which first treats briefly of the Country of Quahoe, which is abundantly enriched with Gold: After that of the Kingdom of Ladingcour, and Country of Lampi; whose King and Subjects are submitted to the Obedience of Aquamboe: This Country affording very great plenty of all sorts of Cattle: Of the Slave Trade there. Agriculture and Fishery. A Copious Description of Rio Volta. The small Force of Lampi, or the Cotose King; and their continual Wars with those of Popo. The Land is dry Sand, without Hills, and very Barren. Slave Trade there. The Inhabitants conversible and good natured. Their Poverty; they live chiefly by robbery. The Multitudes of Idols here. A Description of little Popo; its Barrenness. Of its Inhabitants, those which are banished Acra, are good Soldiers. Their War with those of Offra and Fida; what passed therein. They also live upon Spoil and Slave Trade. Their Villanous Nature; and some Instances of their Cheating.

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A Description of the LET. XVIII.

ing. Formerly a great Trade was driven at this Place. Multitudes of Rats. A Description of great Popo, which was subject to Fida, but is revolted from it. Their Wars occasioned thereby; in which they were Victorious. Popo an Island, wants Provisions. Slave Trade there; our Company formerly had a Lodge there. Popo is accounted to be in the Country of Ardra. Where the Country of Fida begins. The violent Burning of the Sea before it, does a great deal of mischief. Some Instances of it. The strong Current before Fida, stops the Ships. Pleasant Prospect of the Entrance of that Country. Extent of it. It is well cultivated and very Fertile. Description of Fida; Nature of the Inhabitants; their Civility as well to us as to one another. Their Compliments. They are very Laborious. Their Occupations. Womens Work. They eat and drink well. Work for small Wages. Great Slave Trade there. The Men marry many Wives; of which they are very Jealous. Severe Punishment inflicted for lying with another Man's Wife; especially the King's; which must not be touched, and some not permitted to be seen. Great number of the King's Wives, of which he sometimes sends away a good many, without his Number being diminished. The Women not fond of being the King's Wife. The eldest Son is sole Heir to his Father's Estate as well as to his Father's Wives. The King married his own Daughter. Multitude of Children here. Thievish Nature of the People here; some Examples of it. Their rich Cloathing. Red colour prohibited to be worn by any not of the Royal Blood. Convenient Habit of the Women. All their Heads are shorn. Great Offerings in time of Sickness. They are extremely afraid of Death; which must not be so much as mentioned in presence of the King, or any of the Chief Men. An agreeable Adventure of the Author's on that Account. The Inhabitants of Fida make no distinction of time; are natu-

LET. XVIII. Slave Coast of Guinea.

natural Arithmeticians. Menstruous Women utterly unclean. Their Circumcision. Musical Instruments: They are great Gamesters.

S I R,

Yours of the 25th. reach'd me in good time; and reading at the very first your Thanks, I flatter'd my self that you were pleas'd with the Description of the Gold Coast, which I imparted to you; but going on I found my self mistaken, and that you would not be so easily satisfied, but farther desire an Account of those Countries, where our Company, and other Nations, drive their Slave Trade: And that I might not want an Employment, you add a Supplemental Request, that I would lay the whole Coast of Guinea before you. Well, my Friend, was it not enough to set me such a Task, but you must also rally me and acquaint me that Idleness in this Country is very prejudicial to my Health? which to preserve of consequence it is absolutely Necessary to have something to do, as if I wanted Employment, besides this you have found me: If you think that any Person of an active Genius can want Business here, I dare assure you that you will find your self mistaken. Idleness here, and I believe all the World over, is only the Lot of those Idiots, which scarce know either what they do, or wherefore they live: And to let you see that I am none of those, I shall answer your Demand, by writing you not only what I have my self observed of these Countries; but also what ever is considerable in those Places where I have never been, nor never desire to come; though I am not willing to be Security for the Truth of all which I shall say: But yet I dare averr, that the Persons from whom I have my Informations are so creditable, that I should freely rely on their Words in Things of much

much greater Importance ; and therefore believe that nothing preposterous will be found in the Relations.

So as I have received my Information, I shall faithfully transmit it to you, without adding any thing of my own ; but if their Method displease me or disagree with what I have hitherto observed, I shall make bold to change it a little ; and this is the utmost alteration I intend. And that you may know before-hand what Countries they are which you will find described from the Information of others in the following recital ; be pleased to observe, that the Description of the Country from *Ardra* through the whole Gulph of *Guinea* to *Rio de Gabon*, with the Tract of Land West of the Gold Coast, and from the Gold River to *Cabo Monte*, is not mine. But all the rest you may take for my own ; no part of which is the result of any thing but my own Observation.

This being, in my Opinion, a sufficient Advertisement, I shall begin with a Description of the remaining part of *Guinea*, through which I have travelled.

Be pleased to remember that in my fifth Letter I ended the whole Gold Coast, with the Village of *Ponni*, though the Gold is brought to us from the Country a little lower, namely out of *Quaboe*, which abounds with that Metal, and is situate beyond that Tract of Land ; but by reason of the small Acquaintance I have with that Country, as also because its Inhabitants go through *Aquamboe* to *Acra*, where they drive the greatest part of their Trade : Passing over this I shall confine my self to the Sea-side only, telling you withal the Tract of Land betwixt *Ponni* and *Rio Volta* is about thirteen Miles long, being inhabited by the *Negroes* of *Acra*, *Lampi* and *Aquamboe*.

Those

Those of *Lampi* have a King of their own, with the Title of King of *Ladingcour* ; though in reality he and his Subjects (if they may be so called) depend intirely on the King of *Aquamboe*, according to whose Will and Pleasure he is obliged to regulate himself ; for upon the least disgust, which he or his People give to those of *Aquamboe*, they are so severely punished that the remembrance of it remains for several Years ; which is yet stiled a mild and merciful Chastisement : For when-ever the King of *Aquamboe* takes a fancy to it, he makes nothing of cutting them a foot shorter ; which Punishment they are forced to submit to without murmuring ; he having at least as despotick a Power over them as his own Subjects.

The Country hereabouts is indifferent Populous and Fertile, but extraordinarily stord with Cattle, as Cows, Hogs, Sheep, besides Chicken, &c. All which are here daily bought very cheap by the Blacks of the Gold Coast, to transport to the upper Coast.

The remaining Trade of these People consists in Slaves ; which are also bought up by the mentioned *Negroes* : But most of them are transported hence by the *English*, *French* and *Portuguese* Ships. Sometimes the Slave Trade here proves very advantageous, especially about the Village *Ley*.

It sometimes happens that when the In-land Countries are at Peace, here are no Slaves to be got : So that the Trade of this Place is utterly uncertain ; and it only serves to touch at in our Passage this way, without depending on any thing from it.

Besides Trade, the Inhabitants employ themselves in Agriculture and Fishing ; the first of which proves reasonably profitable ; but the Fishery, especially that on the Sea, turns to no, or at most, but small account ; for the Shoar here is very high

high and of very difficult Access: Wherefore it is sometimes unapproachable with small *Canoas*; but the want of Sea-Fish is here abundantly compensated by the Lakes or Rivers, which are extraordinary richly stocked with Fish.

Rio Volta, probably so called by the *Portuguese*, by reason of its rapid Course and Reflux, bounds this Tract of Land.

This is a fine wide River, discharging its Waters so violently into the Sea, that it is sometimes visible three or four Miles from the Shoar. How far this River extends its Course In-land is to me unknown. The extraordinary rapid Reflux into the Sea, continually carries great numbers of Trees along with it; which sticking fast at the Mouth of the River, occasion a very high Burning of extraordinary violence, as well as lofty Agitations of the Waves: So that this place is passable with *Canoas* but twice in the Year, and that is commonly betwixt *April* and *November*, the Weather being then still upon the Coast; which generally is just before the rainy Season, when consequently the Reflux of the River is not so swift: But after the Rains 'tis not possible to persuade a *Negroe* to venture, though they are continually used to pass in their Boats along the shoar, which here, by reason of the mentioned Burnings, they can't do.

I have four times passed by this River on Board of Shipping, and each time some of our People were sent Aloft, that by discerning the Mouth of this River, they might see whether we had passed it or no; and they commonly called to us from Aloft, that they saw its Mouth, and that they were right before it, and at it, or a little way East or West of it; which the Masters of the Ships, through Ignorance, and I, as well as they, firmly believed.

But

But in the Year 1699. coming in a *Canoa* from *Fida*, I caused my self to be rowed as close to the shore as possible, and as the Burnings would permit; but as curious and exact as we were in our Observation, we could descry no Mouth, nor the least opening; but discovered the Truth of what one of my Servants (who had performed this Journey by Land) told me, that this River at a small distance from the Shoar, and throughout is prodigious wide; but that Westward 'tis thwarted by a whole Tract of Land, which leaves it but a small opening or passage: And it is Natural enough to believe that by reason of the wideness within, and the violent Reflux of this River; the Ebb which passes this small Mouth must be much stronger than if this Passage were proportioned to the size of the River. But enough of this.

Eastward of this River, the *Cotose* Country, by most called the Land of *Lampi*, beginneth. From this River to the Village *Coto* or *Verhou*, is about fourteen *Dutch* Miles: The Village having formerly been the place of Residence of the King of *Coto*, where I saw and spoke with him in the Year 1698.

This Kingdom is very inconsiderable in Strength, which yet abates daily by its Wars with *Popo*; that have continued for some Years successively; and they being pretty even in Force, unless they make Peace, their dispute is not like to be ended before one of them engages some other Country to their assistance.

But *Aquamboe*, who would keep them both on foot, takes care that neither be destroyed, by sending assistance of Forces to the weakest side.

When *Aquamboe* was governed by two Chiefs, as I have formerly told you, those of *Popo* had a strong Supporter of the Old, as they of *Coto* of the young King; thus each side was continually furnished with *Aquamboean* Props. But

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But how it will go with them when the old King is dead, time will inform us. Those of little *Popo* in 1700. watched their opportunity, and surprizing those of *Coto*, fell upon them and obliged them to quit their Country; but I doubt not but those of *Aquamboe* will soon reinstate them, and clap a Bridle into the Mouth of the *Popoceans*.

The Land of *Coto* is of a direct contrary sort of Nature to that of the Gold Coast; for as the latter is full of Hills, so the former hath not one: But the Soil is very flat, sandy, dry, barren and void of all Trees, except the Palm or Wild Coco, of which it produceth a great number.

This Land is tolerably provided with Cattle, at least as many as are sufficient to supply its Inhabitants.

River-Fish is not wanting here, but they can get none out of the Sea, by reason of the violent Burnings which extends from this place to *Ardra*, and farther along the whole Coast.

Their Trade is that of Slaves; of which they are able sometimes to deliver a good number, but yet not so many as to lade a Ship.

I found the Inhabitants here very good-natured and civil. I received several Civilities from them, especially from the King: When I told him that after having accomplished my Merchandise at *Fida*, I designed to return by Land; he offered to come himself with his whole Force to receive me on the Borders of his Territories, and to conduct me beyond *Rio Volta* in order to secure me from any mischief from the strolling Robbers. I thankfully accepted this kind Offer, and I should certainly have made use of it, had not those of little *Popo* (who had also promised to conduct me through the Extent of their Land) caused me to be dissuaded from it by their Ambassadors, under pretence they were afraid I might be fet on by the Robbers before they came to me. This

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This Dissuasive was very faint, and the said Ambassadors under-hand encouraged me to this Land Tour, urging it as their private Advice, which naturally discovered their Villany: which was that they designed to murder me on my Journey, and consequently have stolen all my Goods; besides which they would yet have cleared themselves by urging that they advised me against going that way.

I was on this account frightened from undertaking my intended Tour; by which I should otherwise have discovered some Particulars worthy your Curiosity.

But to return to the Inhabitants of *Coto*. In Politicks, Religion and Oeconomicks, they very nearly resemble those on the Gold Coast, except that I found here a vast Quantity of Idol Gods. Their Language is mostly that of *Acra*, with a very small alteration. By reason their Trade is small they are very poor; very few of them being rich. Their most advantageous Trade is taking a Journey In-land and stealing Men, which they sell to the *Europeans*, that come here with their Ships. This is the best part of their Subsistence, and indeed all I have to say of them.

From *Coto* to little *Popo* is about ten Miles; the Country being as the former flat Land, without either Hills or Trees and extraordinary sandy, even to such a degree that all Victuals there dressed is continually full of Sand, and not edible; of which I was very sensible during my three Days continuance there: For the King richly enough provided me with Victuals; but for the mentioned Reason I could not eat it, but was forced to fetch Provisions from on Board our Ship to keep my self alive.

This vast Quantity of Sand, with which the whole Land is covered, renders it so barren, that the

the Inhabitants are forced to be victualled by those of *Fida*, or at least for the most part.

The Inhabitants here are the Remains of the Kingdom of *Acra* behind our Fort there; from whence they were formerly driven by the King of *Aquamboe*. Those who escaped settled here, where they may remain long enough; for it is not probable that they will ever return to the Possession of their Country.

I have already mentioned their Wars with those of *Coto*. They are not very populous; but on the other hand are very War-like. Not many Years since they had a brave Soldier for their King, whose Name was *Aforri*, Brother to the present King. This Prince on account of his Valour was very much feared and respected; but his greatest stock of Fame redounded to him when the *Phidalgo* of *Offra* rebelled against the King of great *Ardra*, his Lord and Master, whose Yoak he shook off, and besides killed our chief Factor *Holwerf*.

For to revenge these accumulated Crimes, the King of *Ardra* perswaded King *Aforri* to come against him with all his Force; which he did, and made such short work with those of *Offra*, that he conquered as soon as saw them; wasted their Country, and delivered the Offender into his Sovereign's Hands: But not content with this Victory, and pushed on by the King of *Ardra*, he marched against the People of *Fida*, and encamped in their Country; but wanting Powder, he delayed attacking the *Fidasians* in expectation of having it sent him according to the King of *Ardra*'s Promise; which he did not fail to do in large Quantity under a good Convoy: But the *Fidasians* getting Intelligence of it, fell upon the Convoy with a very strong Party, defeated it and seized all the Powder; which *Aforri* being informed of, and finding himself, for want of Amunition, not able to stand against

against his Enemies, made a speedy as well as very seasonable Retreat; for the *Fidasians* intended to have fallen on him with their whole Force the next Day, when he and all his Army would probably have been very roughly treated.

His Enemies informed of his Flight, were not in the least enclined to pursue him; but on the contrary did not a little rejoyce to find themselves rid of such a dangerous Enemy.

Aforri being returned into his own Territories, was acquainted that his Neighbours of *Coto* were ready to have assisted *Fida*, if he had stayed any longer in their Country; which he so highly repented that with utmost Animosity he took the Field against them, and desiring nothing more than to come to a close Engagement with them, he attacked them, though stronger than himself, but they received him so warmly, that they had quickly killed a great part of his Army: Upon this, furiously intraged and desperate, and careless of himself, he flew amongst the thickest of the Enemy, where he was so surrounded that it was impossible for him to return; upon which, with several of his Men, after a Valiant Resistance, he was left dead upon the spot.

The present King, though more Peaceable and Mild, yet prudently revenged his Brother's Death on the *Cotosians*, always attacking them in their weakest Condition; which measures he pursued so long as to drive them out of their Country.

The Inhabitants of *Popo*, as well as those of *Coto*, depend on Plunder and the Slave Trade; in both of which they very much exceed the latter; for being endowed with a much larger share of Courage, they rob more successively, and consequently by that means encrease their Trade: Notwithstanding all which, to freight a Ship with Slaves, requires some Months Attendance.

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In the Year 1697. In three Days time I could get but three Slaves; but they assured me that if I would have patience for other three Days only, they should be able to deliver me one or two hundred. I seemed to approve their Proposal, but went on Board under pretence of fetching some Goods ashore which they desired, and immediately weighed Anchor and set sail for Fida; where I was informed that their Incurfions succeeded so well, that they returned with above two Hundred Slaves; which, for want of other Ships, they were obliged to sell to the Portuguese.

This Nation is more than ordinary fraudulent and thievish. It is their common practice to assure the Merchant or Factor that they have a stock of Slaves, only to draw him on Shoar, which having done they never part with him without having fleeced him, and besides detained him several Months.

The Portuguese are cheated by them more than any Nation; notwithstanding which they cannot avoid Trading with them by reason they are loaded with such sorry Goods, that they can scarce get Slaves any where else.

In 1698. I found a Danish Ship there, which was obliged to wait a longer time to deal for five Hundred Slaves, than I spent in Trading for two Thousand at Fida: During which time they met with such ample Proofs of their Villanous Nature, that I don't believe any of that Nation will venture thither again.

A Year or two before this, they dealt in the same manner with an English Ship, and besides cheated him of some of his Goods; but he coming thither again in my time, recovered his Damages in the following manner: As soon as he had dropt Anchor before Popo, some of the great Men, amongst whom was the King's Son, came

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on Board him; all which he clapt in the Bilboa's: From whence he did not discharge them till he was first re-imbursed and had obliged them to pay a Summ besides.

In the Reign of this King's Brother, this Nation was more easily dealt with, for when he had done his Business, he would not suffer his Subjects to impose on the Europeans. In his time one of our Companies Ships in eleven Days dealt for above five hundred Slaves; but that is not what is likely to happen again: For that Nation is at present so fraudulent, that undeniably every Person that deals with them must be more or less cheated.

It is perfectly unnecessary to touch any further on the Nature and Customs of these People, since being originally Inhabitants of Acra, in Religion and Government, they do not much differ from their Country-men.

During my stay here, I found such an incredible Number of Rats, that I thought my self bound in Charity to advertise the Inhabitants to be upon their Guard and destroy those Vermin, lest encreasing upon them they should in time drive them out of their Country.

Four Miles Eastward from hence is the Kingdom of great Popo, whose King was first in subjection to Fida; but the present King being set upon the Throne by the present King of Fida in the room of his Brother whom he had banished, in reward of the Favours of the Fidafian Monarch, he hath withdrawn his Allegiance, and thrown off that Yoak: At which the Fidafian was so much enraged, that he raised a great Army, which he sent against Popo, together with the Assistance and Ammunition which he received from some French Ships that then lay before Fida, designing nothing less than to extirpate them, which he was also encouraged to hope, because the French Ships likewise fail'd to

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to fall upon that Country by Sea. But *Popo* being an Island Scituate in the midst of the River, both the *French* and *Fidassians* were forced to make use of Floats to come at them; and that Nation had put it self in such a posture of Defence, that it not only received its Enemies warmly, but after bleeding them put them to flight without the loss of one Man on their side; for they fired very briskly out of their Houses, and unperceived of their Enemies, by which means they killed a great number of *French* and *Fidassians*; and so disordered their Forces, that throwing down their Arms, they run over one another to make their escape; and if the *Popoians* had followed their Victory, in all probability not one *French*-man would have escaped alive, they not being so swift as the *Negroes*.

Since this so unsuccessful Enterprize, the King of *Fida* hath not ventured on any fresh Attempts with his own Forces; but hath been endeavouring even to this present time to hire other Nations to engage in the Quarrel; but though it hath already cost him large Summs, yet the only success he hath met with, is to be cheated on all sides: Wherefore much against his will he is obliged to suffer the King of *Popo* in quiet Possession of his Island.

The Inhabitants of *Popo* have scarce any dwelling Places besides the King's Village; which, as I have told you, is an Island; and that so thinly peopled and so infested by the *Fidassians*, that they cannot cultivate their Land quietly: Wherefore they very frequently want Provisions, and would be starved, if they were not furnished with Edibles from even the *Fidassians* their greatest Enemies, who continually run the Risque of Capital Punishments, by reason of the Profit they find to accrue by victualling the *Popoians*.

The Natives of great *Popo* Trade also in Slaves; which if no Ships come thither they sell to those

of little *Popo*; but their greatest Gain is by the Fish, which they catch in their River, and Trade with abroad.

Some Years past we had a House or Lodge here; but by reason of the Declension of Trade, since the Enmity betwixt *Fida* and *Popo*, after the Death of our Factor we left it; and since that time we have not traded with them.

This *Popo* is the first place which can properly be reckoned to be in the Country of *Ardra*: The *Ardrasian* Language with very small Alterations is here spoken. The Government also is here upon the same foot; of which more in the Description of *Fida*, where I shall give you a sketch of it.

Just Eastwards of *Popo*, the Country of *Fida* takes its beginning, and four or five Miles lower is the Road and Port.

This Port is so incomodious and dangerous; by reason of the horrible Burnings in the Sea, that we cannot land here without running a great Risque; but in *April*, *May*, *June* and *July*, the Sea burns so violently, that according to the Proverb, he ought to have two Lives who ventures.

About this Season dismal Accidents are very frequent here, great Quantities of Goods are lost, and many Men drowned: For the Sea-Burning is so violent and rolls so that a *Canoa* full of People is over-turned and the *Canoa* shattered into Splinters in a minute; by which means all that are in it are in danger to be lost, except the Rowers, who through their Skill in swimming, may perhaps save themselves. This over-turning of *Canoas* happens every Day.

When I was here in the Year 1698. Besides Slaves there were five Men lost here, *viz.* a *Portuguese* Captain, a Clerk, and three *English* Sailors, besides two Captains which were brought a-shore for dead, and lived but a very little while after.

This Port hath cost me, or rather the Company, at several times, above two Hundred Pounds; and doubtless it must have been more expensive to the *English* and others who have not so good Rowers.

At this time of the Year we are troubled with another Inconvenience, which is a strong Eastern Tide; which no Boat or Shallop can stem by rowing; but those in the Boats are obliged to set 'em along by sticking their Pole in the Ground. So that what by one Inconvenience or another we are detained here twice as long as is necessary to our Slave Trade: But when our Fatigue is over, and we are got on Shoar, we seem to have passed from Hell to Heaven; for having escaped the apparent Dangers of the Sea, and discerning such beautiful Meadow-Ground about half a Mile off, we cannot help being over-joyed on the account not only of our Delivery, but likewise of the future Pleasures this Country promises.

For three several times I have lived here about three Months, not that my Merchandizing required so long time; for reckoning one Ship with another I could dispatch each of them in less than a Month; and which is yet more, I have laden three in fourteen Days: but what obliged me to stay was waiting for a Yacht to carry me off, and preparing for my Voyage.

During my stay here, I used all possible means to discover the length and breadth of this Kingdom, but could never obtain a farther satisfactory account than that its Extent along the Sea-shore is about nine or ten Miles; and in the middle it reaches six or seven Miles In-land: After which it extends like two Arms; and in some places is ten or twelve Miles broad, and in others much narrower: So that it is impossible for me to oblige you with an exact Account of its breadth; but I hope we shall not quarrel.

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It is, however, unquestionably certain that, this Country is so very populous; that in one Village alone, as the King's, or any of his Vice-roy's Villages (for Instance) there are as many People as in a common Kingdom on the Gold Coast: And this Land is well furnished with these large Villages, besides innumerable small ones, which are observable throughout the whole Country, some not above a Musquet-shot from each other; for those who live out of the great Villages or Towns build and settle where they please: So that each Family builds a small Village, which encreases as that multiplies.

The great number of these Villages composed of Houses, which are round at the top, and encompassed with mud Walls or Hedges, together with the great numbers of all sorts of beautiful and lofty Trees, which seem designedly planted in exact order; afford the most beautiful Prospect in the World; to render which the more charming and perfectly agreeable, not so much as one Mountain or Hillock interposeth to interrupt the View; but the whole is a sort of insensibly rising Ground, which is not discovered till you have gone forwards an Hour or two, when turning back, your Eyes are regaled with a Prospect of the most charming Place that Imagination can represent: nor can I believe, that any Country in the World can shew the like. Besides which this Land is covered with a beautiful Verdure, composed either of Grass or Trees, and plentifully provided with three sorts of Corn, Beans, Potatoes, and other Fruits; which grow so close to each other, that in some places a foot Path is the only Ground that is not covered with them: For the *Negroes* of this Country are so covetous, that no place which is thought fertile can escape planting, though even within the Hedges which enclose their Villages and Dwelling-places: And they are so very greedy in this

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particular, that the very next Day after they have reaped they are sure to sow again, without allowing the Land any time for rest.

The Charms of this Country have so far transported me, that I have insensibly passed through it; but since on account of its excellence (comparatively taken and considered as on this Coast) it deserves a very particular Description: I therefore design to divide it into three Heads, viz. first I shall treat of the Nature and Manners of the Inhabitants; secondly, of their Religion and Government; and, thirdly, of the Cattle and Fruits of this Country.

As the first will take up the remainder of this Letter; so the other two shall be treated of each in a Letter apart. But I desire you not to be tired if they all, but more especially this, happen to be somewhat long: I shall not grudge my pains in writing it; and if you put too great a value on the time to read it, the remedy is easie, you may tear off what you will, and not waste so much time on it as to peruse it.

But as to my first particular; I must needs say that the Inhabitants of *Fida* far exceed all other *Negroes* (that I have had the opportunity of conversing with) both in good and bad Qualities; as the following Lines, if worth your reading, will inform you.

I must own that from the highest to the lowest they treat us in the most civil, obliging and engaging manner in the World; and as all *Negroes* continually teize us for Presents; these on the contrary never desire beyond a Mornings Draught; and had rather give than receive. When we Trade with them they are very well pleased that we acknowledge the Services they have done us: but they are incorrigibly fond of their Ancient Customs; but this is so reasonable that no Person can deny them that Privilege.

They

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They are so civil to each other, and the Inferiour so respectful to the Superiour, that at first I was very much surprized at it; for if any of them goes to visit his Superiour, or meets him by chance, he immediately falls on his Knees, and thrice successively kisses the Earth, claps his Hands, wishes his Superiour a good Day or good Night, and congratulates him: Which the other either sitting or standing, or whatever Posture he is found in, barely answers with softly clapping his Hands, and wishing the other a good Day; and if he is extraordinary civil, he saith, it is enough. All which time the former remains sitting or prostrate on the Earth till the other departs; unless his Affairs call him away; when after begging leave, he retires creeping on the Ground; for it would be thought a great Crime to sit upon a Chair or Bench in presence of his Superiour.

The like deference is paid by the younger to the elder Brother, the Children to the Father, and the Wives to their Husbands. None of which will deliver or receive any thing to or from his or her Superiour, Brother, Father or Husband, otherwise than upon the Knee, and with both Hands together, which is a sign of yet greater subjection; and if they speak to any of the said Persons, their Hand is always clapped before their Mouth, that their Breath may not offend the other.

When two Persons of equal Condition meet each other, they fall both down on their Knees together, clap Hands, and mutually Salute, by wishing each other a good Day; which Ceremonies are also nicely observed by their Followers and Dependants on each side, which looks very agreeable.

If a principal Person happen to sneeze, all those in their presence fall upon their Knees; and after having kissed the Earth, and clapped their Hands, wish him all Happiness and Prosperity.

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When a Person is presented with any thing by his Superiour, having received it he claps it in his Hands, and after kissing the Earth very submissively returns thanks. In short, the Inferiour here shews as much respect to the Superiour, as I believe is practised in any place of the World; which is very different from the Negroes on the Gold Coast, who live together without any distinction, like Brute Beasts.

Nor do they differ less from the mentioned Negroes in Industry; for whereas the Gold Coast Negroes indulge themselves in Idleness as their Favourite Vice, here on the contrary, Men as well as Women are so vigorously Industrious and Laborious that they never desist till they have finished their Undertakings; and are continually endeavouring after Work in order to get Money.

Besides Agriculture, from which the King and a few great Men are only exempted, their Manufactures are spinning of Cotton, weaving of fine Cloaths, making of Calabasses, wooden Vessels, Assagayes and Smiths-ware; and several other Handicrafts, which are in greater Perfection here than on the Gold Coast; besides which they also have some which the other have no Knowledge of.

Whilst the Men are so diligently employed, the Women are not idle; they brew, or rather boil Beer, and dress Victuals, which they carry to Market to sell together with their Husbands Merchandize: So that both Men and Women here are employed in getting of Money, and each zealously strives to outdo the other. Hence it is that they live very splendidly, and not as the Blacks on the Gold Coast, who dare not think of a good Morcel when it is dear; for these on the other side, as well the higher as lower sort, eat of the best that is to be gotten as long as they have any thing to support it; and when that

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that fails they are upon the hunt to get more; but to ask them to work with an empty Belly, would be to knock at a deaf Man's Door; on which account I think no Man can blame them, since it is but reasonable that they should before they begin be sensible for what they take pains.

They work for small Wages, and the Service which the meaner sort do us consists in carrying out Goods from the Shore to the King's Village, where our House is. This being about three Miles; for every burthen of Goods we commonly pay from eight to twelve pence, in proportion to the weight of it: The price of each Burthen being exactly adjusted. From hence you may collect, that the Men work very cheap here: But they play an After-game; of which I shall hereafter inform you.

With a Burthen of one Hundred Pounds on their Head they run a sort of continual Trot; which is so swift that we *Hollanders* cannot keep up with them without difficulty, though not loaded with an Ounce weight.

Those who are very rich here, besides Husbandry, in which their Wives and Slaves are employed under them, drive a very considerable Trade, not only in Slaves but all other sort of Commodities.

They are so diligent in the Slave Trade, that they are able to deliver one Thousand Slaves every Month, if there are no Ships at *Jakin*, which is subordinate to great *Ardra*, and situate but three Miles below *Fida*; which makes a very sensible alteration; for the King of great *Ardra*, through whose Territories most of the Slaves are obliged to pass, when the Ships are there, to favour his own Subjects, very commonly shuts up all the Passes to *Fida* by a very strict Prohibition; upon which his Subjects are obliged to deal by stealth with those of *Fida* (against whose King he is an irreconcilable Enemy) which yet they continually do,

seeming not much concerned at their King's Disputes. Notwithstanding which, Trade doth not flourish so well as when the King of *Ardra* leaves Commerce open betwixt his Subjects and those of *Fida*.

The remaining Customs and Manners of the Natives of *Fida*, not affecting their Religious Worship, are very like those on the Gold Coast, excepting only, as I have already hinted, that these exceed the other in all Particulars of Living; for whereas the former content themselves with one, two, three, and the most considerable Men, with eight, ten or twenty Wives; they have here forty or fifty, and their chief Captains three or four Hundred, some one Thousand, and the King betwixt four and five Thousand.

Most of these Wives serve to Till the Ground, for their Husbands only; but the most beautiful stay at home, where they are not yet excused from working; besides which they are obliged to serve and wait on their Husbands. No rich *Negroes* will suffer any Man to enter the Houses where his Wives reside.

The Men here are so strangely jealous of their Wives, that on the least suspicion in the World they sell them to the *Europeans*; being in this particular very different from the *Negroes* of the Gold Coast, who make no manner of scruple of driving a publick Trade with their Wives Body.

The Custom of this Country is vastly different from that; for if any Person here presume to debauch another's Wife, if the injured Person is a rich Man, the Offender must not only dye, but such a Crime is besides that sufficient to plunge his whole Family into Slavery.

If any Person happen barely to touch any part of the Body of one of the King's Wives, designedly or by the most unfore-seen accident in the World, his Head, or at least his Liberty is thereby forfeited; he

he being, for a Punishment of his innocent Crime, doomed to perpetual Slavery. Wherefore all those whose Business lies near the King's Houses, call out aloud that his Wives may be informed there is a Man thereabouts.

For the same reason the King (as I have before hinted) is served by his Wives in his House, not permitting any Man to enter the Walls thereof, unless to repair it, or do what the Women cannot, upon which occasion the Women are obliged to retire to another part of it.

When the Work-men are tiling or repairing the King's House, they continually call out, that the King's Wives may, during that time, keep within; for if they should happen to see them only, it would be imputed to them as a Crime.

So when the King's Wives go to the Field to work, as they do daily by Hundreds, they are certain whenever they meet a Man, to cry out, *Stand clear*; after which he either immediately falls on his Knees or flat on the Ground, and waits their passing by him, without presuming so much as to loook at them.

On account of the least disgust or trifle, the King sometimes sells eighteen or twenty of his Wives, which doth not at all lessen their number: For three of his principal Captains, to whom the Government of the *Seraglio* is entrusted, daily supply their places with fresh Ladies; for whenever they see a beautiful Virgin, they immediately present her to the King, which none of his Subjects dare presume to refuse or contradict.

When a Lady is presented to the King, that happens to please him, he do's her the Honour to lye with her twice or thrice; after which she is obliged to pass the remainder of her Life like a Nun.

For which Reason the Women are so far from being greedy of the Honour of being the King's Wives, that some of them prefer a speedy Death to such a miserable Life. About

About two Years past these Captains endeavour- ed to bring him a beautiful young Maid ; but she not being very fond of a Nun's Life, fled from them, and they pursuing her, she despairing threw her self into a deep Well, in which she was stifled. I leave her Case to be determined by the Ladies.

Upon the Fathers Death, the eldest Son inherits not only all his Goods and Cattle, but his Wives ; which he immediately holds and enjoyeth as his own, excepting his own Mother ; for whom he pro- vides a separate Apartment and sufficient Subsistence, in case she cannot live without it. This Custom obtains not only with the King and Captains, but also amongst the Commonalty.

This present King married two of his own Daughters ; but they dying quickly after, and his Brutal Pleasures being of a short duration, he ima- gines that the Gods that way punished him for his Crime ; which hath drawn from him an Oath ne- ver to repeat it for the future.

To prevent Temptation, in my time he marry- ed his only Daughter to the *English* Companies Fac- tor here : And once talking very freely with him ; I, in a jesting Manner, imposed a sort of Fine upon him for not having made me the first offer of her. He willingly paid his Fine ; adding withal, that though his Daughter was married, she was yet at my service, if I desired her, since one Word was sufficient to call her Home.

What think you, Sir, are not this King's Daugh- ters very cheap ? but the mischief is, that marry- ing a King's Daughter in this Country is not very advantageous ; otherwise I had not failed long since to have been happy that way.

From such a Multitude of Wives a great number of Children may reasonably be expected, suppo- sing the Men in a state of Procreation : For chan- ging of Diet (according to the Proverb) sharpens the Appetite ; and that Whet not being wanting here

here, the Work of Propagation advances with in- credible success ; for the Women not being very Bar- ren, and the Men Vigorous, it is not to be doubted since they, besides eating and drinking very well, use other means to provoke Nature, which is in them very brisk and lively : It is not, I say, to be wonder'd at, that their Issue should be very nu- merous. You will easily believe this when I aver to you, I have seen Men that were Fathers of above two Hundred Children ; but, however, to put it out of doubt, not only my self but feve- ral others, who have enquired into it are ascertain- ed of the Truth of it by two Instances : The first of which is one of the King's Captains, that ser- ved us several Years as an Interpreter, whose name is *Agoei*.

I once asked him in presence of one of our Cap- tains and my Assistant, how many Children he had, having always observed a good number with him ; to which he sighing answered, that he had been so very unhappy in that Particular, as not to have many, and that he could not pretend to above Se- venty : I asked him whether he had not had more that were dead ; he told me yes, about as many as were at present alive. And yet this Man thought that both these numbers making together one hun- dred and forty were but a very small number : From whence you may guess what number is suf- ficient to make a Man rich, or well-stocked with Children.

The King, who was present at this Conversation, assured me that one of his Vice-roys, assisted by his Sons and Grand-Sons with their Slaves, had repulsed a powerful Enemy which came against him. That this Vice-roy, with his Sons and Grand-Sons, could make out the number of two Thousand, not reckoning Daughters or any that were dead. Judge then, Sir, whether if a new World were discovered, these Men would not be fit to People it. If

If what I have told you is true, as I don't in the least doubt but it is, being confirmed by the King's Asseveration in the presence of all his principal Men ; and this whole Country is so prolifick ; it is not very surprizing that it is so populous or annually sells so many Slaves.

Having detained you long enough on the Head of the Marriages of the *Fidassians*, let us now take a view of their dealing with, or keeping the Goods of others. To this purpose is what the King said to me the first time I came to *Fida* ; his Majesty's Advice and Character of his Subjects run thus. " That his Subjects were not like those of *Ardra* and other Neighbouring Countries ; which upon the least Umbrage received from the *Europeans* would poyson them. This is, continues he, what you have no Reason to fear here ; but I advise you to take particular care of your Goods ; for my People seem to be born expert Thieves, and will rob you of no more than they can come at.

I was intirely satisfied with this frank Declaration of the King's ; resolving to be so careful that their pilfering Nature should not much redound to my Damage ; but I reckoned without my Host ; for I afterwards found that they were the greatest and most-cunning Thieves in the World.

Except three or four of the most considerable Men, all this Nation, High and Low, Rich and Poor, are tainted with this Vice. In short, not to exclude any Body in the whole Country, as I have before hinted, they are such expert Thieves, that they obliged a *French-Merchant* to say of them, that they understood the Art of Thievery better than the Cut-purses and Pick-pockets of Paris.

Would you know what extorted this Character of that Nation from him ? It was, that being ready to depart, he had packed up all his Goods in his Pack-house ; to which he had also added a great number of Chickens, designed for his Voyage, resolving

olving to ship off all the next Day ; but he was excused that trouble, for when he came to his Warehouse next Morning, he found neither Goods nor Fowl, though the Warehouse was firm and close, and well locked ; so that he could not imagine which way the Thievery had been acted ; tho' I afterwards discovered the Trick at my cost.

The *Negroes* of the Gold Coast are very thievish, but are not to be compared with these. I never saw a Ship here of what Nation soever, that they have not robbed of Goods to a considerable value : For, as I have already told you, it being three Miles from the King's Village to the Shore ; all which way we are necessitated to make use of these Villains to carry our Goods, they are hereby furnished with the best opportunity in the World to play their part ; of which there is no hindering them ; though instead of *Argus* you had a Watchman with one Thousand Eyes, they would yet deceive him ; and if we happen to catch them and reprehend them for it, they have assurance enough to ask us, whether we can imagine that they would work so hard, as they do, for such small Wages without the Liberty of stealing ?

In my time the *English* sowed up their small Barrels of *Boesies* (the Money of this Country) in Sacks, thinking thereby to have secured them from the pilfering Fingers of the *Negroes* : But they were mistaken ; for as they were carrying them, on the way they cut the Sacks of the Barrels, and dug out their *Boesies* at the Chinks of the Barrel with an Iron Chiffel. They are acquainted with an hundred several ways of stealing, which would be too long to recite here.

I shall only add, that no Person can provide against them : And if we complain to the King, we cannot expect any Justice, much less Retribution. For though the King gives order to have the Guilty searched after and punished, yet no Person dare

dare inform, for fear of the King's Eldest Son, who commonly shares with, and consequently protects these Villains.

And if we should presume to think, that when our Goods are in the Ware-houses, they are then in a safe Harbour, we should find our selves grossly mistaken. At first I was indeed of that Opinion, but having had stolen from me in one Nights time above the value of sixty Pounds sterling in Goods, I changed my Opinion, believing that the only way to be free from their Thievery was to leave them and their Country.

I then found the Locks of my Ware-house entire, and had very safely kept the Key; so that at first I could not imagine which way the Thievery was committed; but afterwards I discovered the Villany: I observed that in the Garret that was thatched with Reed, and Clay or Mud to prevent firing; they had made a Hole, and assisted by a Pole with a Hook at the end of it, had drawn out my Goods.

But they had made such a large Hole in the French-man's Ware-house that a Man might pass through it. In short, go how it will, they are sure to steal something. But having said enough on this Subject, 'tis time to think of something else: And before we speak of their Government and Religion we shall give some short hints on other Subjects.

The *Negroes* here are more richly clothed than those of the Gold Coast, except in Gold and Silver; which they have not here, nor are they acquainted with its worth. They wear five or six Cloaths all of different sorts one above the other; the uppermost of which is about eight or nine Yards long, which they wrap very decently about their Body. None are permitted to wear red, except those of the Royal Family only.

The Women also wear a Multitude of Cloaths or Panes, heaped one over another; each of which is not above a Yard and half quarter long, or Yard

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and half long; of which they buckle their two ends on their Bellies. These Cloaths very closely cover the Posteriors, but sit very loose before; insomuch that if the Wind blows a little fresh, what Modesty obliges to cover is frequently exposed.

The *Negroes* tell us that this Fashion was the Womens invention, and grounded on a Convenience which they found in it, as doubtless every Mode is some way or other useful.

It is odd enough to observe that all Men, Women and Children go with their Heads close shorn by a Razor, and that without any covering in Rain, Wind, the scorching Sun, or be the Weather how it will: and if it is certainly true that going with the Head naked renders it very hard, I dare averr that the *Negroes* must be very hard-headed, since they are always bare in that part: And hence it is as well as from their Beards being close shorn that the old Men seem younger than they really are.

If the *Negroes* on the Gold Coast, when seized by Sickness, are very diligent in the use of Medicines, and numerous Offerings for the recovery of their Health; the *Negroes* here exceed them especially in the last, which is the Employment of several whole Days.

The Medicinal Remedies are the same with those on the Gold Coast, but the Offerings are very different: Here each Person reserves a place under the open Air; which is set apart for that purpose, and hedged about with Reeds and other Trash. In this Consecrated Place they continually Sacrifice in order to obtain Health and Prosperity.

They are so very fearful of Death, that they very unwillingly hear it mentioned, for fear that alone should hasten their end. No *Negroe* in the whole Country dare presume to speak of Death in presence of the King or any great Man, on penalty of undergoing it as a punishment himself.

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The first Voyage I made hither, being upon my Departure, I asked the King, (who owed me about one Hundred Pounds sterling) who should pay me in case of his Death at my return? All those in the presence were perfectly amazed at this Question; but the King, who understood a little Portuguese, taking me right, and finding that I was ignorant of their Customs, smilingly answered, *That I ought not to trouble my self about that, for he should not dye, but always live.* I soon perceived that I had been guilty of some Solacism in their Manners: Wherefore I took my leave and retired to my Apartment; but withal asking the Captains which followed me the Reason of their Astonishment. They replied, *That no Person on pain of Death, dared presume to speak of Death it self so publickly in the King's Presence, much less talk of his own Dying.* I was then silent; but in my second and third Voyage, growing more familiar with the King, and his before-mentioned great Men, I have frequently ridiculed their vain fear of Death; and accustomed them to it, so that in time they began to laugh at it themselves, especially the King (who is a very jolly Fellow) when I frighted any of his Captains with Death: But no *Negro* will venture to open his Lips on that Subject.

The *Negroes* live in a manner by guess, making no manner of Distinction of times. They have no Festivals, nor Divisions of Hours, Days, Weeks, Months or Years, but reckon their sowing time by Moon-shines, and very well know that every three Days there is a great Market-Day.

They are so accurately quick in their Merchandise Accompts, that they easily reckon as justly and as quick in their Heads alone, as we with the assistance of Pen and Ink, though the Summ amounts to several Thousands; which makes it very easie to Trade with them, and not half so troublesome as to deal with other and much duller *Negroes*.

I beg you would not be surprized that I jumble my Matter confusedly together, for not allowing my self time to digest it; so I desire you would please to take it in good part, let it fall how it will: But if you desire what I write to be thrown into an accurate Method, after you have received it you have it in your own Hands and Power. But for the present, I can give you no further Consolation, than that the Glass is almost run out, and this Letter is very near its Conclusion.

Menstruous Women are esteemed so unclean, that they are not permitted Entrance into the King's, or other great Mens Houses, on less penalty than Death or perpetual Slavery.

The Circumcision of Infants, especially the Males, is here customary: But if they be asked whence this Custom was deduced, they readily answer, that it was traditionally handed to them by their Ancestors, and they at present neither know the Reason nor Signification.

I have just hinted that the Male-Infants were circumcised; in which you will perhaps think I am in the right, since that Custom is scarce practicable in the other Sex: But I can assure you, Sir, that some Girls are here liable as well as the Boys. You, as a Physician, need make no farther Question on that Head; and I refer the Ignorant to what Mr. *Arnold van Overbeek* saith concerning the *Hottentats* at the *Cape of good Hope*.

The *Negroes* differ very much from each other in the Circumcision of Children; some do it at four, five or six, and others at eight or ten Years of Age.

Their Musical Instruments are much better than those on the Gold Coast, and they are also much modester in the use of them; for in time of Mourning they never teize you with the noise of them.

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They are very great Gamesters, and willingly stake all they are masters of in the World at play; and when Money and Goods are wanting, like the *Chinese*, they stake first Wife and Children, and then Land and Body.

Not to detain you any longer, I shall pass by their Musical as well as Gaming Instruments, and conclude this from him who at all times and in all places, is, Sir, Yours, &c.

LET

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LETTER XIX.

Which briefly treats concerning the Government of Fida. Capital Crimes very rare here. Punishment of Murther, and of violating one of the King's Wives. Other Crimes charged with pecuniary Mults only. The Oath of Purgation, in what manner administred. The Age of the King; his Temper, his Chamber of Audience, Domestick Office, Revenue, and Receivers thereof. What Portion accrues to the King by the Sale of a Slave. His Revenue which arises from Fish, and his Customs; how much on each Ship; concerning the Captains. The Riches of this Prince: At what charges he is obliged to live, and his great Expences. No Person permitted to see the King eat, or know where he lodgeth, except his Wives. His Presents to the Europeans. He is adored as a Demi-God. His Cloaths, and Children, and the Nature of the latter. How he came to the Throne. A Barbarous Custom on occasion of the Death of their Kings. The Kings Commands executed by his Wives. Whence a pleasant Adventure is related. The Religion and Superstition of the Fidians. Their Multitude of Idols; of which a Negroe gave a very diverting Explication. Their Notion of the True God. Their Principal Deities: First of the Snake; to which great Offerings are made

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made chiefly by the King. The House of their chiefest God; where scituate; of what largeness, and how found out. Offerings formerly sent by the King to the Snake House; but at present abolished, and why. A large Account of the King's Revenue on account of the Snakes Worship: Which Cheat, tho' known to be such by the Negroes, yet for certain Reasons they dare not oppose it. He who injures the Snake condemned to the Flames. The Tragical Fate of some English on that Account. Another which besel a Gold Coast Negroe. Multitudes of Snakes in the Dwelling-places of the Europeans. The Author paid for the imaginary Boarding of a Snake. These Idolatrous Snakes do not injure Mankind. The Negroes cannot bear any discourse against the Snake. How they behave themselves if by chance they happen to kill one of them. A pleasant Adventure between a Hog and a Snake, which cost the lives of some Hundreds of the former. The Trees are the second-rate Gods of the Natives of Fida. The Sea their third God. On what occasions the two last are honoured with Orisons and Sacrifices. Priests and Priestesses in great esteem. The last called Gods Children. Their great Authority. What the Fidassians think of Diabolical Spirits, and Hell; in which Belief they have been long since confirmed. Discourse betwixt a Fidassian Captain, and an Augustin Fryar.

S I R.

S I R,
 I N my last dated——I divided my Description of *Fida* into three parts; of the first of which I therein treated at large, and the second, namely their Government and Religion I shall dispatch in this; but the first part of this Head affording nothing very particular, I shall not detain you long on it.

The Government, for so far as it relates to the Country, or the War, is vested in the King and his principal great Men; but in Criminal Cases the King assembles his Council composed of certain Persons, opens the Indictment to them, and requires each Person to declare his Sentiments what Punishment the Criminal deserves. When the Verdict pleases him, Execution is accordingly done in pursuance to it; but if he dislikes it, he obliges the Council to retire, and punisheth the Malefactor according to his Royal Will and Pleasure.

Here are very few Capital Crimes, which are only Murthers and committing Adultery with the King's or his great Mens Wives: But the *Negroes*, as I have already hinted, being very fearful of Death, are the most careful People in the World how they incur that Penalty. Notwithstanding which, from time to time, several venture so far as to deserve that Punishment; of which I shall give you some Instances, that happened within these five or six Years.

The two first are of two Blacks, both executed for Murther in the same manner, *viz.* they were cut open alive, their Intrails taken out of their Bodies and burned; after which their Corps were filled with Salt and fixed on a Stake in the middle of the Market-place, where I saw them in my first Voyage thither.

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About four Years past a *Negroe*, who had been tardy with one of the King's Wives, being caught, was together with the Female Accomplice of his Crime, brought to the Place of Execution in the open Field, where he was set as a Mark for several great Men by way of Diversion to show their Skill in darting the *Affagays* at him; by which this poor Wretch was miserably tormented. After this in the presence of the Offending Lady, he was bereft of his most Criminal Member, and after being obliged to throw it into the Fire himself, they were both put into a deep Pit, being first bound Hand and Foot: Then their Executioners set a Pot of boiling Water upon the Fire; out of which they by degrees laved some on the poor Criminals till it was half out, upon which they poured the remainder on them all at once, and filling the Pit with Earth buried them alive.

Two Years after this a young Man was taken, that had shut himself up in the King's Dwelling-place in Womens Habit, and enjoyed several of the King's Wives; but at last fearing a Discovery, they resolved to take their Flight; and not contented with having cuckolded the King, they designed to make up a good Pack of the King's Goods which might subsist them in another Country; but they were catched attempting the latter part of their Enterprize, tho' not all, but only the *Negroe* and one Woman; and no Torture inflicted on the former was sufficient to extort from him a discovery of any more, so Sentence passed to burn him with the Woman.

The *Negroe* seeing the King's Wives so very forward to bring Wood to burn him, could not forbear laughing; thereby hinting that they were at present very diligent to furnish Fuel for the Execution of him with whom they had passed many a Night very agreeably; this he not only expressed

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pressed by his Laughter, but publickly said: But would not accuse any of the guilty; for which Reason these two only were punished, who accompanied one another in Life and Death.

From what I have said you may observe, that the King knows very well how to find out those who injure him; but in the Affair of doing Justice to others he is somewhat deaf.

The remaining Crimes of the *Negroes* are mostly compounded by a pecuniary Mulct: Which the King without calling his Captains to his Assistance takes himself, except one of his Favourites, named Captain *Carter*, who is justly called the King's Soul; since without him he will not do any thing, though even of the least Importance. This Person, in my time, was, as we here call him, Captain *Blank*, or the Captain to whom the *European* Affairs were all entrusted.

If any Person here is accused of any Crime and denies the Fact, he is obliged to clear himself by *Fetich's*, as on the Gold Coast; or otherwise (which is here very common) he is brought to a River, not far from the King's Court; to which is ascribed the strange Quality of immediately drowning all the Guilty Persons which are thrown into it; (contrary to the *European* manner of trying Witches;) but the Innocent come clear out of it without any Damage; supposing withal that they save themselves by swimming: In which Art all of them being very expert, I never heard that this River ever yet convicted any Person; for they all come well out, paying a certain Summ to the King; for which end alone I believe this Tryal is designed.

The Vice-roys in their Governments generally follow the same Rule, and condemn the Malefactors to pay a certain Summ for their use.

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Having little more to say concerning their Government, I shall now apply my self to the King's Household and State.

The present King is Aged some Years above fifty, but as vigorous and spritely as a Man of five and thirty: He is the most Civil and Generous Negroe that I have observed among the Black-Kind, and is never better pleased than when we desire a Favour of him. It would be very easie to obtain whatever we asked of him, if a parcel of rascally Flatterers did not continually buzz Lessons of good Husbandry in his Ears, not really out of Kindness to him, but only in order to draw to themselves what by their frugal Advice they prevent his bestowing on others: And I have observed that he daily more and more hearkens to these sort of People; for instead of being kind to us he is now so Obstinate and Humoursome in his trading with us, that we scarce know how to deal with him: For as at first he left it to us what to offer, now on the contrary he will have every thing his own way; he will have the choicest and vendible part of our Merchandises in exchange for his Slaves, which falls very heavy on the Merchant; for besides that he is obliged to give him one third, fourth or fifth at least extraordinary for every Slave; the best Goods being disposed of, the remainder are not to be put off but to disadvantage: Whereas if the King would be a little reasonable, as he was the first and second time I was there, we could easily dispose of the whole Cargo.

This King's Train is so very mean, that it is scarce worth mentioning, he being attended by none but his Wives only.

Once, or at most, twice every Year, he goes abroad, when he appears in a sort of splendid Retinue, more especially accompanied with his Wives, who amounts to above one Thousand; each of which

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which is dressed in the richest and most splendid manner. At this time all his most beautiful Wives, who are always closely enough shut up, may be seen; and with them a rich Treasure of Coral, which is worth even more than Gold.

In this Progress he is not accompanied with so much as one Man; but he before-hand advertises all his great Men where he intends to divert himself, whither they go to wait for him, still taking care they keep far enough off of his Wives, as being allowed no greater Favour than to see them as they pass by.

The remaining part of the Year the King remains in his House, indulging himself in no other Diversions than what his Wives afford him, except when he goes to the place of Audience in order to be informed by his Captains if any thing hath happened, or to impart his Commands to them.

Which being done, he goes to the place of Audience appointed for the Europeans, to discourse with them concerning Commerce. Where, when he and I had no other Business, I have spent many Days in one sort of Game or other (to all which according to the Genius of that Nation he is strangely addicted) we playing for an Ox, Hog, Sheep, &c. but never for Goods or Money; and I had always that Advantage of him, that if I won he immediately sent home my Winnings: but on the contrary if I lost he did not desire to receive my Lossings.

In this place of Audience, there are two Foot-Benches, one broad covered with a Cloath, and provided with an Oval Stool, according to the Custom of the Country; this is for the King, and the other covered with Mats for the Europeans to sit next the King and converse with him, always bare-headed; not that they are ordered to do so, but because they always find that he is pleased therewith. When

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Whenever we enter this place of Audience, we are desired to lay by our Swords, because the King doth not like that any should appear armed before him.

It is diverting enough to spend a whole Day with the King here; for besides that he is very good Company, he is continually entertaining you with the best that he has to eat and drink.

No Person is suffered to drink out of the same Glas or Cup with the King, but he hath always one kept particularly for himself; and that which hath but once touched anothers Lips he never uses more, though it be made of Metal that may be cleaned by Fire.

When any of the *Europeans* eat in his Presence (which he is very fond of) the Table is indifferently regularly furnished and served. All his great Men or Nobles lye prostrate on the Earth a-round as long as he is present, without daring to rise: And what the *Europeans* leave at their Table is bestowed upon them, which they very greedily eat, whether they like it or no; and though they have ten times better at home; and were it not to affront the King's Diet, would not touch it.

The Posts or Offices which this King bestows are of three sorts: First, the Vice-roys, here called *Phidalgoes* or Governadors, which compose the first State of the Kingdom; these in the King's absence and in their Vice-royalties, command as Arbitrarily and keep up as great State as the King himself.

The second are his Chief-Captains, here called Grand-Captains, though most of them are withal Vice-roys over some Country or other.

The third are the common Captains; of which there are a great number; and each of these hath a particular Character: He to whom the care of the Market is entrusted, is Captain of the Market; by the same rule another is Captain of the Slaves, a third

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third of the *Tronks* or Prisons, another of the Shoar. In short, for every Affair that can be thought of, the King hath appointed a Captain Overseer.

Besides which there are a great number of Honorary Captains without any Offices; for each of all which Posts in proportion every Person is obliged to pay the King a good Summ of Money, though he hath always the Honour of bestowing it only out of his especial Favour.

This King's Revenue, in proportion to his Country, is very large; of which, I believe, he hath above one Thousand Collectors, who disperse themselves throughout the whole Land, in all Market-roads and Passages, in order to gather the King's Toll, which amounts to an incredible Summ; for there is nothing so mean sold in the whole Kingdom, that the King hath not Toll for it: Which indeed, if all honestly paid to him, would make him very rich; but the Gentlemen Collectors so largely fleece it, that the King scarce receives one fourth part of the whole.

There are three principal Collectors appointed over the Slave Trade; each of which is to receive a Rix-dollar for the King's Toll, for every Slave that is traded for: But these Gentlemen, like the rest, agree under-hand with those who sell the Slaves; so that the King receives nothing of it: But with respect to the Slaves which are sold for *Boesies* (the Money of this Country) somewhat better care is taken, for the Summ contracted for is paid in the King's Presence; out of which he receives three Rix-dollars for every Slave: Notwithstanding which care, though he is the least cheated, yet some of his Subjects are so sly as to fetch their Money for their Slaves by Night, or at unseasonable times, and consequently cheat him; and on account that we have continual occasion to make

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make use of them we cannot deny them their Money when-ever they demand it.

The exact half of all the Fines and Tolls in his Vice-royalties accrues to him; but I believe he would be very well satisfied if he could but get one fourth.

There are two very fine large Rivers at Fida: one of which runs by the two Popo's, the other by Fakin: They are so plentifully stored with Fish, that the King's Toll out of each of them is worth one hundred Slaves, which yet is not above half what the Collectors receive.

To the foregoing Revenues of the King may be added that from each Ship which comes here to trade, reckoning one with another, either by Toll, his own Trade or Custom, which comes to about 400 Pounds Sterling; and sometimes fifty Ships come hither in a Year, though at other times not above half so many: In short, if the King were not cheated, he would have a vast Income, and be a potent Prince, considered as one of this Country Kings; but compared with the Oriental or other Kings, he makes indeed but a wretched Figure: But it goes here as all the World over, each Officer steals no more than he can, and the Offices seem only to turn to the Advantage of the Possessors, without the Givers being much the better for them.

But how great soever the King's Revenue may be, he hath occasion enough for it; for besides the large Summs which he daily furnishes for the Destruction of Popo, and to Subject Offra;

Besides these, I say, and the necessary Expences of his Household, together with the rich Offerings he is obliged to make to his Idol-Gods, he is daily obliged to keep four Thousand Men, and to provide them with Meat and Drink; and tho' he doth not esteem his Subjects more than his Slaves, yet when he employs them he is obliged to pay them dear enough. His

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His principal great Men eat with him daily, or at least in his Presence, for no Man is permitted to see him eat, nor any Woman besides his Wives; which seems to me formerly designed to create an imagination in the Subjects, that their Kings were somewhat more than Men, and were to be respected and adored as Gods; and that they did not, like other Men, want the common Supplies of Eating and Drinking, though the King doth the last before every Body.

For the former Reason, and one more which I shall mention, no Person is permitted to know the King's Lodging-place. I once very innocently asked his greatest Minion, Carter, where the King lay at Night? but he answered this Question with another, which was, where doth God lodge? just as much, is it possible for us to know the King's Bed-chamber.

This I am apt to think is done to preserve a deep Respect amongst the People; and that upon a sudden on-set of the Enemies, they should not immediately find the King, but that he may get time enough to save himself by Flight.

Besides the above mentioned Expences, the Kings Charge is very much augmented by his continual Presents to the Europeans; which if he likes them, and they receive them thankfully, are considerable.

Their Tables are daily furnished by him with Sheep, Hogs, Fowl, Beef, or what else can be gotten, together with Bread, Fruit, Beer, and what thereto appertains, and all this in larger Quantities than their People really want.

The Hollanders were in my time extraordinary well treated here, for the King provided them better than all other Nations, and frequently sent them a double Portion; but since the Captains of Ships have managed the Trade here, I am informed our Nation is treated by the King with very small

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small distinction; for which these Masters of Ships are solely to blame; for they being utterly ignorant of the Manners of the People, don't know how to treat them with that Decency which they require; and the Natives here being very Judicious, have doubtless lessened their former esteem for them: Upon which Ground I dare prophetically averr, that they will certainly ruine the Slave Trade here, and so manage it that every Body shall be obliged to pay dearer for Slaves than usually. But having touched on this Subject in the seventh Letter, I shall quit it at present; as also that I may not anger the Sailors, who fancy they understand the Slave Trade as well as we our selves: But since I have so often mentioned that Commerce, I shall describe how it is managed by our Factors here.

The first business of one of our Factors when he comes to *Fida*, is to satisfy the Customs of the King and the great Men, which amount to about 100 Pounds in *Guinea* value, as the Goods must yield there. After which we have free Licence to Trade, which is published throughout the whole Land by the Cryer.

But yet before we can deal with any Person, we are obliged to buy the King's whole stock of Slaves at a set price; which is commonly one third or one fourth higher than ordinary: After which we obtain free leave to deal with all his Subjects of what Rank soever. But if there happen to be no stock of Slaves, the Factor must then resolve to run the Risque of trusting the Inhabitants with Goods to the value of one or two hundred Slaves; which Commodities they send into the In-land Country, in order to buy with them Slaves at all Markets, and that sometimes two hundred Miles deep in the Country: For you ought to be informed that Markets of Men are here kept in the same manner as those of Beasts with us.

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Not a few in our Country fondly imagine that Parents here sell their Children, Men their Wives, and one Brother the other: But those who think so deceive themselves; for this never happens on any other account but that of Necessity, or some great Crime: But most of the Slaves that are offered to us are Prisoners of War, which are sold by the Victors as their Booty.

When these Slaves come to *Fida*, they are put in Prison all together, and when we treat concerning buying them, they are all brought out together in a large Plain; where, by our Chirurgeons, whose Province it is, they are thoroughly examined, even to the smallest Member, and that naked too both Men and Women, without the least Distinction or Modesty. Those which are approved as good are set on one side; and the lame or faulty are set by as *Invalides*, which are here called *Mackrons*. These are such as are above five and thirty Years old, or are maimed in the Arms, Legs, Hands or Feet, have lost a Tooth, are grey-haired, or have Films over their Eyes; as well as all those which are affected with any Veneral Distemper, or with several other Diseases.

The *Invalides* and the Maimed being thrown out, as I have told you; the remainder are numbred, and it is entred who delivered them. In the meanwhile a burning Iron, with the Arms or Name of the Companies, lyes in the Fire; with which ours are marked on the Breast.

This is done that we may distinguish them from the Slaves of the *English*, *French* or others; (which are also marked with their Mark) and to prevent the *Negroes* exchanging them for worse; at which they have a good Hand.

I doubt not but this Trade seems very barbarous to you, but since it is followed by meer necessity it must go on; but we yet take all possible care that

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that they are not burned too hard, especially the Women, who are more tender than the Men.

We are seldom long detained in the buying of these Slaves, because their price is established, the Women being one fourth or fifth part cheaper than the Men. The Disputes which we generally have with the Owners of these Slaves are, that we will not give them such Goods as they ask for them, especially the *Boesies* (as I have told you, the Money of this Country;) of which they are very fond, though we generally make a Division on this Head in order to make one sort of Goods help off another, because those Slaves which are paid for in *Boesies* cost the Company one half more than those bought with other Goods. The Price of a Slave is commonly——

When we have agreed with the Owners of the Slaves, they are returned to their Prison; where from that time forwards they are kept at our charge, cost us two pence a day a Slave; which serves to subsist them, like our Criminals, on Bread and Water: So that to save Charges we send them on Board our Ships with the very first Opportunity; before which their Masters strip them of all they have on their Backs; so that they come Aboard stark-naked as well Women as Men: In which condition they are obliged to continue, if the Master of the Ship is not so Charitable (which he commonly is) as to bestow something on them to cover their Nakedness.

You would really wonder to see how these Slaves live on Board; for though their number sometimes amounts to six or seven Hundred, yet by the careful Management of our Masters of Ships, they are so regulated that it seems incredible: And in this particular our Nation exceeds all other *Europeans*; for as the *French*, *Portuguese* and *English* Slave-Ships, are always foul and stinking; on the contrary ours are for the most part clean and neat.

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The Slaves are fed three times a Day with indifferent good Victuals, and much better than they eat in their own Country. Their Lodging-place is divided into two parts; one of which is appointed for the Men the other for the Women; each Sex being kept a-part: Here they lye as close together as is possible for them to be crowded.

We are sometimes sufficiently plagued with a parcel of Slaves, which come from a far In-land Country, who very innocently persuade one another, that we buy them only to fatten and afterwards eat them as a Delicacy.

When we are so unhappy as to be pestered with many of this sort, they resolve and agree together (and bring over the rest to their Party) to run away from the Ship, kill the *Europeans*, and set the Vessel a-shore; by which means they design to free themselves from being our Food.

I have twice met with this Misfortune; and the first time proved very unlucky to me, I not in the least suspecting it; but the Up-roar was timely quashed by the Master of the Ship and my self, by causing the Abettor to be shot through the Head, after which all was quiet.

But the second time it fell heavier on another Ship, and that chiefly by the carelessness of the Master, who having fished up the Anchor of a departed *English* Ship, had laid it in the Hold where the Male Slaves were lodged; who, unknown to any of the Ships Crew, possessed themselves of a Hammer; with which, in a short time, they broke all their Fetters in pieces upon the Anchor: after this they came above Deck and fell upon our Men; some of whom they grievously wounded, and would certainly have mastered the Ship, if a *French* and *English* Ship had not very fortunately happened to lye by us; who perceiving by our firing a Distressed-Gun, that something was in disorder on Board, immediately came to our assist-

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ance with Chalops and Men, and drove the Slaves under Deck: Notwithstanding which before all was appeas'd about twenty of them were killed.

The *Portuguese* have been more unlucky in this Particular than we; for in four Years time they lost four Ships in this manner.

Thus believing I have sufficiently digressed concerning the Slave Trade, I shall return to my Subject, which was the King of *Fida*.

Who, I am oblig'd to tell you, is feared and reverenced by his Subjects as a Demi-God. None of his Subjects, of what Degree soever, as you have been already told, appears in his Presence otherwise than kneeling or prostrate on his Belly: When they go to salute him in the Morning, they prostrate themselves before the Door of his House, kiss the Earth three times successively, and clapping their Hands, whisper some Words tending to the Adoration of the King. This done, they crawl in on all Four, where they repeat the same Reverence.

His Presence is so awful to them, that with a single Word he makes them to tremble; but as soon as his Back is turned they immediately forget their Fear, not much regarding his Commands, and always knowing how to appease and delude him with a Lye or two.

The King is very magnificently Cloath'd in Silk, or Gold and Silver Stuffs; but he is more especially dress'd better than ordinary when he goes to visit any of the *Europeans*; which he can easily do unseen of any, all their Dwellings being built round his Court, if it may be so call'd.

Our Lodging here, which the King caus'd to be built for me, is very large, containing three Warehouses and seven Chambers, besides a beautiful Court within adorned on each side with a covered Gallery. But the Lodgings of the rest of the *Europeans* are very mean and inconvenient.

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The King's Children, besides the small ones yet kept within Doors, are four, viz. three Sons and one Daughter.

All which are very handsome, especially the eldest, who is the most beautiful *Negroe* I ever yet saw in my Life; but it is pity so agreeable a Body should be inhabited by such a villanous Soul. Pursuant to his Birth-right he is Heir apparent to the Crown; but he is of such a fraudulent and perverse Nature, that it is to be hop'd he will not succeed; but if he doth, the Land will suffer very much.

He hath his Emissaries in all Quarters to steal from the *Europeans* as well as Blacks; and what is yet more, he doth not excuse even the King his Father.

He is exactly of the same Nature with the Owls, which take their flight only by Night; for he never goes out of his House till the Evening, when I have several times had the Honour to be visited by him.

One Reason why he doth not go abroad in the Day time is owing to his Haughty Temper, which will not allow him to shew himself to the Commonalty; and the other is several times to avoid the necessity of appearing in his Father's Presence.

The King's second Son is very like his Father; to whom he is not Inferiour in all manner of Civility: Wherefore the great Men make their Court to him; and for this Reason I doubt not but after the King's Decease, this Realm will be engaged in a Civil War; for the greatest number will endeavour to place the youngest Son on the Throne; which the eldest assisted with Foreign Domestick Force, will as vigorously oppose. And if at that time the *Europeans* happen to be able, they will act very prudently in espousing the Party of the younger Brother, as they did in the case of the present King; who, though the younger Brother, yet by reason of his Natural Goodness, was fix'd by force on the Throne by the *Dutch*, *French* and

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and Portuguese, his elder Brother being by their means driven out and banished the Country; which is the principal Reason that he at present is so sensibly inclined to favour the *Europeans*.

I cannot here omit the pernicious Custom of this Nation on occasion of the King's Death; which is no sooner publickly known than every Person falls a stealing to as great a value of his Neighbour's Goods as he can possibly come at, and that openly in the Face of the whole World, without being liable to any Punishment; as tho' the Death of the King put an end to all manner of Reason and Justice.

This Robbery is continued till a new King is confirmed in the Throne; who by publick Proclamation forbids it, and he is immediately therein strictly obeyed.

And if the Chief Commanders cannot agree in the Establishment of a new King; they, notwithstanding, to prevent the continuance of this Disorder, tell the People that they have chosen a new King, and in his Name publish the before-mentioned Proclamation.

The choosing or confirming of a new King seldom continues long in dispute; for the eldest Son no sooner hears of the King's Death, than he immediately makes his Interest amongst his Friends, to take Possession of the late King's Court and Wives; and succeeding happily in these Particulars, he need not doubt the remainder; for the Commonalty will not easily consent that after that he shall be driven from the Throne. This seems somewhat like *Absalom's* Design on his Father *David*.

To accomplish this Design, the younger Brother's Party are always careful enough that he is near at Hand in order to take possession of the Court.

You cannot but remember that I have informed you of the Multiplicity of the King's Wives; who

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who are sometimes made use of by him as Executioners of the Sentences he pronounces against Offenders: Which is only done by sending three or four hundred of them to the Habitation of the Malefactor, to strip his House and lay it level with the Ground; for all Persons being forbidden on pain of Death to touch the King's Wives, they are enabled to execute his Commands without the least interruption.

Just before my Arrival at *Fida*, there hapned somewhat so pleasant that I cannot help imparting it to you. A *Negroe* of my Acquaintance, and who in process of time did me very considerable Services, being before-hand advertised that he was accused of a certain Crime to the King, and that Orders were issued out accordingly to plunder and demolish his House; his time being too short to clear himself to the King, and being innocent, he resolved instead of flying from his House, according to Custom, to remain at Home and expect the King's Wives, who soon after came, and contrary to their Expectation found him at Home; upon which they commanded him immediately to retire, and not interrupt the Execution of their Orders: But instead of obeying them, he had placed a Heap of 2000 Weight of Gun-powder just by him; with which he, with terrible Imprecations, threatned to fire and blow up himself with them in the Air if they came nearer him. They were so far from liking this, that dismally affrighted at his Threats, they made the best of their way back to the King, to acquaint him with their ill Success: But they were not so expeditious but that the *Negroe* was too quick for them; and so handsomely acquitted himself to the King, and brought such clear Proofs of his Innocence, that his Sovereign declared him innocent; and thus by a dextrous management and presence of Mind he freed himself from imminent Danger.

But

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But enough on this Subject, which I might easily have passed over in Silence: It is now time to come to my promised Subject, the Religion of the *Fidasians*.

I have already informed you that the greatest Crimes committed at *Fida* are generally compensated by Money; and what followeth will convince you that their Religion seems only founded on the same Principle, *Interest*.

Their Religion is Superstitious to a greater degree than any I ever yet heard of in the World: For allowing the Ancient Heathens to value themselves on thirty Thousand Deities, I dare yet averr, that those of *Fida* may justly lay claim to four times that number.

I once asked a *Negroe*, with whom I could talk very freely, and whom I had also a good Opinion of (being the same who had the Adventure with the King's Wives, already related :) I asked him, I say, how they celebrated their Divine Worship, and what number of Gods they had? He laughing, answered, That I had puzzled him; and assured me that no Body in the whole Country could give me an exact Account of it: For, as for my own part (continues he) I have a very large number of Gods, and doubt not but others have as many. And I telling him that only three Gods were owned to me by the Inhabitants, and desiring him withal to give me some account of the rest: He obliged me with the following Answer, That the Number of their Gods was endless and innumerable: For (said he) any of us being resolved to undertake any thing of Importance, we first of all search out a God to prosper our designed Undertaking; and going out of Doors with this Design, take the first Creature that presents it self to our Eyes, whether Dog, Cat or the most contemptible Animal in the World, for our God; or perhaps instead of that any Inanimate that falls in our

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his way, whether a Stone, a piece of Wood, or any thing else of the same Nature. This new chosen God is immediately presented with an Offering; which is accompanied with a Solemn Vow, that if he pleaseth to prosper our Undertakings, for the future we will always worship and esteem him as a God. If our Design prove successful, we have discovered a new and assisting God; which is daily presented with fresh Offerings: But if the contrary happen, the new God is rejected as an useless Tool, and consequently returns to his Primitive Estate: He went on in these following Words, we make and break our Gods daily, and consequentially are the Masters and Inventers of what we Sacrifice to.

This Divine Service is not new in the World, nor were the first Men strangers to it. But how these Notions reached *Fida*, is what I dare not presume to determine. So far the *Negroe*.

I was very well pleased to hear this *Negroe* talk in this manner concerning his Country Gods: But having conversed with him for some time, I observed that he ridiculed his own Country Gods; for having in his Youth lived amongst the *French*, whose Language he perfectly understood, and spake, he had amongst them imbibed the Principles of the Christian Religion, and somewhat towards a just Notion of the True God, and how he is to be Worshipped; to whom, and not to his Country Gods, he ascribed the Creation of all Things: Wherefore he no farther concerned himself with the Gods of his Country, than as engaged to it for quietness sake, or to make his Friends easie; to whom he durst not reveal his Opinion, fearing (what would certainly have happened) the falling into some dangerous Circumstances; for as strong as his Faith was, it was not arrived to that Pitch as to oblige him to suffer Loss of Goods on that account: So that we may justly cry out, O how weak was his Faith! It

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It is certain that his Country-Men have a faint Idea of the True God, and ascribe to him the Attributes of Almighty, and Omnipresent; they believe he created the Universe, and therefore vastly prefer him before their Idol-Gods: But yet they do not pray to him, or offer any Sacrifices to him, for which they give the following Reasons. God, say they, is too high exalted above us, and too great to condescend so much as to trouble himself or think of Mankind: Wherefore he commits the Government of the World to their Idols; to whom, as the second, third and fourth Persons distant in degree from God, and our appointed lawful Governours, we are obliged to apply our selves. And in firm Belief of this Opinion they quietly continue.

Their Principal Gods, which are owned for such throughout the whole Country, are of three sorts. First, a certain sort of Snakes, who possess the chief Rank amongst their Gods. How would our Country-man, *Becker*, Author of *the World Bewitched*, divert himself with the contrary Opinions of the Sons of *Adam*? For as we take the Serpent for the Fatal Destroyer of Human-Race; so these of *Fida* on the contrary esteem him their Supreme Bliss and greatest Good. But this by way of Parenthesis only.

Their Second-rate Gods are some lofty high Trees; in the Formation of which Dame-Nature seems to have expressed her greatest Art.

The third and meanest God or Younger Brother to the other is the Sea. These three mentioned are the publick Deities, which are worshipped and prayed to throughout the whole Country: And each of these, according to their ridiculous Perswasion, hath its particular Province, like the Officers of a King or Prince; with this difference only, that the Sea and Trees are not permitted to intermeddle with what is entrusted to the Snake; which on the contrary hath an influencing Power over both the other, in order to correct them when they prove idle or lazy. They

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They Invoke the Snake in excessive Wet, Dry, or Barren Seasons; on all occasions relating to their Government and the Preservation of their Cattel, or rather in one Word, in all Necessities and Difficulties, in which they do not apply to their new Batch of Gods.

And for this reason very great Offerings are made to it, especially from the King, who on several Occasions, by instigation of the Priests, and the great Men his Creatures and the Priest's Tools, sends very rich Offerings to the Snake-House. But I am of Opinion, that these Roguish Priests sweep all the mentioned Offerings to themselves, and doubtless make themselves very Merry with them.

These Offerings are commonly comprized of Money, some Pieces of Silk or Stuff, all sorts of *European* and *African* Commodities, all sorts of Cattel, and good Eatables and Drinks: All which are so frequently exacted from the King, that he sometimes grows tired and refuseth them.

This I had once an Opportunity of observing: For finding him very much enraged, I made no scruple to ask him, *What had so much displeas'd him*: He very freely told me, That that Year he had sent much larger Offerings to the Snake-House than usual, in order to obtain a good Crop; and that one of his Viceroy's (whom he shewed me) had desired him to fresh in the Name of the Priests, who threaten'd a Barren Year, to send yet more. To which he answered, That he did not intend to make any farther Offerings this Year; and if the Snake would not bestow a plentiful Harvest on them, he might let it alone. For (said he) I cannot be more damaged thereby, the greatest part of my Corn being already Rotten in the Field.

I smiling observ'd, That the King would have added another Present, if he could have hoped for

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any Advantage by it; but to make Offerings barely for another's Interest, he was not very fond of; wherefore the Petitioner was obliged to depart without obtaining his end; which went down but indifferently with him and the Priests, who had promised themselves another sort of Success.

The Snake-House which I have so frequently mentioned, is situated about two Miles from the King's Village, and built under a very beautiful lofty Tree, *In which (say they) the Chief and largest of all the Snakes resides.* He is a sort of Grandfather to all the rest; is represented as thick as a Man, and of an unmeasurable length.

He must also be very Old, for they report that they found him a great number of Years past; when by reason of the Wickedness of the Men, he left another Country to come to them, at which being overjoyed; they welcomed their new-come God with all expressible signs of Reverence and high Veneration, and carry'd him upon a Silken Carpet to the Snake-house, where he is at present.

This Roguish Snake probably had the same Freaks in his Tail, which the old Heathen Gods were affected with when they run away from one Country to another; wherefore they were sometimes obliged to bind their God-head fast; of which those poor Wretches who lost the Snake were not aware, otherwise they might have stopped his Journey. But wherefore do I spend my time in making Reflections, since I have more important Subjects to handle!

The Kings of *Fida* were formerly accustomed to Annual Pilgrimages to the Snake-House, which was Celebrated with great Magnificence, and concluded with yet greater Presents: For the

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the King not only made very rich Offerings, but also bestowed very large Presents on the great Men that accompanied him; so that this Pilgrimage commonly cost him several Thousands.

But the present King hath broke off this Custom, which is accordingly grown in disuse for several Years past. In his last Tour which he made to the Snake-House, he was (as I am informed) accompanied by Monsieur *Ducas*, a French Captain, who was ridiculous enough, to the Scandal of all *Europeans*, to dress himself in Tyger's Skins and other sort of Trifles, and lead the King in this Equipage to the Snake-House. If this Action is true of him, it is worse than that of *Naaman* the Syrian, who hardly converted, asked leave to support his Master in the House of *Rimmon*. But this is a digression very wide from our purpose.

The King then as I have told you, doth not make this Pilgrimage in Person, but orders it to be done by some of his Wives, which does not prove near so expensive; and this I believe is the only reason why he leaves it off.

But as the Snake Service proves very expensive to the King, so the Revenue which he draws from thence is not inconsiderable. Annually from the time when the *Mais* or small *Milbio* is sowed till it grows up to Man's height, the King and Priest's Plow turns to a very great Account to them; for the People here which don't see much farther than their Noses, imagine that during this whole Season, the Snake or Snakes make it their Business every Evening and Night to seize all the beautiful young Women which please them, and to make them Distracted; wherefore their Parents or Relations are necessitated to cause these Girls to be brought to a particular House built for that purpose, where they are oblig'd to stay several

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Months, as it is given out to Cure them of their Madness; during which time the Relations are obliged to furnish them with all manner of Necessaries, and that so plentifully, that the Priests can also handsomly subsist on it.

The appointed time of their Confinement being over, and being Cured of the Distemper with which they were never afflicted, they obtain leave to come out; before which they must pay the Charge of their Cure and Keeping, which is adjusted in proportion to the Circumstances of their Relations; and one Girl with another amounts to about five Pounds: And the Number of young Girls thus Imprison'd rises to several Thousands, each considerable Village having a particular House appointed for that purpose, and some which are large being provided with two or three.

All the Money which this Trade raiseth, is commonly thought and believed to be for the Priests, in order to be made use of in their Divine Service. And tho' I doubt not but the Priests have their Share, I am yet certain, That the King is so far from suffering by it, that he draws considerable Sums from this Custom.

The first time that I came to *Fida* to Trade, I was assured that as soon as a Girl was touched by the Snake, she unavoidably run Mad; tho' it was but a sort of Holy or Religious Madness, such as hath formerly been related of the *Bacchantes*, or those from whose Mouths the Divine Oracles proceeded. Yet I don't like these Pious Funs, for the Persons pretend to be affected with it, break and spoil every thing which comes in their way; and instead of Religious are guilty of all manner of Diabolical Actions, which they never leave off till they are brought to the beforementioned Place.

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At first the People here strenuously endeavour'd to perswade me, that a Snake was able to fetch a Girl out of the House and carry her off, tho' the said House was close shut up. Which I easily agreed to, provided the Girl was but stored with proper Instruments to open the Locks.

I would not rest till I had examined how this Cheat is managed, notwithstanding which I should never have discovered it, if the beforementioned *Negro* had not assisted me, and oblig'd me with the following Account of it, *viz.* That the Priests diligently observe those young Maids or Women also which have never been affected by the Snake. These they first attempt by Promises, or if they are not successful, oblige by Threats to perform what they desire of them; which is, that being in the Street and seeing the Coast clear of People on all sides, they set on Crying and Raving with all their Strength, as tho' the Snake had fast hold of them, and commanded them to go to the Snake-house.

Before any Person can come to their help, the Snake is vanished and the Girl is Mad; which necessitates her Relations to follow the Snake's Orders.

When these Females come out of their Mad Prison, the Priest lays his most rigid Commands on them, not to discover how they were seized by the Snake; but to stick fast to the Story that the Snake did it. And in order to clench these severe Prohibitions and render them the more effectual, those who reveal those Secrets of the Sacerdotal Empire, are threatned to be immediately Burned alive. And indeed the Priests are Cruel and Potent enough to make good their Threats, if they could find any Women guilty.

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This Negro related a pleasant Adventure concerning this Confinement, which happened betwixt him and one of his Wives; who by the Instigation of the Priests, one Evening feigned herself Distracted, breaking (according to Custom) every thing in Pieces on which she could lay her Hands. But he very well knowing whence this Distemper proceeded; gently took her by the Hand, as tho' he designed to carry her to the Snake-House, but carried her indeed to the Place of Residence of the *Brandenburgers*, who were then at *Fida* in order to buy Slaves; where he offer'd her to Sale. But when she saw that he was in earnest, immediately freed from her Madness, she fell upon her Knees and ask'd his Pardon, solemnly Promising at the same time never to be guilty of the like Crime for the future, upon which he let her go free; and by this means she was delivered from her Madness, and he freed from the excessive Charge of her Cure. This was a very bold Attempt, for if the Priests had been informed of it, he had been a dead Man.

During my Residence at *Fida*, the King caused his Daughter to be seized by the Snake. (The consequence will justify my charging him with it.) He caused her to be carried to the Snake-House, and confined for some time, tho' not so long as is customary; but on her account all the other Girls went out before their usual time.

On the Day of her Delivery, she was brought out in a very splendid Manner; and carried with all the other Girls which followed her, to the King's Court, before which they were placed. She was Naked except only a Silk Scarf, which was passed betwixt her Legs, and richly adorned with *Conte di Terra* and *Agrie*, two sorts of Coral, which I have already frequently mentioned.

Whilst

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Whilst she was here she was guilty of all manner of Extravagancies, during the Playing on several Musical Instruments; which sort of Madness the *Negroes* told me yet remained on her, more especially by reason of her being enlarged before the expiration of her due time.

Whilst she fate here the most considerable People of the whole Country crouded hither, each bringing his Presents which they made to her; and together amounted to a considerable Sum. These Gifts lasted three or four Days successively, because it was impossible for most of the People to come near her the first Day; so that this young Lady was treated in a quite different manner from her Companions, who were all obliged to disburse Money for their Delivery, whilst she on the other side was a very considerable Gainer thereby.

And if there are any *Negroes* who are very sensible that all this is nothing but a pure Cheat, yet to curry favour with the King and Priests, and for their own Security, they pretend Ignorance, and suffer it to pass upon them for real Truth; which is indeed advisable, for those who should oppose it, would very much endanger their Lives.

I was Eye-Witness to a dreadful Instance of this. The last time I was at *Fida*, a *Negro* born on the *Gold-Coast*, who was called Captain *Tom*, lived at *Fida*; and by reason of his good Deportment and obliging Nature, was promoted to the Dignity of Captain and Interpreter to the *English*. He being a Stranger to the Religion of this Country, had a Wife of this Nation, which fell Mad and pretended to be seized by the Serpent: But he instead of sending her to the Snake-house, clapt her in Irons; which so enraged this She-Devil (different from other in our former Story) that she

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privately accused her Husband to the Priests; who not willing to make any publick Attempts on him, because he was a Gold-Coast Negro who differed from them in Religion; yet secretly Poison'd him in such a manner, that he did not quickly Dye, but immediately became Speechless, and lost the use of all his Limbs, which was worse than Dying.

At my Departure I left him in this miserable Condition, so that I know not whether he was ever Cured or not. From which you may observe, That throughout the World it is very dangerous to disoblige the Ecclesiasticks.

This may suffice, concerning the Frauds of the Priests on account of the Snake-Worship.

The Reverence and Respect which the Negroes preserve for the Snake is so great, that if a Black should barely touch one of them with a Stick, or any otherwise hurt him; he is a dead Man, and certainly Condemned to the Flames.

A long time past, when the English first began to Trade here, there happened a very Remarkable and Tragical Event. An English Captain being landed, some of his Men and part of his Cargo, they found a Snake in their House, which they immediately killed without the least Scruple, and not doubting but they had done a good Work, threw out the dead Snake at their Door; where being found by the Negroes in the Morning, the English preventing the Question who had done the Fact, ascribed the Honour to themselves; which so incensed the Natives, that they furiously fell on the English, killed them all and Burned their House and Goods.

This struck such a Terror into that Nation, that for a long time they refrain'd coming thither, and traded at other Places; but at last coming again, the Negroes were accusom'd to shew all

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all Europeans that came thither some Snakes, desiring that they would not hurt them, by reason they were their Gods; and this hath prevented all such Accidents ever since; so that at present few Europeans come hither who are not advertis'd of this Snake-Worship. If an European should happen at this time to kill a Snake, I should very much doubt, whether he would escape better than the English, except he could possibly fly to the King immediately, and satisfy him that it happen'd by Accident, not Design, upon which, perhaps, he might atone his God-killing Crime by a Fine to the Priests, tho' I should not be very willing to run such a Hazard; for, on such Occasions the Rabble, instigated by the Priests, grow very outrageous; so that it is safest carefully to avoid all things of this Nature.

In my time an Aquamboean Negroe took a Snake upon his Stick, because he durst not venture to touch it with his Hands, and carry'd it out of the House without hurting it in the least, which two or three Negroes seeing, set up the same Cry that is usual on account of Fire, by which they can in a small time raise the whole Country, who flock to the Place arm'd with Clubs, Swords, Assagayes and other Arms, who would have soon dispatch'd this poor Negroe, if the King, acquainted with his Innocence, had not timely rescued him from the impending Danger, by sending some of his Great Men to shelter him; so this Tempest blew over without any Damage.

By these Instances we are deterr'd from meddling with the accursed Gods or Devilish Serpents, notwithstanding that we are frequently molested by them; since in hot Sun-shine Weather (as if they were Lovers of Darknes) they visit us by five or six together, creeping upon our Chairs, Benches, Tables, and even our Beds, and bearing all

ing us Company in Sleep ; and if they get a good Place under our Beds, and our Servants out of Laziness don't turn up our Bedding, they sometimes continue there seven or eight Days, where they have also cast their Young.

But when we are aware of these Vermin, and do not desire to be troubled with them any longer, we need only call any of the Natives, who gently carries his God out of Doors : But if they happen to be gotten to the Joyce, or any high Place of the Houses, (which are here but one Story) without a strong Influence over the *Negroes*, they are not to be remov'd from thence ; wherefore we are frequently oblig'd to let them stay there, till they come out themselves.

A Snake once came over my Table, on which I daily was us'd to eat, where he continu'd fourteen Days, and tho' whenever I rose I could easily touch him, yet I could not find any Person that would venture to take him away. But I was very well paid for his staying afterwards.

For some of the Great Men of *Fida* dining at my Table one Day, we happen'd to talk concerning the Snakes, and my Eye glancing towards that which was over our Heads, I told them, that since that Snake had not eaten any thing in fourteen Days, he must at last certainly die with Hunger, if he did not speedily remove his Quarters. But one of my Guests answer'd me, (and the rest confirm'd what he said) That tho' I was not aware of it, undoubtedly the Snake knew how to come at his Part out of the Dishes. I so well remember'd this, that next Day coming to the King, I told him in presence of the same Persons, That one of his Gods had made bold, tho' uninvited, to eat at my Table for fourteen Days ; wherefore it was but reasonable that I should be paid for his Board, otherwise I should be oblig'd

to

to discharge this bold Intruder my House. The King who was always diverted with such sort of Discourse, told me, that I should let the Snake alone in his Place, for he would take care to provide for me as well as the Snake ; and indeed, not long after I got home, a very fine fat Ox was brought me from the King, in order to satisfy for what the Snake had eaten.

At the same Rate I would willingly have boarded all the Gods of the Land ; and I believe should not have lost much by the Bargain.

But what is best of all, is, that these Idolatrous Snakes don't do the least Mischief in the World to Mankind : For, if by chance in the Dark one treads upon them, and they bite or sting him, it is not more prejudicial than the Sting of the *Millepedes*. Wherefore the *Negroes* would fain persuade us, that it is good to be bitten or stung by these Snakes, upon the Plea, that one is thereby secur'd and protected from the Sting of any Poysonous Snake. But here I am somewhat dubious, and should be loth to venture on the Credit of their Assertions, because I have observ'd, that the Gods themselves are not Proof against these venomous Serpents, much less can they protect us from their Bite. We sometimes observe pleasant Battels betwixt the Idol and venomous Snakes, which are not wanting here ; and perhaps these Combats arise from the venomous Snakes, their finding that the other are so Reverenc'd and Idoliz'd, which they think the more unreasonable, because they are arm'd with Poyson, on Occasion, which the other are utterly void of:

You must suppose these Ratiocinations and Arguments to take place in Antient Times, when Beasts talk'd, of which these venomous Serpents retain only an irreconcilable Enmity against the other, and accordingly attack them whenever they meet them :

A Description of the L E T. XIX.

them: But herein they fall short of their Design, and that with a great deal of Reason; for, 'twould indeed seem very odd, that a God should be oblig'd to strike to such ill-favour'd Creatures as they are. But I can assure you that is not the Reason; for the venomous Serpents being larger, and arm'd with stronger Weapons than the other, would, without any Respect to their Godhead, soon be too hard for them, if they were not always afflicted by a Legion or two of their Worshipers, who punish the Insolence of the other, that presumes to attack their Deity, with certain Death.

The Species of these Idol Serpents here, are streak'd with White, Yellow and Brown; and the biggest which I have seen here, is about a Fathom long, and the Thickness of a Man's Arm.

These Gods are very great Lovers of Rat's-Flesh, and I have with Pleasure frequently observ'd their Rat-Chase; but when they have caught their Prey, they have at least an Hour's Work before they can get him into their Bellies: For if you were to see them, they are so narrow Throated, that you would think it impossible for them to get a Rat down: But I have observ'd, that whilst they are engag'd on their Prey their Throat extends it self.

If one of these Snakes happen to be under the Tiling of a House, and a Rat passeth by him, he cannot possibly catch him, not being able to disengage himself quick enough. This the Rats seem to know; for I have above one hundred times on an Evening seen them run by a Snake thus engaged, and even mock him, whilst he impatiently hiss'd, and employ'd all his Force to loosen himself, in order to come at them, but too late, for by that time they were all gone.

If

L E T. XIX. Slave-Coast.

If we are ever tir'd with the Natives of this Country, and would fain be rid of them, we need only speak ill of the Snake, after which they immediately stop their Ears and run out of Doors. But tho' this may be taken from an *European*, that they like; yet, if a *Negro* of another Nation should presume to do it, he would run no small Risque.

In case a Fire breaks out and one of these Snakes comes to be burnt, each Person that hears it is sure to stop his Ears, and give Money, thereby giving to understand, that it is one of the most dismal and shocking things that he can hear; and this Money is to reconcile him to the burnt God, of whom he hath been so careless. And they farther believe, that tho' the Snake is burnt, he will yet quickly return, to revenge himself on those who have been the occasion of his Death.

In the Year 1697. my Brother Factor Mr. *Nicholas Poll*, (who then managed the Slave Trade for our Company at *Fida*) had the Diversion of a very pleasant Scene. A Hog being bitten by a Snake, in Revenge, or out of Love to God's Flesh, seiz'd and devour'd him in sight of the *Negroes*, who were not near enough to prevent him. Upon this the Priests all complain'd to the King; but the Hog could not defend himself, and had no Advocate; and the Priests, unreasonable enough in their Request, begg'd of the King to Publish a Royal Order, that all the Hogs in his Kingdom should be forthwith kill'd, and the *Swiny Race* extirpated, without so much as deliberating whether it was reasonable to destroy the Innocent with the Guilty.

The King's Command was Publish'd all over the Country. And in Pursuance thereto, it was not a little diverting, to see Thousands of *Blacks* arm'd with Swords and Clubs to execute the Order;

der; whilst on the other side no small Number of those who were Owners of the Hogs were in like manner arm'd in their Defence, urging their Innocence, but all in vain. The Slaughter went on, and nothing was heard but the dismal Sound of Kill, Kill, which cost many an honest Hog his Life, that had liv'd with an unspotted Character to his dying Day. And doubtless the whole Race had been utterly extirpated, if the King (who is not naturally bloody-minded) perhaps mov'd to it by some Lovers of Bacon, had not recall'd his Order by a Counter one, importing, that they should leave off killing the Hogs, with the Addition, that there was already enough of innocent Blood shed, and that their God ought to be appeas'd with so rich a Sacrifice.

You may judge, whether this was not very welcome News to the Remainder of the Hogs, when they saw themselves freed from such a cruel Persecution. Wherefore they took particular Care for the future, not to incur the same Penalty.

Next time that I came to *Fida*, I found by the dearness of these Beasts, that there had been a very great Slaughter of them.

These sorts of Tyrannies are frequent under despotical Governments, where the Priests are joyn'd Masters. But not too fast, lest I should slip from Beasts to Men.

Hitherto I have been talking of the *Fidastan* chiefest God, or rather Gods, by reason of their Number: But the other being of less Consequence will take up much less time.

The Trees which are the second-rate Gods of this Country, as I have already inform'd you, are only pray'd to, and presented with Offerings, in time of Sicknes, more especially Fevers, in order to restore the Patients to Health. And this they believe to be as properly the Tree's Business

as

as the Snake's: But however, the Snake must not be forgotten; for they imagine, and that truly enough, that if he does no Good, he will at least do no Harm. And hence I believe this Nation would be easily prevail'd upon with the *Athenians* to Worship the unknown God, if they could hope for any Benefit by it.

Besides this, they have other imaginary Remedies at hand to cure Diseases; such are their Sacrificing to several junior or inferior Deities; as also the killing and eating part of a Man, which was practis'd two or three Years past, on account of the King's Sicknes; besides which, they practise several other Extravagancies, too tedious to be repeated.

The Sea comes in for the least Share of Divinity. When it rages and hinders our bringing our Goods on Shoar, when no Ships have been there for a long time, and they impatiently wait for them; On these Occasions, they make great Offerings to it, by throwing into it all sorts of Goods. But the Priests don't much encourage this sort of Sacrificing, by reason there happens no Remainder to be left for them.

The former King of *Great Ardra* once caus'd a great Quantity of these Offerings to be made to the Sea; and when he was inform'd by his Subjects (for he must not see the Sea himself) that they all availed nothing, he grew very angry, and fell into as wild a Fury as *Xerxes*, who caus'd the Sea to be whip'd, because he had been so unfortunate upon it.

Having no more to say concerning these two Deities, before I put an end to this Letter, I shall just observe to you, who are the Performers of their Divine Service here.

Their Religious Offices are here Celebrated by Men and Women together, both which are held

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in such high Veneration amongst the *Negroes*, that they are not liable to Capital Punishment for any Crime whatsoever; notwithstanding which, the present King, with the Consent of his Grandees, ventur'd to break in upon this Custom, but not without great Cause, and a pressing Necessity; for one of these Villains was engag'd with the King's Brother in a Conspiracy against the Kingdom and the King's Life, for which that Prince ordered both his Brother and the Priest to be kill'd together.

The Women which are promoted to the degree of Priestesses, tho' some of them perhaps were but Slaves before, are yet as much respected as the Priests, or rather more, inasmuch that they pride themselves with the distinguishing Name of God's Children; and as all other Women are oblig'd to a slavish Service to their Husbands, these on the contrary exert an absolute Sway over them and their Effects, living with them perfectly according to their Arbitrary Will and Pleasure; besides which, their Husbands are oblig'd to shew them so much Respect, as they receiv'd from their Wives before their becoming Priestesses, which is to speak to, and serve them upon their Knees.

For this Reason the most sensible *Negroes* will neither Marry a Priestess, nor easily consent that any of their Wives be rais'd to that Honour. But if notwithstanding it happens, they must not oppose it; for if they did, they would be call'd to a severe Account for it, and look'd upon as Men who endeavour'd to stop the common Course of Divine Worship.

To conclude the Subject of their Religion, I must add, that they have a sort of Idea of Hell, the Devil, and the Apparition of Spirits. And their Notions, concerning these, are not very different from those of some simple People amongst us.

As

As for Hell, they bestow on it a fixt Place under the Earth, where the Wicked and Damned are punish'd with Fire.

For these three or four Years last past, they have been very much confirm'd in this Belief. For an old Sorceress, that came from some odd Corner, hath told them strange things concerning Hell; as, that she saw several of her Acquaintance there, and particularly the last Captain of the *Blacks*, Predecessor to the present Captain *Carter*, who was there miserably tormented. In short, she saw so much of Hell, that she was a fit Match to dispute with *Don Quevedo*, who had the best Intelligence there. But she must be own'd to have the Advantage of him, because she pretended to have been there in Person, whereas his Journey was but a Vision.

Whilst I was here, there was also an *Augustin* Monk, which came from *St. Thomè*, in order, if possible, to convert the *Blacks* to Christianity, but in vain. Polygamy is an Obstacle which they cannot get over. As for all the other Points they might have got Footing here, but the Confinement to one Wife is an insuperable Difficulty.

This Priest invited the King to be present at Mass, which he also did. And when I saw him next, asking him how he lik'd it, he said very well, and that it was very fine; but that he chose rather to keep to his *Fetiche*.

This Priest in my Company being once in Discourse with one of the King's Grandees, who was a witty Man, said in a menacing manner, *That if the Fidasians continu'd their old Course of Life, without Repentance, they would unavoidably go to Hell, in order to burn with the Devil; To which the sharp Fidasian reply'd, Our Fathers, Grandfathers, to an endless Number, Lrv'd as we do, and Worship'd the same Gods as we do; and if they must burn there-*

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therefore, Patience, we are not better than our Ancestors, and shall comfort our selves with them. After this the Priest left off, and perceiving that all his Pains at Fida were like to be fruitless, he desir'd me to introduce him to the King to take his Leave of him, which I did shortly after.

If the Negroes could read and understand our Books, I should believe, that this Captain had read the Friesland Chronicle, where a parallel Adventure betwixt a Bishop and a Friesland King is related. It is now time to conclude; wherefore,

etc.

L E T.

LETTER. XX.

In which, first, of the Fidasian Quadrupeds; viz. Oxen, Cows, Horses, Sheep, Goats and Hogs. Secondly, Of their Fowls, which are only Turkeys, Ducks and Chicken. The Price of all the above-mentioned. Next, concerning their three Sorts of Corn, and the Plenty of it; notwithstanding which, Fida sometimes suffers great Famines. The remaining Fruits of the Earth are Potatoes, Jammes, or Beans, &c. Great Plenty of the first. Of their Fruit Trees. The Fertility of Fida, and Fitness for Plantations, and to produce Cotton, Indigo and Sugar. The Wars and Force of the Fidasians. Their Arms. Great Ardra, much more Potent than Fida. War of Great Ardra with an Inland King. The Occasion of this War, which destroy'd half the Country of Ardra, and made a cruel Slaughter of its Inhabitants. Jakin subject to Great Ardra. Of Offra, or Little Ardra, where our Company formerly had a Lodge. The Author's Departure from Fida. His Arrival at Rio de Gabon. Of the Gulph of Guinea, and its Islands and Rivers; as Rio Formosa, (Beautiful River) otherwise call'd Rio de Benin, Rio Elrei, Camarones, Old and New Calbary. The Islands are Fernando Po, El Principe, (Prince's Island) and Corisco, divided into two, large and small.

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Rio

LET. XX.

A Description of the Rio de Gabon, a fine, wide, and very good River. Two Islands in it: Visited by several Europeans, and wherefore they trade there. Few Inhabitants, which are notwithstanding divided into three Classes. Their Poverty and Pride. They're great Brandy Drinkers, and awkward in Trade. How the King gets his Livelihood. They're all well shap'd and clean limb'd Men. Their Occupation. Barrenness of the Land thereabouts. The River very full of Fish. Description of the Nord-Kapers, of which here are great Quantities. On Land there are abundance of Buffels, Elephants and wild Swine. Hunting of them, and an Elephant. A Skeleton of an Elephant found. Description of the Buffels. One of our Men kill'd by them. How they are shot by the Negroes. The Author's Departure from Gabon, and Arrival at Cabo Lopez di Gonzalvez, where is a good Road, Watering-place and Wood for Fuel. The Trade here. Plenty of Fish. Departure from Cape Lopez. He falls upon, or below the Island of St. Thome, which is described: As also Ilha Annaboa, whither the Author also came after two Days sailing. Sailing along the Equinoctial, and the Cold there. Return to the upper Coast, and to Affinee. The Dwelling Place of the Negroe Baptiz'd in France, to whom the French King was Godfather, and call'd him Lewis Hannibal; he passed for King of Assyria, but was indeed only a wretched Slave. Sailing to the Gold Coast, where the Author's

Author's Companion, or Ship which sailed with him, took an Interloper. Arrival at Elmina, with which the Voyage, this Letter, and the whole Description of Guinea is concluded.

S I R,

Since my last no Vessels have arriv'd here from Europe, and consequently I receiv'd no Letter from you: I shall then at present in this, dispatch what I have left untouch'd concerning *Fida* in the former; to which I shall add a Relation of a Voyage that I made in 1698. from *Fida* to *Rio de Gabon*, *Cabo-Lopez*, *Annaboa*, and my return to *Elmina*, where it ended.

First of all I am to speak of the Cattle of the Country of *Fida*; of which first of the tame Quadrupeds, as Oxen, Cows, Goats, Sheep and Hogs, all which in Shape are not different from those of the *Gold Coast*, but are much better, more fleshy, and of a more agreeable Taste, by reason they have here very fine Meadows, and as good Grass as in *Europe*.

Nor are they dear here. An Ox or Cow is to be bought for ten, a good Sheep for two, a Goat for one, and a Hog for two Rix-Dollars.

Nor are Horses wanting here, tho' they do not much excel those which I mentioned in my Description of the *Gold Coast*. When I was design'd to have took my Journey by Land to *Elmina*, I was provided with five or six, each of which cost me somewhat less than four Pounds Sterling; but they did me no manner of Service, I being oblig'd to leave them behind me.

Here, as well as on the *Gold Coast*, is no great Variety of tame Fowl, there being only Turkeys, Ducks and Chicken; and of the two first, not ma-

ny ; but of the last, incredible Plenty, which tho' small, are yet very fat and good, the Price being about Sixpence each ; the Price of our Goods reckon'd for as Money, they are not above Three-pence each.

But if any Body would buy in Provision cheap, he must bring two or three Cafes of long Pipes with him ; for he may put off every Pipe for the worth of Twopence, or sometimes Fourpence ; so that for three Pipes one may have the best Pullet that is to be bought.

There are not very many large Wild Beasts about *Fida* : But there are farther in-land, Elephants, Buffels, Tygers and several sorts of Dear in great Abundance. And there are also some of the last Sort at *Fida* ; But the Country there being so populous, and close inhabited, there are not many. Here are also a sort of Hares.

But this whole Country seems covered with Wild Fowl. Here are Geese, Ducks, Snipes and twenty other sort of edible Birds ; all which are very good and very cheap.

When over-night we give a *Negroe* order to go a shooting, we have against next Day Noon, without fail, one or two Dishes of Wild Fowl, which we can pay for with a dozen of Pipes ; and this is so infallible, that we can at pleasure promise a good Treat of Wild Fowl not yet caught.

Here are such prodigious Abundance of Turtle-Doves throughout the whole Country, that my Assistant, who was a good Marks-man, would undertake to shoot one hundred in one Day, betwixt six and nine in the Morning, and three and six in the Afternoon only, which is bare six Hours in all.

Besides edible Fowl, here are also a sufficient number of Birds of Prey, which may serve for Ornament

Ornament, tho' not such great Variety as on the Gold Coast.

The Crown-Bird you see in the Drawing comes from hence, as the following Bird, whose Body is about as big as a Chicken, his Legs and Neck short, his Eye and Eyelids hairy, like those of Men, his Bill short and thick, his Colour is black and blew intermixed, his Legs and Bill are very strong, and therefore very fit for preying.

If I should say any more of the feather'd Kind, I should be oblig'd to repeat what I have formerly said, which I believe you are as little desirous of as my self ; so that now I come to the Product of the Earth ; and first of Corn, of which we are here provided with three Sorts. The first is the great *Milbio*, which is not so large a Grain as that on the Gold Coast, but as good, notwithstanding which the *Negroes* don't make Bread of it, but use it in the brewing of Beer, for which reason not much of it is sown.

Small *Milbio*, or *Maiz*, which is like that on the Gold Coast, is what chiefly serves to employ this Nation. It is sowed twice each Year, tho' much more at one time than the other. In the best Tilling time the Land is so thick sown, that as I have before hinted, scarce a Foot-path is left unplanted, whence we may suppose prodigious Quantities are produc'd ; but notwithstanding this at the end of the Year, they rather fall short of what they want, than have any Overplus, which is partly occasion'd by their being so very populous, and partly by their selling very large Quantities to both the *Popo's* and the neighbouring Countries.

For which Reason one barren Year occasions an incredible Famine here ; and sometimes Free-men here have sold themselves for Vi&uals ; others set their Slaves free, perfectly discharging them of their Slavery, because they could not keep them in Vi&uals.

Equals. An *English Ship*, which was here at that time, got his whole Shipfull of Slaves, without parting with any other Merchandize than Victuals, with which he very luckily had abundantly provided himself.

When he had fill'd his Ship full of Slaves, he went to the *Portuguese Islands*, where he afresh stor'd himself with Provisions for his Goods.

Here is also a third sort of *Milbio*, like the last, which doth not grow on Stalks, but like Oats in *Holland*. Its Grain is reddish, and must continue in the Ground seven or eight Months before it is full ripe. This is not eaten, but mixed with the great *Milbio*, to Brew withall, because the *Negroes* firmly believe that it strengthens the Beer.

The *Negroe Women* are very well skill'd in brewing good Beer, one sort of which is so strong, that it doth not give Place to our strong Beers in *Holland*. And the Price of this is much higher than the common sort; for instead of Threepence a Pottle for the common sort, you are oblig'd to pay a *Rix-dollar* for the same Quantity of this. All People here, the Slaves not excepted, drink only Beer; for Water they will not drink, because it is drawn out of Wells twenty or thirty Fathom deep, and but six or eight Foot wide; so that no Sun can reach it, which renders it raw and cold as Ice, and consequently very unwholsome in this hot Country; for drinking it but few Days only, brings an unavoidable Fever; and the good Beer being too hot, an *European* cannot do better than mix them in equal Quantities, whereby he will have a pleasant and wholsome Drink.

There is not one Oven in this whole Country, by reason the *Negroes* never use them, but always boil their Bread.

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Potatoes are what they commonly Eat instead of Bread with all sorts of Victuals, and here is such abundant Plenty of them, that I believe the whole Coast doth not produce a like Number.

Here are also Jammes, but neither, in such Plenty nor so Good as on the *Gold-Coast*, nor are they much esteemed here.

Here are several sorts of small Beans in very great Plenty, amongst which is one species, of which our People make Oyl-Cakes, which are as light as ours in *Holland*; and those who are used to them, like their Taste well enough. They are here called *Acraes*. Onions and Ginger grow here, tho' in but small Quantities, especially of the former. All the other Fruits of the Earth which the *Gold-Coast* produceth, grow here also: But I shall pass them by in order to come to the Trees.

Amongst which are first Citrons, Limons, Oranges, Bakovens or Paquovens, Bananas, Piemont, and in a word all those which I have mentioned in the Description of the *Gold-Coast*; besides which here are abundance of Tamarind-Trees, and some Fruit-Trees which are not only unknown, but their Fruit is also so mean that it is not worth detaining you with a Description of them.

Here are great numbers of Palm-Trees the whole Country over, but the Wine is drawn off and Drank by very few here: For they Cultivate them only in order to draw Oyl from them.

Nor are the Pardon-Trees wanting at *Fida*; but the *Negroes* preferring Beer to Wine, they are not much esteem'd, only their Wood being very durable, they are felled for Building.

Besides the beforementioned, here are no Fruits: It is indeed Pity there should be no more in such a fertile Land, Peopled with industrious Inhabitants,

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so that they want only Seeds and young Plants; for I dare aver, that not only all sorts of *African*, but several *European* Fruits might be produced here.

I tryed here the Sowing of Cabbage, Carrots, Turneps, *Spanish* Radish, Radishes, Parsley, &c. and found they grew forward, and Ripened as well as in *Europe*. So that it is unhappy that this Land as well as the *Gold-Coast*, is not Inhabited by some *Europeans*: For here might be Planted the finest Salade Gardens in the World.

And I believe this Soil is as fit for Plantations of Sugar-Canes and Indigo, especially of the last, as any other part of the Globe.

Indigo is already very plentiful here, and besides if it doth not exceed that of *Asia* and *America* it yet equals it. All the Cloaths of the Inhabitants are Dyed with it, but being Ignorant of the true way of using it, they wast four times as much in the Dying of a Cloth as would really do it; and the *Indigo* spent in Dying it, would yield more with us than their whole Cloth is worth.

Having proceeded thus far in the Description of *Fida*, its pleasant Situation, Cattel, Fruits and the Nature of their Inhabitants, I shall by way of Supplement and Conclusion, say something of their Wars and Ammunition.

As for the first they may be thought perhaps very potent, since they can easily bring two hundred Thousand Men into the Field; notwithstanding which they are so weak and heartless, that they would not venture on five Thousand well Armed Men, tho' but *Negroes* of the *Gold-Coast*, nor scarce stand before them.

For which several Reasons might be given; as first, they are so strongly bent to Trade and Agriculture, that they never think of War.

Secondly,

Secondly, they want able Commanders; for if they are forced into the Field, they entrust the Command of their whole Army to a worthless Person, never standing for any Proof of his Courage.

Thirdly and chiefly, their common fear of Death renders them so incredibly Cowardly, that most of them set to Running before the Enemy appears.

As I have told you the Command of the Army is entrusted to an ordinary Person, whilst the Captains and Chief Men out of Fear stay at Home. But if it happens that any of them is endowed with any Portion of Courage, and goes into the Field, Affairs go somewhat better: But with the other General, by whom the Inferiors will not be Commanded, they are very unsuccessful; For these Heroes no sooner perceive any thing coming against them, but they expect Safety from their Feet; and being at least as fond of Life as the rest, it is commonly observed that the General gets home before his Soldiers, if he be but moderately nimble, without troubling himself in general Flights, what becomes of his Army.

But he is yet assured of one thing, which is, that his Men will not stay long behind; but for their own Security certainly follow his Example.

Hence you may judge what Heroes they are in attacking other Countries: But to say truth, they shew somewhat more of Courage in the Defence of their own Country as long as is possible, confirming the old Proverb, *That every Dog will Bark in his own Kennel.*

This Cowardice is not particular to the *Fidassians*, but the Natives of *Ardra* are full as bad; wherefore they never Fight against each other with their own Forces, but hire the *Gold-Coast Negroes*

Negroes for that purpose, of which the Natives of *Aquamboe* are generally first at Hand; but if *Coto* and *Pope* were united, by reason of their nearer Neighbourhood, they would be more proper.

The Arms of the *Fidase* and of all *Ardra*, consist in a few Muskets, Bows and Arrows, fine and well made Hangers, strong and beautiful Assaguays; but the principal Weapons and on which they most depend, are a sort of Clubs about a Yard long, and five or six Inches thick, very round and even, except a Knot at the Bottom, the breadth of a Hand, and three Fingers thick. Every Man is provided with five or six of these.

These Clubs are made of very heavy Wood; and they are so dexterous in the throwing of them, that they can fling them several Paces and hit their Enemy; and wherever it falls it bruises very much and breaks their Limbs: Wherefore the *Gold-Coast Negroes* are almost as much afraid of these Devilish Weapons as of a Musket it self.

Having inform'd you of the most observable Particulars of the Country of *Fida* and *Ardra*, I might indeed hint some things of less Importance, as concerning the differences betwixt *Fida* and *Ardra*: But it not being worth while, entirely stepping over it, I shall only give you the following Account of great *Ardra*.

The King of *Great Ardra* with all his dependant Countries, is twenty times as strong as he of *Fida*, and yet hath not the Courage to make War against him, tho' they live in perpetual Enmity.

Farther In-land are yet more potent Kingdoms than this; but I know nothing, or at most but very little of them; except that while I was here one of their Ambassadors came to the King of *Great Ardra*, to advertise him from his Master, That several *Ardrasian* Negroes had been with, and made
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Complaints to him: And to advise him to take Care that his Viceroy treated these poor Men more gently; or else much against his Will, he should be obliged to come to their Assistance, and take them into his Protection.

The King of *Great Ardra* instead of making a proper use of this wholesome Advice, Laughed at it, and in farther despite to that King, Murthered his Ambassador; upon which he was so violently as well as justly Enraged, that with utmost Expedition he caused an Army (by the *Fidasians* augmented to the number of Ten Hundred Thousand Men) to fall into their Country; and these being all Horfed and a warlike Nation, in a short time Mastered half the King of *Ardra's* Territories, and made such a Slaughter amongst his Subjects, that the Number of the Dead being innumerable, was commonly express'd by saying they were like the Grains of Corn in the Field.

The *Fidasians* reported to me of the mentioned People, that it was customary in their Wars, to Cut off all the Privities of slaughtered Enemies, and carry them off with them; as also, that none durst presume to take an Enemy Prisoner, that was not furnished with One Hundred of these Trophies.

This looks very fabulous, insomuch that tho' it is confirmed to me by Oaths, I don't not affirm it for Truth. But it is certain that the Slaughter was prodigious great; and that the General of this great Army contenting himself therewith, returned home, expecting to be very well received by his Master, but found himself mistaken: For the King as a Reward of his Heroick Expedition, caused him to be Hanged on a Tree; because according to his Order he did not bring the Person of the King of *Great Ardra* along with him, on whom and not his Subjects, he aimed his Revenge.
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You may please to observe what Mischiefs this Prince brought on himself, and also that the Law of Nations is as well observed amongst these Heathens as us Europeans: For this great Monarch did not account himself satisfied by the Death of so many Thousand Men for the Murder of his Ambassador, but would rid the World of the particular Occasion of it.

Which whether he afterwards did I have not yet heard: But I believe he will content himself with the Blood already shed.

This Nation strikes such a Terror into all the circumjacent Negroes, that they can scarce hear them mentioned without Trembling. And they tell a Thousand strange Things of them.

Four Miles eastward of Fida is the Land of Fakin, which as I have already said is under Great Ardra; by whose Phidalgo it is at present Governed.

A little lower, but farther Inland, lies the Land of Offra, called Little Ardra by the Europeans; where our Company many Years since had a Lodge and a Factor, and drove a considerable Trade; but since our Factor was killed, and the Land laid waste by the Popoians, we have not been there. And the Country hath mostly lain Wild and Untilled, in which state it will probably continue several Years. For the Kings of Great Ardra and Fida are at Strife for the Mastery of it, each being desirous to appoint his Viceroys, and yet neither of them dare begin.

But to leave them disputing, and go aboard the Ship called, Stad en Land (City and Country) in which I sailed from Fida on the 14th of August, 1698. steering towards Rio de Gabon, where in a eleven Days we arrived, without meeting any Thing remarkable in our Passage. We had a continual fresh Gale, but were obliged mostly to bear

bear up to the Wind, otherwise we had reached perhaps in eight Days.

Before I come to speak of Rio de Gabon, I would say something of the Gulph of Guinea, by which Name it is best known to the Europeans. It extends from Ardra to Cape Lopez. in length . . . Miles. Betwixt these two Extremities are several fine large Rivers, by which means we keep Trade alive here with our Yachts: The Commodity which we get there being Elephant's Teeth, of which this Country produces a great Quantity.

The Trading-Places are Rio Formosa (or beautiful River) otherwise called Rio de Benin, from the great Kingdom of that Name. Next is Rio d' Elrei or King's River, and Camarones, together with Old and New Calbary. Of the first River I hope before long to be Master of a Description, which you are then to expect.

In the Gulph of Guinea I see also four Islands, call'd El Principe or Princes's Island: The Isle of Fernando Po, and Corisco divided into two, the Greater and Lesser.

At Great Corisco our Company had some Years past a settled Trading Lodge; but it lying too far distant, and not turning to a very great Account, we left it and have not been there since.

Corisco are two very agreeable Islands, and the Land so low, that at a distance the multitudes of Trees there, seem'd Planted in the Water; and afforded a very pleasant Prospect.

The Island of Fernando Po, is Inhabited by a Savage and Cruel sort of People, which he that deals with ought not to Trust. I neither can nor will say more of them.

The Princes's Island was at the latter end of the fifteenth Century, subject to a considerable Merchant of Amsterdam; but by reason of the Dissention of our Country-Men, and the Treachery of the

the Portuguese (its first Masters) we were oblig'd to quit it. And at present the Portuguese Company, have built a strong Fort there, and indifferently well Peopled the Island; which is Fertile and well Situated; or at least the Portuguese Till it so well, that it yields them vast Quantities of Provisions; which they sell to all Ships for Money, besides which they can also Store their own Ships very plentifully.

All sorts of Ships which have been to fetch Slaves, touch here or at the other Portuguese Islands in order to take in Refreshments, except only our Company's Vessels, which avoid it (I believe) out of a groundless Jealousie, that when our Masters of Vessels come to these Islands, they should drive a clandestine Trade to the Prejudice of our Company; but in reality at Annaboa, the Chief of these Isles, nothing else is to be gotten but bare Refreshments as well for our own People as the Slaves: And of what Assistance and Advantage this would be to our Company, I leave to those who have experienc'd it only to determine.

It is morally certain, that so many of the Slaves would not Sicken and Dye, if they were sometimes furnished with Refreshments. But the Directors of the Company are otherwise informed, on what grounds I know not. But perhaps the Reason why our Vessels do not touch here, may be either unknown or unfit to be known by me; and leaving it so I come to Rio de Gabon.

This River is Situated fifteen Miles from Cabo Lopez di Gonsalvez, or the utmost Point of the Gulph of Guinea; and is so famous that no Nation which ever Sailed to this part of Africa, can be unacquainted with it. It is a very fine River, and above two Miles over at the Mouth.

Having passed three or four Miles up this River, we come to two Islands, one of which takes its

its Name from the King, and the other from the Prince of this River, Two great Lords. But they both are Desolate and Wild: For pure Fear of each other, the King hath left one and the Prince the other; each of them Living at present upon a particular Branch of the River, of which Branches here are a great number.

For some Miles this River is Navigable with small Ships, but I cannot exactly tell you how wide it is, or how far its Course extends Inland.

Several Ships (as I have just told you) visit this River, on account as well of the Trade which is driven here, as of its convenient Situation for the Cleaning and Refitting of Vessels: Those that come hither on the last account, unlade their heavy Baggage, as Guns, Anchors, Water-Barrels, &c. on Prince's Island; and by help of a flowing Tide, get their Ships as far on Land as possible, that by means of the strong Ebb they may be on a sort of dry Ground, and thereby obtain an opportunity of Repairing them all round. But this is not very advisable with great Ships, by reason they may easily get some Mischief by lying dry: And one of our Cruisers that Sailed in company with me, would not run the Hazard of it; but chose rather to fasten his Ship to ours, by which means he could come even at her Keel to clean her, which was consequently better than to lay her Dry.

The Trade of this River consists in Elephant's Teeth, Wax and Honey, and is sometimes indifferently quick, especially if no Ships have been there lately; which seldom happens, for the Zealand Interlopers visit it the whole Year round, in order to cleanse their Ships and store themselves with Water and Wood, and Trade withal as long as they are there: But their chief aim is Cleaning

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A Description of the LET. XX.

their Ships and Trading, for they can have Water and Wood as well at Cape Lopez as here.

Any Person that never was here before, must be amazed at the unevenness of the bottom of this River in sailing into it, for in one Place we have Ten, immediately Fifteen, than Five, and presently Twelve Fathom Water; as if the Mouth of the River were filled up with Rocks.

The Ebb is here so strong, that even with a good Wind 'tis scarce possible to sail into the River, but we are obliged to wait till Flood.

I made a tryal of this my self, but we were stopp'd in the Mouth, and had enough to do to bear up against the Ebb with full sail, losing more ground than we gained, and could not get in before the Flood.

The Inhabitants of this River, tho' but a small number, are yet divided into three Classes; one of which is with the King, the other with the Prince, and the third trouble themselves with neither, but live quietly.

The two former are always Warring against each other, but not in open Field; for which purpose I don't believe them strong enough, but they fall on and Rob one another by Night, and at unreasonable times, and return Home with either the Booty or Blows which they get.

These People are the most wretchedly Poor and Miserable that I think I ever saw; and besides, to augment their Miseries, they are so very Proud, that they thereby become the more ridiculous; especially if the reason of their Vanity be looked into, which is barely a Dutch Name, there being none of 'em that come on board of us that want one, with which they immediately make us acquainted, imagining we value them the more on that account; and are very well pleased with us for calling them by their borrowed Name.

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LET. XX. Slave-Coast.

Excessive Brandy-Drinking seems the innate Vice of all Negroes, but these are most accurate Proficients, and really herein exceed all others that I have ever Convers'd with. They consume in this all they can come at. They will sell an indifferent large Elephant's Tooth for this Liquor, which they will drink out before they part; nay, sometimes before they so much as go out of the Ship.

If one chance to get but a Mouthful more than another, and they are half Drunk, they immediately fall on Fighting, without any respect to the King, Prince or Priest, who on such an occasion lay about them briskly with their Fists, that they may not be accused of being idle Spectators. These Heroes are so warm and vigorous at their Work, that Hats, Perukes, Coats, or whatever they have, are thrown overboard.

Perhaps you may be surpriz'd that these poor Wretches should wear Hats, Perukes, &c. which they do in a very particular dismal manner. Formerly a great Trade was driven here in old Perukes by our Sailors. For these they got whatever they pleased of these People, as Wax, Honey, Parrots, Monkeys and all sorts of Refreshments.

But for these four Years so many Merchants of these sorts of Goods, have been here, that the Sailor swears the Trade is utterly spoiled; and tho' his prime Stock costs him nothing, yet it doth not at present turn to account.

The best Quality in these People, is, that as great Lovers of Brandy as they are, they yet are not very nice, for I have seen some of our Men give them Brandy half lengthened out with Water; and for Proof they told me, there was a little Spanish Soap clapt into it, and the Scum of the Soap pass'd on them for the Proof; and they

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praised this Brandy as so extraordinary good, that they would willingly have laid in a stock of it.

I designed when I came into this River, to have Traded for some Ivory and Wax for our Company; and had brought several Goods with me to that end; but found them so very troublesome that I could not have Patience to deal with them; and there being another of the Company's Ships here, which also had Orders to Trade, I left it wholly to them, being very glad that I was so cheaply rid of them. And these Wretches appeared the worse to me, because I was used to deal with such civil *Negroes* at *Fida* for an hundred times more than the Commerce of this Place. For to sell one Tooth they would sometimes haggle a whole Day; go five or six Times away and come again; Ask and Bid as if they were on a Fish-Market, and come to no Resolution.

As great Lovers of Brandy as they are, they will not yet, when they first come on Board and are ask'd to Drink, touch a Drop before they have received a Present. And if we should happen to stay too long before we give them any thing, they will boldly ask us if we imagine that they will Drink for nothing; It not being sufficient to content this wretched Crew that they Drink up our Liquor for nothing, but they must besides be hired to it, as tho' they thereby did us a very great Honour; and he that intends to Trade here, must humour them herein, or he shall not get one Tooth on Board. Thus the Merchant which would deal here, ought to be very well Armed with *Job's* Weapon, without which nothing is to be done.

After I had given over the Trade, a strange Troop of *Negroes* came on board me, to whom I presented some Brandy, and would have caused them to be carried to our other Ship: But these

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Gentlemen would not Drink before I made them a Present, which I had no mind to do, wherefore they marched out of my Cabin; but understanding that I did not design to Trade, they all very humbly returned, Begging what I before offered them; but I told them I was not at leisure, and they went off without any thing.

They are very ready to make us Presents at our first Arrival, but much readier to receive others in requital from us: And when we happen to be too slow, they ask where is our Counter-Present, or we will take our own back again; which without making much ado, they easily do, if our Present be not worth more than theirs. In short, these are Men which no otherwise differ from Beasts than in Shape.

Their Cloathing is like that of other *Negroes*, but very Poor and Wretched: For they deal with our Men for all their old Coats, Shirts, Breeches, &c. and all other old Cloaths; and when Dressed in them, think themselves very fine.

As to what farther relates to their Manners, I shall not say much because I am unacquainted with them; but if you take what hath been already said for a Specimen, you may easily form an Idea of the remainder.

I do not believe they have much Religion. I have observ'd them to be very Superstitious, and that as well as others they have great numbers of Idols; but of what sort they are, or what they believe concerning them, I was not able to observe in my short stay here.

That their Government is not extraordinary, I observ'd from the small Respect they shewed each other; whence without fear of Heresy, I dare conclude, That every free Person lives here for himself, without much troubling himself with King or Prince; and that those Gentlemen have

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only

only the bare Name of Royalty, without the least Shadow of the thing it self.

The present King, like an honest Man, in order to rub through the World, follows the Trade of a Smith to get his Bread; not neglecting other Perquisites, the chiefest of which is letting his Wives at a reasonable Prize to the Europeans during their stay there; notwithstanding which he is, as all the rest are, a very poor Man.

They are mostly large, robust well shaped Men. They besmear their Bodies with Elephants and Buffel's Fat and a certain sort of Red Colour, which makes them stink abominably; especially the Women, which one can hardly come near without turning Sick. And yet they venture to drive a publick Trade with their Bodies, exposing their Favours to Sale at a very cheap Rate: And where they fear no Danger, they will readily relieve the languishing Lover for a Knife or a Trifle of that value. But those who engage with these Ladies, must be very fond of new Faces, for if a Man happen to be the least Nice or Squeamish, he will sufficiently wind them at Twelve-score Yards, to deter him from any nearer Approaches.

But the Case is different with a common Sailor, who is content with every thing that is but Woman.

I am apt to think that the most part of the Inhabitants depend chiefly on Hunting and Fishery; for I don't believe that they trouble themselves with Agriculture, nor did I see any Corn or *Mil-hio* during my stay here; but instead of that I daily saw them eat immature Banacas roasted at the Fire. They had also Jammes, Potatoes and small Beans, but in no great Plenty.

The Land doth not seem very fertile or fit to produce Corn or other Fruits of the Earth; at least

least what I have seen of it, which is from the Mouth of the River to the *Prince's-Island*. But as for those Fruits which grow on Trees, they have great plenty of them; wherefore I believe that their *Banana* is besides what they eat with it, the Staff of their Life.

This River is prodigiously stocked with all sorts of good Fish, and I assure you we pursued them very closely, and catch'd so many that we abundantly stor'd our selves for our whole Voyage.

The *Negroes* manner of Fishing here, is very diverting: For passing along the River side in a Canoa, and perceiving a Fish, they instantly dart an *Assaguay* at him; which is so certain a way, that by means of their Dexterity, it very seldom missed.

Before the Mouth of *Rio de Gabon* we dayly observed Shoals of large unweildy Fish, which we call *Noord Kapers*, or *Northern Capers*; tho' they look more like a Species of Whales, which if they are not, it is certain they are not many removes from them.

These Fish we guessed to be about forty Foot long, but I believe I have seen some longer. They came so near our Ship, that we could easily reach them with a long Pole, supposing them to continue still. If we had a good Shoal of these Fish and could brace them to, and guide them before our Ships, as we do Horses to our Wagons, I doubt not but we should always run a swift Course.

But to leave this Diversion to *Neptune*, and return to our Subject.

They Swim chiefly on the Surface of the Water, having a young One or two near them, who springing up to the top of the Water, in imitation of their Dam, mount above Water. They

A Description of the L E T. XX.

blow up the Water with very great Violence, and put the Sea in as great a ferment as a Ship under Sail; and in spouting of Water they would easily outdo the best Water-works at *Fontainebleau*: And it is not less diverting than rare to see a number of these Fishes together.

The Land about this River incredibly abounds with wild Beasts, especially Elephants, Buffels and Wild-Boars.

As soon as we had dispatched our Affairs at *Prince's-Island*, and carreen'd our Ship, we sailed down the River again in order to Anchor at the *Sand-Punt*, i. e. *Sand Point*, or *Zuidhoeck*, i. e. *South-nook*; and provide our Selves with Water, which is better there than at *Cape Lopez*. Being advanced about an *English Mile* from this Place, we got sight of an Elephant; which taking the same course with us, walked very gently along the River-side to the beforementioned Place: Where accompanied with my Captain and some of my Servants, we stept into a Boat and landed together, and immediately set upon the Elephant; but after having pursued him very hard for an Hour, we could not overtake him, but lost sight of him in a Wood.

At the Writing hereof I tremble to think what a Risque we ran, and what Danger we were in; for not being above Ten or Twelve strong, and not half of us provided with good Fire-Arms, we should have attacked this Elephant if we could have come at him; fondly imagining to have fetched him down with two or three Shot, which I have since found was what two or three hundred Men could scarce do: Thus we all had reason to thank Heaven that we did not overtake this Beast; for if we had, if not all, yet at least some of us had been left Dead on the spot.

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L E T. XX. *Slave-Coast.*

In our return we met five Elephants together, who looking on us, I suppose thought us not worth their Anger, and therefore suffered us to pass them without the least disturbance; and we owning them stronger than we, were very well pleased, and after pulling off our Hats in grateful Acknowledgment of their Civility, went on our way.

We lay three Days still before this Place, during which time having no other Employment, I went every Morning on Shoar in order to fall upon some of the wild Beasts, but not Elephants; which I had in a sort sufficiently forsworn since our last Adventure. But the wild Swine afforded us the most Diversion, and were what we chiefly intended to exercise our Selves on: And accordingly the second Day that we came on Shoar, we were so fortunate as to meet a Troop of above three Hundred. We began immediately to hunt them with utmost Fury, but having four Legs to our two, they were too nimble for us, so that they soon got out of our reach; except only one, which we cut off from his Companions, and so beset him, that he seemed obliged to Pay dear for lagging, since there was no other way of flying left him than into a Thicket, in which we pursued him so close, that in a very short time he was likely to fall into our Hands.

But he escaped us in the following manner. Being come into the midst of the Thicket, as tho' we had been in a well built Garden-house or Bower, we found a Skeleton of an Elephant; and the surprize of this Adventure detained us from the pursuit of the Wild Boar, in order to examine this Skeleton nicely; which we found intire with the Teeth affixed to his Head, which I caused to be taken out and Weighed, their Weight being seventy Pounds; I

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Measured his Legs, and found the fore, three; and the hind, four Foot; the Head also four Foot; and the remainder of the Body proportionable; whence you may conjecture how large he was when Living and covered with Flesh.

The two first Days being past in fruitless Elephant and Wild-Boar Chase, we designed to spend the third in the latter Sport; but when we came on Shoar, we found that their Place was taken up by about one hundred Buffels: Not being discouraged we run at them, and being come near a Parcel of Eighteen or Twenty, we presented them with half a Dozen Bullets, but I believe did not hurt one of them: They all stood still, and seemed to look very angrily on us, consulting, I suppose, whether they should Punish our Insolence or not; but since none of them was Wounded, it passed in the Negative, and we escaped free.

These Buffels were Red, with strait Horns extended backwards, about the size of an Ox; as they ran they seemed Lame behind, but that did not hinder their being very swift.

The Negroes informed us, that when these Beasts are shot, and not mortally Wounded, they fly at the Men and kill them.

We the easier believe this, because about ten Years past, our Men going a Buffel-hunting here, one of them being too forward, let fly at a Buffel; but was immediately seized, and had been killed by him, if one of his Camerades had not come to his Assistance; who notwithstanding Firing at the Buffel, was so unhappy as to miss him and mortally Wound his Companion, and the Buffel soon trod out the small remainder of the Snuff of his Life.

This unhappy Accident agreeing with the Negroe's Report, made us rejoyce that we had met with such good natur'd Buffels; and immediately

ly resolv'd never for the future to attempt the Elephant and Buffel Chase; which Resolution in order to be remembred was Registred in its proper Place.

The Negroes to prevent such Misfortunes, go more warily to work. They first observe the Place where the Buffels resort in the Evening, and place themselves on a high Tree, and as soon as a Buffel comes they shoot at him from thence. If they kill him and there is no danger below, they come down, and assisted by some of their Companions carry off their Game; but if they have not hit the Buffel they sit still, and keep out of Danger. By which means they shoot several.

The Buffel's Flesh here is very good, and by reason of the Meadow-Ground about the *Sant-punt*, Fat enough.

This is all that I could possibly observe in my sixteen Days stay here. Our Cruiser after having taken in some Wood came to us, and we Sailed together out of the River, and three Days after Anchored at Cape Lopez di Gonsalvez.

Which as I have before informed you is the uttermost Point of the Gulph of Guinea, situate in some few Minutes of South Latitude, and Gabon is exactly under the Equinoctial Line. A little South of Cape Lopez begins the Country of Angola, which stretches several Degrees southward.

This Point or Cape is as much or more visited by Ships than Gabon; for most of the Ships laden with Slaves, come hither to store themselves with Water and Wood, with both which it always abounds; and the Inhabitants have always quantities of the latter ready Cut, which they Sell so cheap, that we commonly don't give above a Bar of Iron for a whole Fathom of it: And Water we have for fetching from a very convenient Place

Place near the Sea-side. We generally indeed pay for the Liberty of fetching Water to the King, or he who calls himself so, three or four Knives, and a Bottle of Malt Spirits; but this is rather our Civility than any thing else, since there is no Ship so small, as that it could not furnish its self with Water and Wood by force. But this would, in my Opinion, be very unreasonable, since the Natives deserve some Reward for their Trouble; and it would also render it very inconvenient to other Ships that come after us: For the *Negroes* finding we did not pay them, would not be very fond of selling more Wood; on which account it is far the better way to content them with a Trifle.

The Trade here, as well as at *Rio de Gabon*, consists in Elephants Teeth, Wax and Honey, with which it abounds; but by reason of the Multitudes of Ships which daily touch here, not much is to be expected; yet one of our Yachts this very Year dealt for betwixt three and four thousand Weight of Elephants Teeth, as well as Wax, and at other times for larger Quantities:

At *Cape Lopez* there are a few Houses, in which the Inhabitants live as long as any Ships are there: But their proper Dwelling-place is a little beyond this Point, upon a River which is called *Olibatte*. The Principal Men, or Grandees, distinguish themselves by the Names of King, Prince and Admiral; tho' like those of *Gabon*, they are oblig'd to be contented with the Name only. And indeed, the Inhabitants of both Places agree so exactly, that I do not believe the least Difference is observable betwixt their manner of Living, except only, that the latter are far more Civil and Conversable than the former.

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I don't think it necessary to say any more concerning this Place, than that the Ships here meet with a good Road, if they are but so cautious as to avoid some Sand-Banks, which are hereabouts, which yet are not dangerous in good Weather, since they are passable without Damage at High-Water, as we experienced.

I have already told you, that the River *Gabon* is plentifully stored with Fish. But this Place is enrich'd with such prodigious Shoals, that our Cruiser one Morning casting his Net, caught such a vast Quantity as would have sufficed ten Ships.

After having passed three Days at this Cape, we heav'd in our Anchor and set Sail, designing for the Isle of *Annaboa*; but the strong Tide, which at this time of the Year winds in a Serpentine manner towards the North, carry'd us below *St. Thomè*, an Island belonging to the *Portuguese*; which affords me an Opportunity to impart to you some Particulars concerning it, after having acquainted you, that tho' our Ships were cleaned, and in good sailing Condition, we yet were driven above a half Degree Northward; but another of our Company's Ships, which I had laden with Slaves at *Fida*, and departed thence three Weeks before me, came the third time to Anchor with me at *Cape Lopez*, and told us, that he had been in one Degree and half South Latitude; but that the Vehemence of the Tide had (which is scarce credible) in one Night driven him thro' the Line exactly before *Gabon*.

The Isle of *St. Thomè* (and not of *St. Thomas*, as some would have it, that being in *America* in the *Danes* Possession) was formerly in our Hands; and we were oblig'd to quit it by the continual Treachery of the *Portuguese*, which fatigu'd our Men,

Men, and by the great Mortality which then afflicted them; in which so many of our Country-Men died, that this Island in Europe went by the Name of the Dutch-Church-yard.

The Portuguese, tho' more used to this scorching Air, prove at this very time, that it is a very unwholsome Country, great Quantities of them dying, and very few living to a great Age.

The Natural Reason of which, in my Opinion, seems to be first, the scorching Heat, which continues here the whole Year; for one Point of it being situate just under the Line, it is easy to conceive, that the greatest part of the Year must be intolerably hot.

Secondly, that this Island chiefly consists of Hills, the Valleys betwixt which are continually filled with a very thick and stinking Mist, even in the very hottest time of the Day, which of necessity must condense and inflame the Air, and consequently render it very unwholsome. And in the third Place we may add the excessive Phlebotomy of the Portuguese, which they have recourse to on the very least Occasion, some of 'em letting Blood above fifty times in a Year; and this it is, which, I believe, makes them look more like walking Ghosts than Men: And this Practice, the longer continued, must necessarily the more weaken the Constitution; for the Nature of this Country is not such, as to supply them with hasty Recruits of fresh Blood. Excepting what hath been observed, this is a pleasant and fertile Island, abounding, according to the Report of the Portuguese, with fresh Rivers or Lakes, and good arable Lands, which yield Corn, Sugar and Cotton: Here are also several Earth-Fruits and Trees, besides great Plenty of Cattel, larger and finer than on the Gold-Coast. It cannot but have its Share of Terrestrial Blessings, because the Ro-

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mish Clergy have two Convents here, according to the best of my Remembrance; filled with the Fraternities of St. Peter and St. Augustin. And here is also a Bishop's See.

More need not be said to prove this Island good and proper to live in: For it is certainly true, that these Ghostly Fathers never settle, where, besides Soul's good, sublunary Conveniences are not to be gained.

I shall now bid adieu to St. Thomè, with only acquainting you, that all Ships, which, by reason of contrary Wind, cannot reach Ilha del Principe, put in here for Refreshments.

Instead of Annaboa, being as I have already told you fallen below St. Thomè, we despaired of reaching it, because it is more difficult to sail to it from St. Thomè than from Cape Lopez: But the Wind changing, and contrary to our Expectation getting the Tide with us, we were so fortunate in two Days time as to Anchor before the famous Island of Annaboa.

This Island is visited by a great number of Ships, as well those which have been Trading in Guinea, as those bound for East-India and Angola. When the East-India Men fall below the Gulph of Guinea (for they, different from our Account, reckon the Gulph of Guinea to take in almost the whole Coast) they put in here; and the Ships bound for Angola touch here, it being almost in their way.

Annaboa is so prodigiously stock'd with Cattel and Fruit, that it far exceeds St. Thomè and Prince's Island in both; tho' 'tis much smaller, and indeed not above half the Circuit of either of them. Like St. Thomè, it is almost always covered with a thick Mist: But if we may believe the Portuguese, not so unwholsome. But why it is more healthful, I shall not presume to determine; for the

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Air is almost the same, *Annaboa* being but about one Degree and half more South.

The Land is here full as high as at *St. Thome*; and in the highest Place of it, according to the Report of the *Portuguese*, is a Lake of fresh and very good Water, about which the Air is as cold as the severest Autumns in *Holland*: But who knows whether this be true?

The *Portuguese* have tilled the Plains to half way up the Hills, for so far the Ground is good. But taking a view of this Island from below, it seems very dry and barren; notwithstanding which it is all over planted with Fruit-Trees, viz. *Coco*s, Oranges, Limons, *Bakovens*, Bananas, Palm-Trees and several others, whose Fruits are all plentiful and cheap. One hundred *Coco*-Nuts are sold for a Rixdollar; a thousand Oranges or Limons at the same Rate; and the other Fruits in Proportion.

Hogs, Sheep, Goats, Chickens, &c. are to be bought for almost nothing, considering that we have them for all manner of old trash Cloaths of Linnen and Woollen. In short, here is the true *Amalthea* or *Cornucopia*, of which the Antients have said so many fine things.

The Inhabitants of this Island are black, and but a sort of half Christians, tho' they bear the Name of Christians; for if they can but read a *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*, confess to the Priest, and bring some Offerings with them, they pass for good Christians.

The White *Portuguese* of this Island esteem them Slaves, by reason that they are the Descendants of those Slaves which they set on this Island. They are all of them, without any Exception, Thieves and Rogues, that will injure or defraud no Man more than they can. The Women are all common publick Whores, which allure and
mislead

L E T. XX. Slave-Coast.

mislead the Sailors, and except a very few, are monstrous, ugly and ill-favour'd, as Monsieur *Fokkenbrog* has well observ'd it.

The Government of these People is entrusted in the Hands of a white *Portuguese*, who is honour'd with the Illustrious Name of *Governador*.

He who was honour'd with this high Post in my time, was such a great *Don*, that if I had been charitable enough to have bestowed the Alms of a Crown upon him, he would have made no Difficulty of receiving it, nor thought it an Affront to his honourable Charge, or the Grandeur of his Nation.

His Subjects also stood in such awe of him, that if I had but desir'd them, they would certainly have broken his Head, and have deliver'd the Island into our Possession. For this *Don* being appointed by a *Portuguese* Gentleman, to whom this Island belongs, as Rent-gatherer in his Name, to collect a Third of all the Inhabitants Cattel, Fruit and Income; in order to secure somewhat for himself, he very fairly fleeces the Inhabitants of a compleat half, which renders him so hated by his black Subjects, that they would very willingly be released from their Yoak, and deliver the Island to another Nation.

But it would not indeed be serviceable to any Nation, without all its Black Inhabitants were transported thence; for whilst they stay there, on account of the least Difference with the Possessors, they would fly to the Hilly part of the Island, which is sufficiently inaccessible to the *Europeans*, and from thence so gall them, that they would be oblig'd to abandon it; as it happened to us, when we formerly were in possession of it; for we left it on no other Account.

Besides the *Governador*, I found here also two White Priests, who were endowed with no other

Qualities than the profound Ignorance and Stupidity of the meanest of their Neighbours, except only (which is indeed something uncommon) that they could drink as much Brandy as I could Wine, or other Liquor.

Their Wisdom was lodged in their *Capucin's Cap*. I cannot indeed tell, whether they could Read or Write, since I did not see one Book they had, nor would they produce one, tho' I asked the Favour; perhaps that it might not be defiled with my Heretical Fingers.

They invited us to come and see their Churches, which we did, and found them very handsome, and large enough for four times the Number of Inhabitants on the Island. Before we entered their Churches, we were all over besprinkled with Holy Water; from which I conclude, that it is not very dear here.

They desired a Bottle of Wine of me to Celebrate their Mass withal, which I gave them; and they thereupon promised me (tho' unasked) that they would say a Mass for my happy Voyage; after which I took Leave of 'em.

We saw here some small Pieces of Cannon, and asking where they got them, we were informed, that they belong'd to a small *French* Pyrate, which stranded there about ten Days before; the Captain of which, with two of his Men, was then upon the Island.

These Pyrates had robb'd the *Gold-Coast* of some Gold, Slaves and Elephants Teeth. But two Days before our Arrival here, the *Sloter-Galley*, an *English* Ship, Commanded by *Thomas Kent*, had set sail from hence, having made an Agreement with these Pyrates, in consideration of a Part of their Prey to be given to the Captain, to carry them and all their Booty to the *French* Islands. The Pyrates depending on this Contract, had brought all

all their Goods on board Captain *Kent*, and all the Men, except the Captain and two more, follow'd, who designed to have gone on board the last Day of the Galley's stay here; but as they were coming, were welcom'd with a few Musket Shot, and charged, if they valued their Lives, to return back, which they were oblig'd to do, and had the Satisfaction of seeing Captain *Kent* haul up his Anchors and set Sail with all their Goods.

What think you, Sir, Were not these Villains right served? Indeed, I think they were; and had it been my good Fortune to meet with them, I should not have given them any better Treatment.

After having staid here a few Days to refresh, pursuant to the Director General's Leave, we steered our Course towards *Elmina*, sailing continually along the Line, without inclining one Degree towards the South or North. I expected to have met with a violent Heat here; but on the contrary found it so cold, that tho' well clad, I could scarce bear the Cold. The Sailors, who commonly are not moved at a Trifle, also cloathed themselves very thick. Expressing my Surprize hereat, the Captain told me, that about this time of the Year (being *September*) it was almost always so cold here, notwithstanding the Sun in that Month passes the Line, and must be exactly over our Heads; but the case lies here, we have always thick Weather and a stiff Gale, which prevents our feeling the Heat of the Sun.

After several Days sailing forwards in this manner, guessing that we were advanced high enough to make the Coast, we steered directly Landwards, and got sight of Land about the *Quaqua* Coast; but our Orders running to stay

no where, we sailed along by the Shoar, proceeding on our Voyage to *Assinee*, which the *French* some time past took Possession of; and that in such a diverting manner, that I cannot help imparting it to you. The Author of the *European Mercury* for the Year 1701, obliges us with the following Relation of the Converting of a *Morish* King to the Christian Faith, in these Words,

Here is another Pagan Prince brought over to the Christian Faith, namely Lewis Hannibal, King of Syria (which he mistakes for Assinee) on the Gold-Coast of Africa, who, after being a long time instructed in the Christian Principles, and Baptized by the Bishop of Meaux, the King being his Godfather, received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, on the 27th of February, from the Cardinal de Noailles, and offered at the same time a Picture to the Blessed Virgin, to whose Protection he submitted his Territories, having made a Vow at his Return thither, to use his utmost Endeavours towards the Conversion of his Subjects. This Morish Prince departed on the 24th of this Month, in order to imbark at Port Lewis, and be Convoy'd home by two or three Men of War, under the Command of the Chevalier Damon.

Thus far runs our above-mentioned Relation: Now it is my Task to give you a short Account of the Extraction of this pretended King, and to acquaint you with what happened afterwards.

Some Years past the *French* were accustomed to seize all the *Negroes* that came on board them, and sell them into the *West-Indies* for Slaves; amongst which happened to be the before-said *Lewis Hannibal*, Christened by the *French*; but finding him endowed with a more sprightly Genius than his Country-Men, instead of selling, they brought him to the *French Court*,

Court, where this Impostor pretended to be Son and Heir apparent to the King of *Assinee*; by which means he so insinuated himself into the good Opinion of the Court, that the King made him several very rich Presents, and sent him back to his own Country in the manner above related; but upon his Arrival upon the Coast, he was discovered to be only the Slave of a *Caboceer* of *Assinee*; to whom shortly after his Arrival he returned; and as I am credibly informed, instead of Converting his Subjects to Christianity, is himself returned to Paganism.

You may easily guess at the Resentments of the *French Court*, after being so ridiculously Bubbled by a *Negroe-Slave*: If you consider that by this means they have lost their Aim, which was to get footing on the *Gold-Coast*; and besides, that the pious Intention of his most Christian Majesty, to Convert a Heathen Prince, and Establish him on his Throne, were frustrated; the *Cardinal de Noailles* and the *Bishop of Meaux*, laboured in vain: And in short, the whole *French Court* was disappointed of its Expectation.

By this, Sir, you may see, that as stupid as the *Negroes* are, yet some amongst them are able to delude such a wise Court as that of *France*, which I doubt not but long ere this has repented of its Credulity, and a thousand times Curst the pretended King of *Syria*. But to leave the *French* in their Resentments, and pursue our Voyage.

Sailing by *Assinee* we touched on the *Gold-Coast*, where our Companion the Cruiser, called the *Beschermmer* or Protector, Commanded by Captain *Hinken*, found a *Zealand-Interloper* called the *Great Apollo*, betwixt the Shoar and the *Brandenburg-Fort*; which he vigorously attacked, and af-

ter a short but warm Resistance, took and brought her as good Prize to *Elmina*.

This, Sir, is the end of my Voyage, and will also be the last Letter that I shall write to you concerning the State of *Guinea*. What you have farther to expect from me, is, as I have already told you, the result of others Observations. I beg your Approbation of the Contents of this and all my past, assuring you I have written nothing to you but real Truth, digested from my own Observation. If I am so happy as to please you in this Attempt, I shall be so far from thinking my Labour lost, that I shall conclude it doubly Rewarded.

These, Sir, are the sincere Assurances of one that never will omit any thing which can render you an agreeable Service; but is now and shall ever be incessantly Ambitious of the honourable Name of

Your Hearty Humble Servant,

W. BOSMAN.

The End of the Author's last Letter.

A De

A Description of *Rio Formosa*, or the River of *BENIN*; being the first Supplemental, or the One and Twentieth Letter.

Containing a Description of Rio Formosa, or the River of Benin. The great number of its Branches. The Trading-Place and Church of the Portuguese. The King of Benin's great Opinion of himself. Our ordinary Trading-Place. The Pirates of Usa. The Morass and Floating-Land in and about the River, which is very Pleasant but Unwholsome, and the reason why. The great Mortality of our Men on Ship-board. The Rashness of five Mariners, and a remarkable Event which followed it. The Country is very even and full of Trees. Who are the King of Benin's Vassals. The King's Slave an honourable Name. Benin not very Populous. The three principal Trading-Places, their Names, Constitution and Governours. Besides which, a fourth Trading-Place, where one of our chiefest Commanders or Factors was Killed. On which account a double Revenge was taken. The Benin Inhabitants generally good Natured, Civil, and very conversible People; who are not to be treated forcibly, but gently: Are very per-

A Description of the LET. XXI.
tinacious in their old Customs. Who are the Managers of their Trade. They are very Civil to Strangers, but Treacherous to each other. Their Governours very Covetous. There are three Estates besides the King; concerning the first, and their Power: Of the second, their Marks of Honour or Knighthood, the loss of which is Punish'd with Death; of which some Examples. The third State. The manual Arts and Trades of the Commonalty. The Rich live very well, and are very Charitable to the Poor. The Habits of the Negroes of both Sexes. Each Person Marries as many Wives as he is able to keep. The manner of their Marriage. The Husbands very Jealous of their Wives, of which they are absolute Masters. Three sorts of Punishments for Adultery. Of Pregnant Women and their Delivery. The Male Infants belong to the King. Both Male and Female are Circumcised. The Groaning-Treat. Twins esteemed a good Omen, except at Arebo: The Cruelty of whose Inhabitants on that Occasion, describ'd and confirm'd by some Instances. A Sacred Grove, and their Opinions concerning it. They are very Prolisick. Monstrous Women esteemed Unclean. The Negroes here not so much afraid of Death as others. Their Remedies in case of Sicknes. Physicians not much valued, and how treated. Who hath the Right of Inheritance, and in what Cases the King is Heir. Common Whores:

Whores: Their Government. Punishment of Thievery, to which they are not much addicted. The Punishments of Murder, and their Distinctions concerning that Crime. Five sorts of Oaths. How Fines are distributed. Their Musical Instruments; they Dance very well to the Harp. Are great Gamesters. Their Religion very confused; each particular Person hath his separate Priest. Their Notion of the Deity, and their Ratiocinations on that Subject. They Worship Idols, and the Devil in the same Shape. Apparitions of Spirits. Dayly and Annual Offerings. Their Sentiments concerning a future Life. Multiplicity of Idols, and their Festivals. Which is their greatest Festival. Their Sabbath. They celebrate the times of the Death of their Parents. Their division of Time. Their Wars, and confusion therein. They are great Cowards. Their Weapons, all Sorts of Game, and wild Quadrupeds. Great Baboons which fall upon Men. Great Plenty of Feathered kind: But not such stores of Fish; yet great Quantities of Terrene and Arboriferous Fruits. Of several Dying Ingredients. The King's Revenue, wherein it consists. A Description of the Town of Benin, which is very long and well Built. Strangers not allowed there. Of the Grandees which follow the Court. Natives cannot be sold for Slaves, nor is it allow'd to Transport any
out

A Description of the LET. XXI. *out of the Kingdom as such tho' Strangers. The Trades and Employments of the Commonalty. Their Tradesmen. Very fine Streets in the City. Slavery of the Women, which are fond of all Europeans except the Portuguese. A large Description of the King's Court, and the Coral-Feast, at which the King is present. The Author's Audience of the King. His Portraiture. The War betwixt Are de Rou and the King, which hath Ruined the City of Benin; which is at present Wast and Desolate. Conclusion of this Letter.*

S I R,

IN Obedience to your Orders, this contains a Description of the River of *Benin*. I dare not assure you of your expected Satisfaction; but would fain hope that my Endeavours, however imperfect, being the utmost I can do, may meet with your favourable Reception.

About fifty Miles East of *Ardra*, are situate the Cape and River of *Formosa*, otherways called *Benin* from the Kingdom of *Great Benin*, with which it is encompass'd.

This River shews it self very plainly if entred from the West; for from *Ardra* the Land is even and Woody: The West Point is much higher, and looks like a Rock with the Top cut off. But the East-point is low and flat Land: Its Mouth is about a Mile wide; but sailing farther up, is yet wider in some Places and narrower in others.

This River sprouts it self into innumerable Branches; some of which are so wide, that they very well deserve the Name of Rivers; and the Banks

LET. XXI. Kingdom of Great Benin.

Banks of each of them are inhabited by a particular Nation, govern'd by its own King.

The Multitude of its Branches render the sailing up this River so difficult, that a Pilot is absolutely necessary.

About a Mile and half from its Mouth there are two Branches about half a Mile from each other. Upon one of which the *Portuguese* have a Lodge and Church at the Town of *Awerri*, which is govern'd by its particular and independant King, who doth not treat the King of *Great Benin* any otherwise than as his Neighbour and Ally: Tho' that vain Prince shews no Marks of Esteem for him, nor any other Potentates, imagining that if he is not the greatest King in the whole, yet indisputably in the *Guinean* World: That Part of it that is situate above one hundred Miles beyond his own Territories, being as little known to him as the large Remainder of the Globe.

The Common Trading Place here is called *Arebo*, situate above sixty Miles above the River's Mouth. So far, and yet farther our Ships may very conveniently come; in their Passage sailing by hundreds of Branches of this River, besides Creeks, some of which are very wide.

What I have already hinted is sufficient to give you an Idea of the Breadth of this River; but its Length and Source I have not been able to discover, no *Negroe* being able to give me an exact Account of it. But I believe its Branches extend into all the Circumjacent Countries; for I have seen several Men that came from *Ardra*, *Calbary* and several other Places, in order to Trade, which were taken on this River by the Robbers, and sold for Slaves.

These Robbers, or Pyrates, live just at the Mouth of the River, and are called the Pyrates of

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of *Ufa*. They are very poor, and live only on Robbery; they sail hence to all Parts of this River, and seize all that lights in their way, whether Men, Beasts or Goods; all which they fell to the first that come hither, for Victuals, with which they are not at all provided.

The *Portuguese* informed me, that here was a Land Road which reached to *Calbary*, and one much more commodious by Water; that it was easy with a Canoa to get into the Circumjacent Rivers, *viz. Lagos, Elrei, Camarones* and several others, besides the River *Volta*, which last I can scarce believe, it being utterly improbable: But as to the former Rivers, they are so near the other, that it may be easily done,

Several Miles upwards from the Mouth of the River the Land is every where low and morassy, and its Banks all along adorned with great Numbers of high and low Trees, and the Country all about it divided into Islands by the Multiplicity of its Branches; besides which, here are several forts of Floating Isles, or Lands covered with Reed, which are driven by the Winds, or Travadoes, from one Place to another, by which means they often happen in our way, and oblige us to steer a different Course, on which Occasions Pilots or Guides are very convenient.

The River it self is very pleasant, but very unwholsome, as most of the Rivers on the Coast seem to be naturally, which I am apt to think is occasioned by the continual contagious Exhalations which hover about them; more especially those in low Ground and Morasses.

To which may be added another, and not less Plague: The innumerable Millions of Gnats, which the *Portuguese* call Musquito's: For the Land, as I have already told you, being very Woody, is insupportably pestered with these Vermin,

LET. XXI. *Kingdom of Great Benin.*

Vermin, especially in the Nights, when they attack us in whole Legions, and sting so severely, that several Persons have been so marked with Pustules, that it was impossible to know them.

This Torment which deprives us of our natural Rest, heightened by the Unwholsomeness of the Climate, continually occasions a great Mortality amongst our Men. You very well know, that this is my Second Voyage to this River; and that the first time I was here we lost half our Men, and at present the Number of our Dead on board is not less, and the Remainder are most of them Sick, which strikes such a general Terrour into the Sailors, that the boldest of them is afraid of his Life.

Five of our Sailors were so rashly Impious, as to throw Dice who should Die or Live to come out of this River. They over-perswaded my eldest Servant to throw for his Chance with them, and the highest Cast being esteemed safest, he threw Eleven.

And it is really Remarkable, that this Lad is yet alive; but the other five Died all in the River of *Benin*.

Bating the said Contagion of the Climate, this is a very desirable place of Trade, by reason of the Pleasantness of the River and adjacent Country, which is very even Ground, without Hills, and yet rises by gentle Degrees, which affords the most agreeable Prospect in the World; which is yet improved by the Multitude of Trees which stand so regular, as if they were designedly planted in that Order.

The Inhabitants of this River and the Neighbouring Country have several Princes; and indeed, each small Nation is governed by his own King, tho all of them are Vassals to the King of *Benin*,

Benin, except those of *Awerri*, where the *Portuguese* live, and the Pyrates of *Ufa*, both of whom would never yet submit to his Yoak.

They are all Free-Men, notwithstanding which they are treated as Slaves by their King, and are so far from taking it for an Unhappiness, that the Title of the King's Slave is a distinguishing Mark of Honour amongst them.

Tho' here is a prodigious Number of People, yet in proportion to the extent of Land, and upon the comparison with *Ardra*, this Country is not populous. The Towns are widely distant from each other, as well those near the River as farther in-land.

There are at present three principal Towns where we Trade, and whither all the Neighbouring in-land *Negroes* resort, especially when we have cast Anchor there.

The first of these Villages is *Boededoe*, containing about fifty Houses or Cottages, built with Reed and Leaves. It is governed by a Vice-Roy, and some Grandees appointed him, who, under the King, and in his Name, govern the whole District of Land: But their Authority doth not extend beyond things of small Importance, as Civil Causes and the raising Taxes for the King; but if any thing considerable happens, or any Capital Crime is committed, they are not permitted to decide it, but must send to Court and wait their Orders.

Arebo, the second Village, which is situate much farther up the River, is a fine large oblong Town, indifferently well furnish'd with Houses and People. The Houses are much larger than at *Boededae*, tho' built in the same manner. This Place and its dependant Country is, as well as the former, governed by a Vice-Roy.

Some,

Some Years past here were two Lodges or Factories, one of which belong'd to the *English*, and the other to our Company; each of them had their particular Factors and Trustees, called in *Portuguese* Mercadors and Fiadors; the last of which are here but a sort of Brokers. But the *English* not having traded here for many Years, their Lodge is fallen down and demolished, and their Factors and Brokers incorporated with ours.

Agatton, the third Village, was formerly a considerable Trading Place, but hath suffered so much by the Wars, that it lies in a manner waste at present. It is situate on a small Hill in the River, just joyned to the firm Land.

The remaining Ruins discover it to have been a very large Village, much more agreeable and healthful than the others are; for which reason the *Negroes* employ their utmost Diligence in the re-building of it. It is environed with all sorts of Fruit-Trees.

Hereabouts are several small Villages, whose Inhabitants come hither at every considerable Market, which is held here for five Days. A Day's Journey by Land from *Agatton* is the City or Village of *Great Benin*, the Resident of the King: But more of this hereafter.

I must not here omit a certain Village, where we formerly Traded, which is called *Meiborg*, probably borrowing its Name from that of one of our Factors.

Several Years past our Company had a considerable Factory and some Servants here. Their last Factor here was *N. Beeldsnyder*, who made himself to be hated by the Natives, by reason of his Brutality.

Besides which, he cast a lascivious Eye on one of the *Negrae* Governor's Wives, which he ravish'd,

vish'd, and thereby so enraged her injured Husband, he that resolv'd to take his utmost Satisfaction of *Beeldsnyder*, and came against him with a Party of armed Men, designing to have his Life; but he defending himself in his Flight, narrowly escaped on board one of our Ships, which then lay there, but was withal dangerously wounded. He was no sooner come on board, than he failed out of the sight of his Pursuers, but one of his Wounds proved so fatal, that thro' the Unskilfulness of the Surgeon he died of it.

Mr. *N. N.* who was then the Company's Director General on the Coast, and was not fully informed of the Merits of the Cause, did not let his Death pass unrevenge'd, but immediately sent a Yacht, reinforced with *Elmina* Soldiers to *Benin*, with strict Orders to take the utmost Revenge for the Murther or Massacre, as it was termed. These Soldiers so rigorously executed, or perhaps stretched their Commission, that they killed, or took Prisoners, every Person of the Village that could not make their escape.

The King of *Great Benin* being informed of this, and the Author of the Massacre, was not content with the Revenge which our Director had taken, but commanded the Person, who was the Occasioner of the Massacre, to come to him; and tho' he had defended the Honour of his Family, and was consequently very excusable, yet the King caused him and his whole Race, to the third and fourth Generation, to be cut to pieces; which Cruelty was executed, in order to justify himself, not only with respect to the Action, but also the very Knowledge of it.

The dead Corps of these miserable Wretches were thrown upon the Dunghill as a Spectacle, to be devoured by the Wild Beasts; and their Houses

Houses were razed to the Ground, with strict Orders, that they should never be re-built. We finding the King so zealously interested for us, have ever since continued our Trade there.

The Inhabitants of *Great Benin* are generally good-natur'd and very civil, from whom it is easy to obtain whatever we desire by soft means. If we make them liberal Presents, they will endeavour to recompence them doubly; and if we want any thing, and ask it of them, they very seldom deny us, tho' they have occasion for it themselves.

But they are so far in the right, to expect that their Courtesy should be repaid with Civility, and not with Arrogance or Rudeness; for to think of forcing any thing from them, is to dispute with the Moon.

They are very prompt in Business, and will not suffer any of their antient Customs to be abolish'd; in which, if we comply with them, they are very easy to deal with, and will not be wanting in any thing on their Part requisite to a good Agreement.

But what is worst of all, is, that they are very tedious in Dealing. Many times they have a Stock of Elephant's Teeth by them, which we are generally eight or ten Days before we can agree with them for: But this is managed with so many Ceremonious Civilities, that it is impossible to be angry with them.

Another Inconvenience, which really deserves Complaint, is, that at our Arrival here, we are obliged to trust them with Goods to make Panes or Cloaths of; for the Payment of which we frequently stay so long, that by reason of the Advancement of the Season, the Consumption of our Provisions, and the Sicknes or Mortality of our Men, we are obliged to depart without our

F f Money:

Money: But on the other hand, the next time we come hither, we are sure to be honestly paid the Whole.

The Persons which treat with us on their behalf, are such as are thereto appointed by the Government, and are called by the above-mentioned Names of Mercadors and Fiadors; and these are the only Merchants with which we deal: This Custom having obtained, by reason that these Factors can speak a miserable sort of Portuguese, which qualifies them to talk with us. This is their only Excellency, without which they would be look'd on as the very Scum of their Country-men, and not thought worthy a Name amongst them.

At our Arrival here, we are obliged to pay some sorts of Customs to these Brokers and the Governors, which are so inconsiderable, that they are hardly worth mentioning.

The Natives here seem very civil to each other, and omit no Opportunity of offering their mutual Services: But this is bare Complement. For they will not trust one another, but are jealously Prudent, and very reserved, especially in the Management of their Trade, which they dispatch with utmost Secrecy, out of fear of being represented as great Traders to their Governors, who, upon such a Discovery, would certainly accuse them of some Crime or other, in order to possess themselves, tho' never so unjustly, of the Effects of these rich Merchants. And here, as well as every where else, 'tis easy to find a Stick to beat a Dog withal. Wherefore those who are out of Power, and have no Share in the Government, always pretend to be poorer than they really are, in order to escape the rapacious Hands of their Superiors. This obliges them all to a cunning sort of mutual

tual Civility, in order to avoid Accusers: And their Professions are very rarely sincere, but only feigned.

I have observed here three States, besides the King, which governs absolutely, his Will being a Law and Bridle to his Subjects, which none of them dare oppose.

Next him the first and highest State is composed of three Persons, called here great Lords or great Men, which are always near the King's Person; and any Person that wants to apply to his Majesty, is oblig'd to address himself first to them, and they undertake to acquaint him with it, and return his Answer. But they are sure to inform him only of what they please themselves, and consequently in the King's Name they act as they think fit; so that in reality the whole Government depends solely on them; which may the more easily happen, because, except a very few, no Persons are admitted into the King's Presence; much less allowed to speak with him.

The second State or Rank is composed of those which are here called *Are de Roe*, or Street Kings. Some of which preside over the Commonalty, and others over the Slaves; some over Military Affairs, others over the Affairs relating to Cattle and the Fruits of the Earth, &c. And indeed here is a particular Supervisor over every thing that can be thought of.

Out of the Number of these *Are de Roes* are chosen the Vice-Roys and Governors of the Countries which are subject to the King. These are all under the Command of, and responsible to the three great Men on all occasions.

They obtain these honourable Posts by the Recommendation of these three Lords: And the King, as an Ensign of this Honour, presents

each of them with a String of Coral, that being equivalent to the Arms of an Order of Knighthood. This String they are obliged to wear continually about their Necks, without ever daring to put it off on any Account whatever.

For if they are so unhappy as to lose it, or carelessly suffer it to be stolen, they are *ipso facto* irretrievably condemned to die.

For the Confirmation of which I can give you two Instances, to one of which I was witness; viz. A Negro, who thro' Inadvertency had suffered this Chain to be stolen from him, and without delay was executed, as was also the other who acknowledged himself guilty of the said Robbery, besides three more which were privy to it, and did not timely discover it: Thus five Men were put to Death for a Chain of Coral, that was not intrinsically worth Twopence.

The second Instance happened about the Year 1700, and was somewhat more extraordinary. At that time there lay near me before the Village of *Boededoe*, two Portuguese Ships or Barks, one of which departed before us, but the other was obliged to stay a Month or two after me, in order to get in his Debts; which coming in very slowly, the Captain resolv'd to cause a Fiador, that was his greatest Debtor, to be arrested in his Ship; but when he attempted it, the other resisted, and endeavour'd to escape; and during the Scuffle with the Sailors, the Pilot caught hold of his Chain of Coral, broke it in pieces and threw it over-board, which so dispirited the Fiador, that he let go his hold and surrendred himself immediately. But sometime after finding the Pilot asleep, and having gotten a Blunderbus he shot him thro' the Head, and thus oblig'd him to exchange his natural for a more

more lasting Sleep; with which the *Negro* was not yet satisfy'd, but afterwards wounded the dead Body in several Places, and then threw away his Knife, adding, *That he had now taken his Revenge, and that it was perfectly indifferent to him what they did with him*; For continues he, *When my Coral was thrown over-board, I was a dead Man; and at present I am in the same Condition.* The Portuguese did not venture to punish him, but deliver'd him to the Governor of the Place, who dispatch'd him to the King; and the Bark departing, his Majesty committed him to close Prison, in order to punish him very severely in the Presence of the next Portuguese that should come thither.

This very Year I saw the *Negro*; and just upon my Departure two Portuguese Ships came with Orders to demand Justice for their murdered Pilot. How they succeeded I cannot say, because I left that Place immediately after. But that it cost the *Negro* his Life, is undeniable.

The King keeps these Corals in his own Possession; and the Counterfeiting, or having any of them in Possession without his Grant, is punished with Death. They are made of a sort of pale red Coctile Earth or Stone, and very well glazed, and are very like speckled red Marble.

From the last Relation it is easie to infer, that the Fiadors are the third Rank or State of this Country; for no Person is permitted to wear this Coral, unless honoured by the King with some Post; since, as I have already told you, they can have it only from the King.

Besides the Fiadors, under the same Rank are also reckoned the Mercadors, or Merchants; Fulladors, or Intercessors; the Veilles, or El-

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ders; all which are distinguished by the above-mentioned Mark of Honour.

And besides these three, I know of no other Offices or Dignities; wherefore the Commonalty take place next; very few of which are laborious or industrious, unless it be those who are wretched poor: The others laying the whole Burthen of their Work on their Wives and Slaves, whether it be Tilling the Ground, Spinning of Cotton, Weaving of Cloaths or any other Handicraft; whilst they, if they have but the least Stock, apply themselves to Merchandize alone. Here are very few Manual Arts, besides Weaving, practised or understood. The Chief Workmen here are either Smiths, Carpenters or Leather-Dressers; but all their Workmanship is so very clumsy, that a Boy that has been but one Month learning in *Europe* would out-do them.

The Inhabitants of this Country, if possessed of any Riches, Eat and Drink very well; that is to say, of the best. The common Diet of the Rich is Beef, Mutton or Chickens, and Jammes for their Bread, which after they have boiled, they beat very fine, in order to make Cakes of it. They frequently treat one another, and impart a Portion of their Superfluity to the Necessitous.

The meaner Sort content themselves with smoak'd or dry'd Fish; which, if salted, is very like what we in *Europe* call Raf and Reekel. Their Bread is also Jammes, Bananas and Beans; their Drink Water, and *Pardon-Wine*, which is none of the best. The Richer Sort drink Water and Brandy, when they can get it.

The King, the great Lords, and every Governor who is but indifferently rich, subsist several

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veral Poor at their Place of Residence on their Charity, employing those who are fit for any Work, in order to help them to a Maintainance; and the rest they keep for God's sake, and to obtain the Character of being Charitable; so that here are no Beggars. And this necessary Care succeeds so well, that we do not see many remarkably poor amongst them.

They are very liberal in all mutual Presents of all sorts of Goods, and they give the *Europeans* prodigious Quantities of refreshing Provisions, and more than they really want; nay, some in this Particular give beyond their Ability, only in order to acquire a good Reputation amongst Strangers.

The Habit of the *Negroes* here is neat, ornamental and much more magnificent than that of the *Negroes* of the *Gold-Coast*. The Rich amongst them wear first a white Calico or Cotton Cloath about one Yard long, and half so broad; which serves them as Drawers; over that they wear a finer white Cotton dress, that is commonly about sixteen or twenty Yards long, which they very ornamentally pleat in the middle, casting over it a Scarf of about a Yard long and two Spans broad, the End of which is adorn'd with Fringe or Lace, which is somewhat like the Female *Negroes* on the *Gold-Coast*. The upper Part of their Body is mostly naked. These are their Cloaths in which they appear Abroad; but at Home they wear only a coarse Paan instead of Drawers, covered with a great painted Cloath woven here, which they wear like a Cloak.

The mean Sort go thus cloathed; but the Stuff they wear is much coarser: And as to Fine or Coarse each Person is govern'd by his Circumstances.

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The Wives of the great Lords wear Calico Paans Woven in this Country, which are very fine and very beautifully Chequered with several Colours. These Paans or Cloaths are not very long, and are buckled together like those which are wore at Fida, but with this difference, that as the Fidasé Paan is open before, this on the contrary is open behind or on one side, and covered before. The upper part of their Body is covered with a beautiful Cloath of about a Yard long, instead of a Veil, like that which the Women wear on the Gold-Coast. Their Necks are Adorned with Neck-laces of Coral, very agreeably Disposed or Plaited. Their Arms are dressed up with bright Copper or Iron-Arm-rings; as are also the Legs of some of them, and their Fingers are as thick crouded with Copper-Rings as they can possibly wear them.

Thus set out, Sir, they look pretty tolerable, and may pass for such for want of better.

The meaner sort of Women as well as the Men of the same Condition, differ from the Rich only in the goodness of their Cloaths.

Almost all the Children go Naked; the Boys till they are ten or twelve Years old, and the Girls till Nature discovers their Maturity. Till then they wear nothing but some Strings of Coral twisted about their Middles, which is not sufficient to hide their Nudities.

The Men don't Curl or Adorn their Hair, but content themselves with letting it grow in its natural Posture, except buckling it in two or three Places in order to hang a great Coral to it. But the Women's Hair is very artificially turned up into great and small Buckles, and divided on the Crown of the Head, like a Cock's Comb inverted; by which means the small Curls are placed in exact Order. Some divide their Hair into twenty

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twenty or more Pleats and Curls, according as it happens to be either thick or thin. Some Oyl it with the Oyl which they Roast out of the Kernels of Oyl-Nuts, by which means it loses its black Colour, and in process of time turns to a sort of Green or Yellow, that they are very fond of; notwithstanding which in my Opinion it looks hideously.

The Men here Marry as many Women as their Circumstances will allow them to keep. They have scarce any, or at most very few Marriage Ceremonies amongst either Poor or Rich; except only that one treats the Bride's Friends more splendidly than the other.

Their Marriages are commonly made in the following manner. If a Man likes a Virgin, he discovers his Passion to one of the most considerable amongst his Relations; who repairs to her House and asks her of her Relations, who if she is not before Promised, seldom deny his Request: The Consent then of the Relations or Parents thus obtained, the Match goes on, and the Bridegroom Cloaths his future Bride with a rich Suit of Cloaths, Necklaces and Bracelets; and after having handsomly treated the Relations on both sides, the Wedding is ended without any farther Ceremony. The Treat I now speak of, is not performed at the House of the Bridegroom, or indeed any other; but the Victuals and Drink is dressed and prepar'd, and each hath his part sent home.

The Negroes are very Jealous of their Wives with their own Country-men, but not in the least with respect to us; for they are very little concerned at our Conversing with their Wives, whether we rally, sit or lye by them, provided we keep within the bounds of Modesty: Nay, they have entertained so good an Opinion of us, that

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that when we Visit them, if their Affairs call them away, they not only leave us alone with, but recommend us to their Wives for Diversion whilst they are out: But no Male *Negroe* is allowed to come near the Women's Apartment; which is a Custom very strictly observed by them.

All the difference betwixt the Wives of the great and those of the meaner Sort, is that the latter go every where, where their Work obliges them; but the former are almost always shut up very close, to obviate all occasions of Transgression.

If a Man be in his own House accompanied by some of his Wives, and receives a Visit from any of his Acquaintance; the Wives immediately retire to another part of the House, that they may not be seen: But if the Visitants are *Europeans*, they continue with their Husbands, by reason it is their desire; whom they use all Arts to please, because their Happiness depends on them: For the Men are here absolute Masters of their Wives.

Adultery is here Punish'd three several ways: First amongst the Commonalty in the following manner. If any of them is suspicious of the Levity of any of his Wives, he tries all possible means to surprize her in the Fact, without which he cannot Punish her; but if he succeeds in his Endeavours, he is thereby lawfully entituled to all the Effects of her Paramour, whether consisting in Slaves, Boesies (their Money) Elephant's Teeth, or any other Mercantile Commodity; all which he may immediately Seize and perfectly Use, Occupy and Enjoy as his own. The offending Wife is Punish'd very heartily with a Cudgel, and driven out of his House to seek her Fortune; but no Person being very fond of

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of Marrying her after this, she retires to another Place, where she passes for a Widow, by way of aiming at another Husband; or else strives to subsist her self by a Trade not very difficult (for her at least) to learn.

Thus far extends the poor Man's Satisfaction. The Rich revenge themselves much the same way; but the Woman's Relations to avoid the Scandal which might thereby accrue to their Family, reconcile the offended Husband with a good Sum of Money, and thereby prevail upon him to admit her to Grace, which they generally do; and then the thus attoned Adulteress passes for as virtuous a Woman as before her Crime; and is also for the future treated with all Matrimonial Endearments in her turn, as well as his other Wives.

The Governors Punish Adulterers more severely; for if they surprize any Debauching their Wives, they kill both them and their Paramours on the very spot where they committed the Crime, and throw their dead Bodies on the Dunghil, to be exposed as a Prey to wild Beasts.

These severe Punishments of Adultery amongst all ranks of People, deter Men from meddling with other's Wives so much, that this Crime is very seldom Committed here.

The *Negroes* are very Libidinous, which they ascribe to their *Pardon-Wine* and good Eating, which invigorates Nature: They are indeed much in the right as to the last, but I never could observe any such great Virtue in the former.

They are not enclined to talk of Procreation in obscene or too expressive Terms; they believe it to be designed by Nature for obscure Retreats; and therefore very improper to be talked of

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of in broad terms : But he that can cleanly express this Subject in well meaning Hints, passes for a Wit. Hence each of them aims at diverting Fables or Similitudes tending this way.

The pregnant Wife is not allowed even the Matrimonial Careffes of her Husband till she is Delivered ; after which if a Male Infant it is presented to the King, as properly and of right belonging to him ; and hence all the Males of the Land are called the King's Slaves ; but the Females belong to the Father, and live with him, according to his Pleasure, till they are of Age ; after which he Marries them, when, and to whom he pleases.

Eight or fourteen Days, or sometimes longer after the Birth of their Children, both Males and Females are Circumcised ; the former are hereby bereft of their Prepuce, and the latter of a small Portion of their Clitoris. Besides which they make small Incisions all over the Bodies of the Infants, in a sort of regular manner expressing some Figures thereby ; but the Females are more adorned with these Ornaments than the Males, and each at Pleasure of their Parents.

You may easily guess that this Mangling the Bodies of these tender Creatures must be very Painful ; but since it is the Fashion here, and is thought very Ornamental, it is practised by every body.

When the Child is seven Days old, the Parents make a small Feast, imagining that the Infant is past its greatest Dangers ; and in order to prevent the evil Spirits from doing it any Mischief, they strew all the Ways with dressed Victuals to appease them.

If a Woman bear two Children at a Birth, it is believed to be a good Omen, and the King is immediately informed thereof, who causes publick

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lick Joy to be expressed with all sorts of their Musick. The Father imagining it too heavy a Task for the Woman to Suckle both the Children, searches out a wet Nurse whose Child is Dead ; whom he persuades by the force of Money or good Words, to Nurse one of his Children.

In all Parts of the *Benin* Territories, Twin-Births are esteemed good Omens, except at *Arabo*, where they are of the contrary Opinion, and treat the Twin-bearing-Woman very barbarously ; for they actually Kill both Mother and Infants, and Sacrifice them to a certain Devil which they fondly imagine harbours in a Wood near the Village. But if the Man happens to be more than ordinary tender, he generally buys off his Wife by Sacrificing a Female-Slave in her place ; but the Children are without possibility of Redemption, obliged to be made the Satisfactory Offerings which this Savage-Law requires.

In the Year 1699. a Merchant's Wife commonly called *Ellaroe* or *Mof*, Lay in of two Children, and her Husband redeemed her with a Slave, but Sacrificed his Children. After which I had frequent Opportunities of seeing and talking with the disconsolate Mother, who never could see an Infant without a very melancholy Reflection on the Fate of her own ; which always extorted briny Tears from her.

The following Year the like Event happened to a Priest's Wife: She was Delivered of two Children, which with a Slave instead of his Wife, he was obliged to Kill and Sacrifice with his own Hands, by reason of his Sacerdotal Function. And exactly one Year after, as tho' it had been a Punishment inflicted from Heaven, the same Woman was the second time Delivered of two Children ;

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but how the Priest managed himself on this Occasion, I have not been informed, but am apt to think, that this poor Woman was forced to atone her Fertility by Death.

These dismal Events have in process of Time made such Impressions on the Men, that when the Time of their Wife's Delivery approaches, they send them to another Country; which makes me believe that for the future they will correct these Inhumanities.

The Wood beforementioned in which the Devil is supposed to lurk, is by them esteemed so Sacred, that they never permit a foreign *Negroe* or any of his Wives to enter it. If any Person accidentally happen on a Path which leads to this Wood, he is obliged to go to the end of it without returning before he comes there: And they are firmly persuaded, that if this Law be violated, or that of Offering the Children and Mother, or at least a Female-Slave in her Place, the Land will be infested with some severe Plague. Notwithstanding all which I have frequently gone a Shooting in this Wood, and to ridicule their Credulity, designedly turned before I had gone half to the end of the Path: By which means I not a little staggered the Faith of some who saw that my Boldness was not attended with any ill Consequences. But the Roguish Priests were immediately ready at Hand with an Exception, which was, That I being a white Man, their God, or rather Devil, did not trouble his Head with me: But if a *Negroe* should presume to do so, the Danger would soon appear.

The Multiplication of Mankind goes forward very successfully here; which is not very hard to believe, since the Women are not Barren, and the Men vigorous; besides which they have the advantage

advantage of a choice out of their great number of Wives: Of which, for their Encouragement, the fruitful Woman is highly valued, whilst the Barren is despised.

Menstruous Women are here deemed so unclean, that they are not permitted so much as to enter their Husband's Houses, or to touch any thing either to Dress the domestick Diet or Clean the House, or indeed on any other Account; nor are they permitted so much as to look into, much less enter several Houses, but during this natural Uncleanness, are obliged to reside in a separate House, tho' as soon as that is over and they have washed themselves, they are restored to their former State.

If they are asked who first taught them Circumcision, and to believe menstruous Women unclean; they reply that they do not themselves know, but that those Customs are traditionally Handed to them by their Ancestors: And this is the common Answer of all the Blacks.

The *Negroes* of this Country don't seem so much afraid of Death as in other Lands. They are not uneasy at the naming of it, and ascribe the length or brevity of Life to their Gods. Notwithstanding which they are very zealous in the use of those means which are thought proper for the prolongation of Life: For if they fall Sick, the first refuge is the Priest, who here as well as on the *Gold-Coast*, acts the Doctor. He first administers green Herbs; which proving ineffectual, he hath recourse to Sacrifices. If the Patient recovers, the Priest is very much esteemed; but if not he is dismissed, and another from whom better Success is expected, is called in.

If these Sacerdotal Doctors happen to Cure the Patient, they are very much Reverenced; but the sick Person is no sooner perfectly recovered,

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red, than they are discharged without any Respect: So that if the Priests here have no other dependance, they are generally Poor; because each particular Person Offers his own Sacrifices, and performs the Service of his Idols without giving them any manner of Trouble.

When any Person dies, the Corps is Washed and Cleaned; and if a Native of the City of *Benin* happens to Dye at a very distant Place, the Body is perfectly dried up over a gentle Fire, and put into a Coffin whose Planks are closely joined with Glue, and brought with the first Opportunity to the mentioned City in order to be Buried. But sometimes a convenient Conveyance does not offer it self in several Years; wherefore the dead Corps is thus long kept above Ground, as I have seen several in my time at *Arebo*.

The nearest Relations, Wives and Slaves, go into Mourning on account of the dead Person: Some Shave their Hair, others their Beards, or half their Heads, &c. The publick Mourning commonly lasts fourteen Days. Their Lamentations and Cries are accommodated to the Tunes of several Musical Instruments, tho' with large intermediate stops; during which they Drink very plentifully. And when the Funeral is over each Person retires to his own House, and the nearest Relations which continue in Mourning, bewail the Dead in this manner for several Months.

The right of Inheritance devolves in the following manner. When any Person of Condition Dies, the eldest Son is sole Heir, but is obliged to present a Slave by way of Herriot to the King, and another to the three great Lords, with a Petition that he may succeed his Father in the same Quality; which the King accordingly grants, and he is declar'd the lawful Heir of all his Father hath left

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left behind him. He bestows no more on his younger Brothers than what out of his bounty he pleases: But if his Mother be alive, he allows her a creditable Maintainance proportioned to her Condition, and allows her besides to keep whatever she hath gotten from his Father. His Father's other Widows, especially those which have not had any Children, the Son takes home if he likes them, and uses as his own; but those which he doth not like, he also takes them home with their Children, and sets them to Work in order to subsist them the more creditably; but entertains no Matrimonial Conversation with them.

Of this last sort, here are as great numbers as of Prostitutes in other Countries.

If the Deceased leaves no Children, the Brother inherits his Effects; and in case of deficiency of such Heir, the next akin. But if no lawful Heir appears, the King Inherits.

The Government of this Country is principally vested in the King and the three mentioned great Lords: The first is Nominal Governor, and the last are really so. Each Province hath its particular Governor, all which depend on these three chief Springs, without whose Consent they dare not Act.

The Crimes here committed are Punish'd in the following manner. Thievery is not rife here, these *Negroes* not being of the same pilfering Nature as at other Places; however, if the Thief is taken in the Fact, he is obliged to restitution of the stolen Goods, and besides Punished by a pecuniary Mult; but if he is Poor, after restitution of the stolen Goods, if in his Power, he is very well beaten. But if the Robbery be done upon any of the Government, it is Punished with Death: In the mean time as I have already

G g hinted,

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hinted, this Crime so seldom occurs, that Exam-
ples are very rare.

Murder is a Crime that happens here, yet
more seldom than the former. Whoever Kills
a Man is Punished with Death; but if the Mur-
therer happen to be the King's Son or some
other considerable Person, he is Banish'd to the
utmost Borders of the King's Territories, to
which he is convey'd under a very strong Guard;
but none of these Banished Persons being ever
heard of, the *Negroes* take it for granted, that
their Guard conduct them to the *Elysian Fields*.
If any Person with his Fist, or otherwise Acciden-
tally and Undesignedly Kills another, and the
dead Person did not Bleed, and his Death doth
not seem violent; the Offender may then purchase
his Life, by first Burying the Dead creditably at
his own charges, and afterwards producing a Slave
to suffer in his stead. This Slave doomed to a re-
conciling Offering, he is obliged to touch on his
Knees with his Forehead as he is Killed; after
which he is obliged to Pay a large Sum to the
great Lords; and this performed, he obtains his
Freedom; and the Friends of the Deceased are ob-
lig'd to rest satisfied with this.

I have already informed you of the Punishment
of Adultery; whatever other Crimes are com-
mitted, they are attonable with Money: And the
Fine is proportioned to the Offence. And he
that hath no Money, must satisfie the Fine by a
corporal Punishment; so that where Effects are
deficient, the Body must make good the Fine.

In case of Accusations which are not clearly
proved, the Accused is obliged to Purge himself
by Tryal, which is practised five several ways,
four of which take place in slight Offences and
civil Causes, and the fifth in capital and high
Crimes, as High Treason, or all Crimes of so deep a
Dye:

Dye:

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Dye: This last Trial is only lallow'd to be taken
by considerable Persons, and that too by the
King's especial Order.

The first sort of Purgation is managed in the
following manner. The Accused are carry'd to
the Priest, who greeses a Cock's Feather, and
therewith pierces the Tongue of the Accused;
if it passes easily thro', it is a Sign the man is In-
nocent, and the Wound made by the Quill will
soon close and heal up without any Pain: But on
the other side, if he is Guilty, the Quill remains
sticking in his Tongue, and he is accordingly pro-
nounced Guilty.

The second Trial of Innocence is practised in
the following manner. The Priest takes an ob-
long Clot of Earth, in which he sticks seven or
nine Cock's Quills, which the suspected Person is
obliged to draw out successively; and if they
come out easily, it is a Sign of Innocence; but if
not, the Prisoner is convicted of the Crimes al-
leged against him.

The third Proof is made by spurting a certain
Juice of green Herbs into the Eyes of the accused
Person; which, if it happen to do him no Hurt,
he is thought Innocent; but if his Eyes become
thereby red and inflam'd, he is oblig'd to pay the
Fine laid on him.

For the fourth Trial the Priest strokes the
Prisoner three times over the Tongue with a red
hot Copper Arm-Ring, and from his being hurt
or not hurt thereby, they pronounce Judgment.

I have seen all these four Trials made; but all
the Accused were declared Guilty, and not with-
out Reason; for it would be strange, indeed, if
red-hot Copper should not burn the Tongue. The
fifth and last Proof, which doth not happen once
in twenty Years, I never saw, and consequently
have it only by Hear-say.

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If any Person is accused of a very great Crime, of which he is desirous to clear himself by Oath, the King's Leave being first asked and obtained, the Accused is brought to a certain River, to which is ascribed the strange Quality of gently wafting every innocent Person plunged therein to Land, tho' never so unskilled in the Art of Swimming; and on the other side to sink the Guilty to the bottom, tho' never so good Swimmers; by which means, if he endeavours to help himself out, 'twould be in vain, and only render his Death the more painful. The Water (before very calm) immediately upon a guilty Person's being thrown in, grows and continues as turbulent as a Whirl-pool, till the Criminal is gotten to the bottom, when, as tho' perfectly satisfy'd, it returns to its former Tranquility. What think you, Sir, should you rely on this weak Proof? I believe not; for my part I should not; for I should, tho' never so innocent, be very much afraid, if not a skilful Swimmer, that my Innocence would not save me from irrecoverably sinking to the bottom; and I believe there are several of my Mind.

The Fines charged on these Crimes are divided as follows: First, The Person injured by Thievery, or any other Crime, is satisfy'd out of it; then the Governor hath his Part; and last of all the beforementioned great Lords have also their share: For the King, whose Ear it never reaches, hath no Part thereof. If the three Lords are contented with what is sent them, it is well; but they frequently send them back to the Governors or Vice-Roys, and in the King's Name inform them, that the Fines are too small, and consequently that they have not deported themselves in that Affair, according to their Duty, giving them also to understand what they ought

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to have done. Those to whom these Orders are sent, tho' they very well know that the King never intermeddles in these Affairs, but that it is only the Pleasure of the Lords, are notwithstanding oblig'd to a strict Obedience, and generally send double the Sum they require, otherwise the Lords would not fail to take an Opportunity of revenging their Contempt by some ill Office or other.

Before I speak of their Religion, I shall employ a few Lines in the Description of their Musical Instruments, which chiefly consist in large and small Drums, not very different from those of the *Gold-Coast*. They are shaped like them, covered with Leather or Skins, and beaten in the same manner as they are. Besides these Drums, they have a sort of Iron Bells on which they play, also Callebasses hung round with Boesies, which serve them instead of Castagnettes; all which together afford a very disagreeable and jarring Sound.

Besides these, they have also an Instrument, which will needs be called an Harp; it is strung with six or seven extended Reeds, upon which they play very artfully, and sing so finely, and dance so justly to the Tune, that it is very agreeably diverting to see it. These are indeed the best Dancers I ever saw amongst the *Negroes*. The Natives of *Axim* in their annual Feast, when they drive out the Devil, have much such a Dance, tho' neither so fine, nor near so diverting as this.

The Natives here are not at all addicted to Gaming. Here are no other Games than those play'd with Beans, and that only for Diversion and Pastime; but never for Money.

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Their Religion is so absurd and perplexed, that I scarce know how to describe it : But however to begin as well as I can.

They profess to Worship both Gods and Devils in Human and Brutal Images, some of which are Elephant's Teeth, Claws, dead Men's Heads and Skeletons, &c. Also they take every thing which seems extraordinary in Nature for a God, and make Offerings to him ; and each is his own Priest, in order to Worship his Gods in what manner pleases him best.

It is really the more to be lamented, that the Negroes Idolize such worthless Nothings, by reason that several amongst them have no very unjust Idea of the Deity : For they ascribe to God the Attributes of Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Omniscience and Invisibilty ; besides which, they believe that he governs all things by his Providence. By reason God is Invisibile, they say, it would be absurd to make any Corporeal Representations of him, for it is impossible to make any Image of what we never saw : Wherefore they have such Multitudes of Images of their Idol-Gods, which they take to be subordinate Deities to the supreme God, without considering what sort of Trifles they are, and only believe there are Mediators betwixt God and Men, which they take to be their Idols.

They know enough of the Devil to call all that is ill by that Name, and believe themselves oblig'd to worship and serve him, to prevent his mischiefing them. The Devil is not represented by any particular Image, or distinguished from their Idols any otherwise than in their Intention only ; for to the very same Image they one time make Offerings to God, and at another to the Devil ; so that one Image serves them in the two Capacities of God and Devil.

They

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They talk very much concerning the Apparition of the Ghosts of their deceased Ancestors or Relations ; which yet happens only to them in their Sleep, when they come and warn them to make this or that Offering ; which, as soon as Day approaches, they immediately do ; if they are unable, they will, rather than fail in this Duty, borrow of others ; for they imagine that the Neglect hereof would draw on them some heavy Affliction. If any Person in Railery tells them they are only idle Imaginations and Dreams ; these will agree with them ; but add, It is a Custom of our Fore-fathers which we are oblig'd to follow. No other Answer is to be obtained from them.

Their daily Offerings are not of great Value, consisting only of a few boiled Jammes, mixt with Oil, which they lay before the Images of their Gods. Sometimes they offer a Cock ; but then the Idol hath only the Blood, because they like the Flesh very well themselves.

The Great Men make annual Sacrifices, which are performed in great State, and prove very expensive ; not only by reason of their killing great Multitudes of Cows, Sheep and all sorts of Cattle, but because that besides they give a solemn Feast, making their Friends very merry for several Days successively, and withal make them Presents.

The Seat of Bliss or Torment in the future Life, they imagine to be the Sea. They call the Shadow of a Man *Passadoor*, or Conductor, which they believe shall testify whether he hath lived well or ill : If well, he is raised to great Dignity in the mentioned Place ; but if ill, he is to perish with Hunger and Poverty ; so that they send the Happy and the Damned to the same Place.

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Their false Gods, or the Trash which represents them, are spread all over their Houses, and no Place is free from them: Besides which there are also several small Hutts erected without the House, which are likewise filled with them, and whither they sometimes go to Sacrifice.

To conclude their ridiculous Religion, I shall add a small Account of their Festivals, of which they have so many, and different ones, that they ought not to give place to the *Romanists*. Their Great Feast, called the *Coral-Feast*, happens in *May*, at which the King himself is present. The Celebration of this pompous Festival I this Year saw at *Benin*. But of this more at large in the Description of that City.

Their Sabbath happens every fifth Day, which is very solemnly observed by the Great with the Slaughter of Cows, Sheep and Goats, whilst the Commonalty kill Dogs, Cats and Chickens, or whatever their Money will reach to. And of whatever is kill'd, large Portions are distributed to the Neccessitous, in order to enable them, as every Person is oblig'd, to Celebrate this Festival.

One Day in the Year they also very expensively Celebrate the Decease of their Ancestors or Relations, in order to keep up the Remembrance of them.

They divide Time into Years, Months, Weeks and Days; each of which is distinguished by a particular Name, and they reckon fourteen Months to a Year.

Believing that I have said enough of their Idolatrous Worship, it is time to vary the Subject. I cannot say much of their Wars; for notwithstanding that they are continually fallen on by the Pyrates or Robbers, and their Neighbours not subject to the King of *Benin*, they yet are igno-

L E T. XXI. Kingdom of Great Benin.

ignorant of the Art of War; for being by necessity drawn into the Field, their Conduct is so very confused, that they themselves are ashamed of it. They have no Officers or Commanders; and each Man takes his own Course, without regarding his Neighbour.

They are so very cowardly, that nothing but the utmost Necessity can oblige them to fight; and even then they had much rather suffer the greatest Losses than defend themselves: When their Flight is prevented, they return upon the Enemy, but with so little Courage and Conduct, that they soon fling down their Arms, and either run away or surrender themselves.

Their Weapons are Cutlaces or Hangers, small Poniards, Assaguays, together with Bows and Arrows, the latter of which are poyson'd. They have also Shields, but so light, and made of small Bamboes, that they cannot ward off any thing that is forcible; wherefore they are rather Ornamental, than really serve for Defence.

It is now time to treat of the Animals of this Country. Here is no want of tame Beasts, such as Horses, Cows, Sheep, Dogs, Cats, besides Poultry, &c. all which are equally good and cheap. The Cattle here, tho' very small, are yet very good, especially that Part of 'em that are edible with us, which are of a good Taste. As for the Remainder, the Dogs and Cats, the *Negroes* evince this Truth also, for they eat them rather than any other Beast.

Wild Beasts, as well Voracious as others, are here also in great Abundance. Among the fierce Kind are reckoned the Elephants, and then the Lions and Tygers. This Country is prodigious full of the first Sort: But I am not very fond of believing there are many Lions or Tygers, by reason I have never yet seen one of them, or indeed

deed so much as one of their Skins; which may nevertheless proceed from the great Cowardice of the *Negroes*, who dare not venture on Hunting them, and consequently have none of their Hides.

Wild Dogs or Jackalls are reported to be very numerous here: They also tell us here are Monkeys or Baboons, which are extraordinary large, and will attack a Body of Men, that is not too numerous for them.

Here, as well as on the *Gold-Coast*, are all sorts of Apes, besides edible wild Beasts, which are here so abundant, that a good Mark's-Man might live on the Sport alone. Their Quadrupeds consist of several sorts of Harts, wild Hogs and others.

Amongst their feathered Kind the Principal are Pheasants, Partridges, both green and blew, Turtle and Ring-Doves, Ducks, Crooked-Bills, Snipes, Divers, Water-Hens and a sort of Crown-Birds. But by reason the *Negroes* neither very much love, nor are expert in the use of Fire-Arms, seldom any wild Beast or Fowl come to hand, except they happen to catch them in a Net. They sometimes kill Harts and wild Swine with their Assaguays, but very seldom; and whenever it happens, it is look'd upon as something rare.

The River upwards is not well stor'd with Fish; all that they eat here coming from a Place called *Boca de la Mare*, or the Mouth of the Sea, where they are dry'd and smoak'd; but most of it not being salted, tastes very ill, and stinks abominably.

The Fruits of the Earth are, first, Corn, or great *Milho*; for they have none of the small Sort. The large *Milho* is here cheap, but they do not esteem it; wherefore but little is sow'd, which

which yet yields a prodigious quantity of Grain, and grows very luxuriantly.

They sometimes employ the *Ardra* Women to brew Beer with this *Milho*; but it proves disagreeable and hot.

Here are not many Potatoes, but a prodigious abundant Plenty of Jammes; which is also their most ready Diet. They eat them with all manner of Edibles instead of Bread; wherefore they are very careful that this Fruit be planted and gathered in its proper Season.

Here are two sorts of Beans, both which are very like Horse-Beans: They are of a hot disagreeable Taste and unwholesome.

I never saw any Rice here, nor do I believe any grows in *Benin*, tho' the morassy Land near the River seems very proper for it.

The Arboriferous Fruits of *Benin* are two sorts of Coco-Nuts, Cormantyn-Apples, Paquovens, Banana's, Wild-Figs and some others, which are only known here, and are not extraordinary.

The Soil, a little distant from the River, is extraordinary fruitful; and whatever is planted or sowed there, grows very well, and yields a rich Crop. But close by the River the Land is not good; for tho' what is sown comes up, yet the contagious Damps of the River kill it.

The Inhabitants are very well skill'd in making several sorts of Dyes, as Green, Blew, Black, Red and Yellow. The Blew they prepare from Indigo, which grows here abundantly; but the remaining Colours are extracted from certain Trees by Friction and Decoction.

The *Negroes* here make Soap, which is better than any all over *Guinea*: And by reason this washes very well, the *Negroes* Cloaths are very clean. You know it is made upon the *Gold-Coast*.

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Coast with Palm-Oil, Banana-Leaves and the Ashes of a sort of Wood. The manner of making it here differs very little. That a prodigious quantity of Cotton-Trees must needs grow here, you may reasonably conjecture, when I tell you, that not only all the Inhabitants are clothed with it, but they annually export Thousands of woven Cloaths to other Places.

Thus far have I answered you on the Heads which you proposed concerning *Benin*; so that I have only two remaining Particulars, which are concerning the King's Revenue, and whether any Tolls are levied here.

As for the first. The King hath a very rich Income; for his Territories are very large and full of Governors, and each knows how many Bags of Boesies (the Money of this Country) he must annually raise to the King, which amounts to a vast Sum, which 'tis impossible to make any Calculation of. Others, of a meaner Rank than the former, instead of Money, deliver to the King Bulls, Cows, Sheep, Chickens, Jammes and Cloaths; in short, whatever he wants for his House-keeping; so that he is not oblig'd to one Farthing expence on that Account, and consequently he lays up his whole Pecuniary Revenue untouch'd.

Duties or Tolls on imported and exported Wares are not paid here; but every one pays a certain Sum annually to the Governor of the Place where he lives, for the Liberty of Trading. The Vice-Roy sends part of it to the King; so that his Revenue being determined and settled, he can easily compute what he hath to expect annually.

The *Europeans* are here extraordinary civilly treated; for the Customs which we are oblig'd to pay for every Ship, to the King, the Great Lords,

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Lords, the Governors of the Place where we trade, the Mercadors and Fiadors, or whatever Persons else who have any Demand upon us, do not amount to above six Pounds Sterling; for which we become entirely free to Trade.

You also desired, that when an Opportunity offered to get to the City of *Benin*, I should give you a particular Description of it. I have now twice successively had the Happiness to see that City, which I shall represent to you in its present State; whence you may judge how far what Dr. *Dapper* hath said of it agrees with Truth.

The Village of *Benin*, for it at present scarce deserves the Name of a City, is the Residence of the Great King of *Benin*, whence the whole Land and River also borrows its Name. It is situate about ten Miles Landwards in from the Village of *Agaton*. The Neighbouring Country is flat, as is the Village it self, which is at least about four Miles large. The Streets are prodigious long and broad, in which continual Markets are kept, either of Kine, Cotton, Elephants Teeth, *European* Wares; or in short, whatever is to be come at in this Country. These Markets are kept in the Fore and Afternoon each Day.

Formerly this Village was very thick and close built, and in a manner overcharg'd with Inhabitants, which is yet visible from the Ruins of half remaining Houses; but at present the Houses stand like poor Mens Corn, widely distant from each other.

The Houses are large and handsome, with Clay Walls; for here is not a Stone in the whole Country so big as a Man's Fist. They are covered at the top with Reed, Straw or Leaves. The Architecture is passable, considering it in comparison with *Negroes* Buildings, and is very like the *Axim* way of Building.

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The Inhabitants of this Village are all Natives; for Foreigners are not permitted to live here.

There are several very rich Men who live here, and attend continually at Court, not troubling themselves with either Trade or Agriculture, or any thing else, but leaving all their Affairs to their Wives and Slaves, who go to all the circumjacent Villages to Trade in all sorts of Merchandizes, or otherwise serve for daily Wages, and are oblig'd to bring the greatest part of their Gain in Trade or Hire to their Masters.

All Male Slaves here are Foreigners; for the Natives cannot be sold for Slaves, but are all free, and alone bear the Name of the King's Slaves.

Nor is it allow'd to export any Male Slaves that are sold in this Country, for they must stay there: But Females may be dealt with at every one's Pleasure.

I have already acquainted you with the Employment of the Great; but that of the ordinary Citizens is to loyter about whole Days, till they hear of any Ships being come into the River, upon which they go thither to Trade with what Goods they have in Store: And if no Ships come, they send their Slaves to *Rio Lagos*, or other Places to buy Fish, of which they make a very profitable Trade further in-land.

The Handicrafts keep to their Work, without troubling themselves with the Court or Trade. Others employ themselves in Agriculture, or some such thing, in order to get their Living.

The Streets being so long and wide as I have said, are by the Women kept very neat; for here, as well as in *Holland*, every Woman cleans her own Door.

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The Women here are as much Slaves as in any Place in this Kingdom. They are oblig'd to keep the daily Markets, look after their House-keeping and Children, as well as their Kitchens, and Till the Ground: In short they have so much Employment, that they ought not to sit still; notwithstanding which, they dispatch it all very briskly, and with a great deal of Pleasure.

They behave themselves very obligingly to all; but more especially the *Europeans*, except the *Portuguese*, which they don't like very well; but our Nation is very much in their Favour,

The King's Court, which makes a principal part of the City, must not be forgotten. It is upon a very great Plain, about which are no Houses, and hath, besides its wide Extent, nothing rare. The first Place we come into, is a very long Gallery, if it must have that Name, which is sustained by fifty eight strong Planks, about twelve Foot high, instead of Pillars; these are neither saw'd nor plain'd, but only hack'd out. As soon as we are past this Gallery we come to the Mud or Earthen Wall, which hath three Gates, at each Corner one, and another in the Middle, the last of which is adorn'd at the top with a wooden Turret, like a Chimney, about sixty or seventy Foot high. At the top of all is fixed a large Copper Snake, whose Head hangs downwards: this Serpent is very well cast or carved, and is the finest I have seen in *Benin*. Entering one of these Gates we come into a Plain about a quarter of a Mile, almost square, and enclosed with a low Wall. Being come to the end of this Plain, we meet with such another Gallery as the first, except that it hath neither Wall nor Turret. Some time since this Gallery was half thrown down by Thunder, since which no Hand hath been laid to it to re-build it. This Gallery hath

hath a Gate at each End; and passing thro' one of them a third Gallery offers its self to view, differing from the former only in that the Planks upon which it rests are Humane Figures; but so wretchedly carved, that it is hardly possible to distinguish whether they are most like Men or Beasts; notwithstanding which, my Guides were able to distinguish them into Merchants, Soldiers, Wild-Beast-Hunters, &c. Behind a white Carpet we are also shewn eleven Mens Heads cast in Copper, by much as good an Artist as the former Carver; and upon each of these is an Elephant's Tooth, these being some of the King's Gods. Going thro' a Gate of this Gallery we enter another great Plain and a fourth Gallery, beyond which is the King's Dwelling-House. Here is another Snake, as upon the first Wall. In the first Apartment at the entrance of the Plain, is the King's Audience-Chamber, where, in presence of his three Great Lords, I saw and spoke with him: He was sitting on an Ivory Couch under a Canopy of *Indian Silk*.

He was a Person of an effable Mien, and about forty Years old. I stood, according to Custom, about thirty Paces distant from him; but desired, in order to observe him the better, that I might approach nearer to him; which, tho' unusual, he smiling granted; and after he had beckon'd me, I advanced to within eight or ten Paces of him. There was no Person in the Hall besides the three mentioned Great Lords, the King and a *Negroe* with a drawn Sword in his Hand, that look'd as fierce as a Cabin Centry.

Whatever any Person would say to the King, must be first told to these Three, who then report it to him, and bring his Answer, going thus continually to and from him, without any Person's

son's being able to determine whether they faithfully report the Messages on either side.

On the King's left Hand, against a fine Tapestry, I saw seven white scoured Elephants Teeth on Pedestals of Ivory, which is the manner that almost all the King's Gods are placed within his House. I presented the King with a Silk Night-Gown, with which (as I was afterwards told) he was highly pleased; but whilst I was with him I saw no Marks of his Satisfaction, because it was brought to him covered, and he did not see what it was till after my Departure; for every thing which is brought to the King is in like manner covered with Mats; and before and behind these Presents several *Negroes* march provided with white Staves. All those who happen to meet them in this Posture, immediately make haste out of the way, otherwise they would be very well beaten. This Precaution is taken to prevent all opportunity of poysoning the King's Goods, or killing him.

The *Coral-Feast* happen'd when I was at this great Prince's Court; which, tho' it affords nothing very extraordinary, I shall yet give you some Description of, because it is the only Day in the Year when the King appears publicly. He came most magnificently dress'd to the second Plain, where under a very fine Canopy was placed a Seat for him; and there also his Wives and a great number of his Officers of the first Rank all in their richest Dresses ranged themselves around him, and soon after began a Procession; after which the King also removed from his Throne, in order to Sacrifice to the Gods in the open Air, and thereby begin the Feast, which Action is accompanied with the universal loud Acclamations of his People. After passing about a quarter of an Hour in this

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manner, he return'd to, and again sat down in his Place, where he staid two Hours, in order to give the remainder of the People time to perform their Devotions; which done he returned home. The remainder of the Day was spent in splendid Treating and Feasting, and the King caused all sorts of Provisions and Pardon-Wine to be distributed in common to all, and all the Great follow'd his Example; so that on that Day nothing is seen throughout the whole City, but all possible Marks of rejoicing.

I was not able to discover the Nature and Intent of this *Coral-Feast*, because the *Negroes* would not give me any Account or Explanation of it; their only Answer to that Question, whenever I put it, being, *We don't know any thing of it.*

In the beginning of my Description of this City, I inform'd you of its mean State at present, and that the greatest Part of it lies desolate; which, indeed, is deplorable, by reason the Circumjacent Country is as pleasant as could be wish'd, where no interposing Hill or Wood rudely interrupts the agreeable Prospect of thousands of charming Trees, which, by their wide extended Branches full of Leaves, seem to invite Mankind to repose under their Shade. The Ruin of this Town and the Circumjacent Land, was occasioned by the King's causing two Kings of the Street to be killed, under pretence that they had attempted his Life, tho' all the World was satisfied of the contrary, and throughly convinced, that their overgrown Riches were the true cause of their Death, that the King might enrich himself with their Effects, as he did indeed. After this Barbarity the King found also a third Man that stood in his way, who, being universally belov'd, was timely warned of that
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Prince's Intention, and accordingly took his Flight, accompanied with three fourths of the Inhabitants of the Town; which the King observing, immediately assembled a number of Men from the bordering Country, and caused the Fugitives to be pursued, in order to oblige them to return; but they were so warmly received by this King of the Street and his Followers, that they forced them to return with bloody Noses, and give their Master an Account of their Misadventure. But he resolving not to rest there, makes a fresh Attempt, which succeeded no better than the former, which was not all; for the Fugitive throughly incensed and flush'd, came directly to the City, which he plundered and pillaged, sparing no Place but the King's Court; after which he retired, but incessantly continued for the space of ten Years to rob the Inhabitants of *Great Benin*, till at last by the Mediation of the *Portuguese*, a Peace was concluded betwixt him and the King, by which he was entirely pardoned all that was past, and earnestly requested by the King to return to his former Habitation; however he would not trust himself there, but lives two or three Days Journey from *Benin*, where he keeps as great a Court and State as the King.

The returning Citizens were affably and amicably received by the King, and preferred to honourable Offices, in order by those means to induce the rest to return, which probably they will not do, as being very well contented where they are; wherefore it is to be feared that the greatest Part of this Town is still likely to continue uninhabited.

This, Sir, is all I can say of *Benin*. Nor can I at present give you any Account of *Rio de Calbary*, because I was not there, by reason of

A Description of the, &c. LET. XXI.

the great Mortality which happened amongst our Men; but I hope once in my Life to meet with an Opportunity of going thither. I pass over *Rio de Gabon* and *Cabo Lopez di Gonsalvez*, because you your self have been there; and for the same Reason I omit our Arrival on the *Gold-Coast*.

I have now only to add my Wishes, that these Observations may in the least contribute to your Satisfaction, and assure you, that the Writer hereof is very ambitious of being reckoned amongst your most Humble Servants, and shall continue so whilst

David Van Nyendael.

*From on Board the
Yacht Johanna Ma-
ria, Sep 1. 1702.*

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A Description of the *Tooth* and
Grain Coast, &c.

LETTER XXII.

The Author's Departure from Elmina, and Arrival at Acra; which he leaves and sails to Cape Lopez di Gonsalvez, which he leaves after Trading there and sails along the Equinoctial Line. Arrival at the upper Coast about Cabo Monte. The Author lands, and is very civilly treated by the Inhabitants: A Description of the King's Person, his Children and the Multitude of his Wives. The Industry of the Inhabitants. The Vegetables, Cattle and Fish of the Country. They Marry as many Wives as they please. Their Habits, Religion, Wars and Weapons. Description of Cape Mont, and Departure from thence. His Arrival at Cape Mizurado, and going on Shoar. Some Inhabitants of this Place robb'd by the English. The Trade there. A Description of the Place and its Inhabitants. The Women do all the Work, and the Men live idly. Some English made Prisoners by them. A very fine River. His Departure from thence, and Arrival at Rio Junk, be-

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fore

A Description of the L E T. XXII. fore the Town of Corra, where he went on Shoar, and what he observ'd there. A Woman delivered of four Children at a Birth. The Author's Departure and Arrival at Rio Sestre. A Description of that and the Village, of the King and his Subjects. Great Plenty of Rice. Their Trade. Manner of burning their Dead. His Departure. How the Land bears, Anchoring before Sanguin. Trade with the Natives, as also with those of Boffoe and Bottewa, who are very Thievish. The Captain of Bottewa comes on Board. His Character. He sails by Battewa and Sino. Arrival at Sestro Crou, which is a fine Village. He sails by Wappo and Cape das Palmas, and arrives at Druwin, where he Trades. The Natives have very sharp Teeth, are very Savage and Lovers of Humane Flesh. Rio St. Andrees is so wide and deep, that it is navigable with small Ships. The Inhabitants are Barbarous, But the Country Pleasant and Fruitful. The Author's Departure and dropping Anchor before Cape La-Hoe, where there is a great Village and River. The Natives affable and very tractable in Business. His Departure and passing Jaque La-hoe, and the bottomless Pit. Arrival at Affine, but sailing by it. Account of the French Garrison there. Sailing

L E T. XXII. Tooth and Grain Coast. ing by Cape Apolonia. Arrival at Axim, and Conclusion of the Voyage.

S I R,

Pursuant to your Orders, this serves to furnish you with an Account of our Voyage, and the Countries where we Traded. But making but a few Days stay on some of them, I am not therefore so able to oblige you with a large Account of the National Constitution or Manners of the Inhabitants, as I could wish I were; so that I can only desire you to believe, that if my Relation falls short of your Expectation, the Fault is to be charged on want of Opportunity to gratify you, but not in the least to want of Inclination.

After having taken our Leaves under the Salvage of a chearful Glass, we weighed Anchor and began our Voyage. Two Days after we arrived at Acra, where we executed our Commission, left that Place and steered our Course to Cape Lopez di Gonsalvez, where we arrived without any considerable Accident in our Passage on the— I shall not describe this Cape to you, who have visited it your self; but shall only inform you, that after having concluded our Trade there, we left it on the——and inclined to the West, sailing along the Æquinoctial, till we came high enough, to make the upper Coast.

About Ten in the Evening, on the 28th. of November, we made Land; and in the Morning found our selves about ten Miles above Cape Monte. The Land here bears low and flat to the mentioned Cape. It is furnished with numerous Villages; but not one Negro coming on board us we were resolved to depart without Anchoring and make for the

Cape, where we happily arrived the following Day.

After which I immediately loaded a Parcel of Goods into the Boat, and therewith went on Shoar, intending to try whether I could deal for any Elephants Teeth, which sometimes are plenty there.

As soon as I landed I found the whole Shoar filled with *Negroes*, who very civilly welcomed me, and conducted me to their Houses, just beyond the Shoar, making out three small Villages, the whole Amount of which was not full thirty Houses.

As soon as I was come into one of these great Villages, I was treated with several Pots of Wine, and desired to stay the Arrival of their King; which I agreeing to, after having passed an Hour, his Majesty appeared, accompanied with a party of Men. I rose up in order to meet him before he entered the Village, and to salute him with a profound Reverence.

He, as well as the rest, bid me heartily welcome, and we went into the Village, where we sat down together. After some Conversation I asked his Majesty, *Whether there was any Probability of Trading to any purpose here*; but was answered, *That they had not at present any stock of Elephants Teeth*; wherefore I was obliged to content my self with two, there being then no more to be gotten.

This King was an elderly Man, as appeared by his grey Head and Beard. His Name was *Jan de Cabo Monte*, so called from the Point of that Name. He was cloathed, or rather hung with a brown Cloak, and a woollen Cap on his Head; so that his whole Equipage, if sold to the Brokers, would not yield forty Shillings.

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I was informed, that he was blessed with sixteen Children, twelve Sons and four Daughters. On each of the first of which he hath bestowed the Government of a Village containing eight Huts; for Houses they cannot, with any manner of Justice, be called.

The Daughters also did their best to pass honestly thro' the World; but their principal Trade lay in relieving the Travellers Necessities at a very reasonable Price.

If the *Negroes* are to be credited, the King had not above four hundred Wives, who all live with him in one Village, about three Miles in-land from the River-side.

This is a very fine River, which begins just beyond the Shoar, without entering the Sea above once in a Year, when, by reason of the great Rains, it overflows. Its Course is extended far in-land, and according to the Report of the *Negroes*, dissembogues its self into the River *Sierra Leone*, which is a good Distance from this Place.

The Inhabitants of *Cabo Monte* are industrious to the last Degree. Their Employments chiefly consist in planting of Rice, and boiling of Salt; both which all the *Negroes* are oblig'd to do for the King, whose Slaves they are accounted.

The Product of this Land consists of a small Quantity of great Milhio, Jammes, Potatoes, and abundance of Rice. The Arboriferous Fruits here, as well as on the *Gold-Coast*, are Paquovers, Banana's, Anana's, &c.

They are not very well stored with Cattle; for they have neither Kine nor Hogs, and but a few Sheep; also not many Chicken, but they are good.

Here

A Description of the LET. XXII.

Here are enough of Elephants, Tygers, Buffes, Harts, and other wild Beasts.

Nor is there here the least want of Fish; the River is full of them; and they catch them with large Nets.

Each Man, here at pleasure, Marries as many Wives as he can maintain, and by reason the Women work hard, their kpeeping is not very expensive. They seem also to live very contentedly with their Wives, and not to be much concerned if they sometimes venture on unlawful Pleasures with other Men.

The Habit of these Negroes is very like Shifts, with wideSleeves, which hang down to the Knees; or indeed it is more like a Surplice: But the Women do not wear this Habit, but in stead thereof a narrow Cloth wound about their Middles, and tucked in at their sides to fasten it, without being at the trouble of doing it by a Girdle, as on the Gold Coasts: Nor do they wear Garters like them. Sometimes they shamelessly go naked, as if they wear proud of what Nature bestows on them in common with the rest of their Sex.

I asked them what Religion they Professed; and was Answered that it principally consisted in Reverencing and Obeying their King and the Governour set over them, without troubling themselves with what was above them.

When I enquired after their Warrs with other Countries, they told me, they were not often troubled with them; but if any difference happened they chose rather to end the Dispute Amicably, than to come to Arms: Wherefore their Bows and Arrows (their only Weapons) serve rather for Ornament, than Military uses.

This being all I have to say of Cape Monte, I shall take leave of it with only acquainting you that the Cape is a very high Mountain, which

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LET. XXII. Tooth and Grain Coast.

as we come from the Sea, looks like a lofty Island separated from the Coast. The Country hereabouts is very pleasant, and also seems very fertile. The Coast of Cape Monte extends South-East and by East, and North-West and by West and is all over flat Land.

We departed thence, and arrived on the 25th. before Cape Mizurado, which is also a high Hill, tho' not so high as that of Cape Monte. They are about ten Miles distant from each other.

We cast Anchor, but not one Negroe coming on Board, I stepped into the Shalop, and went on shoar; and after having staid a while on the Strand, some Negroes came to us; and being desirous to be informed why they did not come on Board, I was answered that about two Months before, the English had been there with two large Vessels, and had Ravaged the Country, destroyed all their Canoa's, Plundered their Houses, and carried off some of their People for Slaves; upon which the remainder fled to the Inland-Country, where most of them were at present: So that here not being much to be done for us, we were obliged to return on Board, having not been able in two dayes time to come at above three hundred weight of Teeth.

The Land betwixt both the last mentioned Capes, is perfectly flat and even; the Coast bears as above. Two Miles West of this Place are three Villages, containing about twenty Houses each; which indeed were the finest I saw in my whole Voyage. Each of them had three neat apartments; and covered at the tops, like our Hay-reaks in Holland. In one of these Houses are commonly Lodged fifty, or sixty Men, Women and Children, all which confusedly intermix in their Lodging: The Women are handsome, and as the Men informed me, are permitted to earn

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earn what Money they please with their Bodies. I found all the Inhabitants civil and good natured People. Two old Men here pretended to be Captains, and obliged me to pay seven pound of Copper as Custom. By Reason of the Injuries which they received from the English, they were so timorous, that they would not venture on Board any Ship. And if any Person come Armed on Shore, they immediately fly.

The Men do not much trouble themselves with Working, but rather leave that to their Wives; as believing they have sufficiently fatigued themselves with trading a little, mostly in Palm Wine, which is very plenty and good here.

They seem to give themselves no more trouble about Religion, than their Neighbours of Cape Monte, being very solicitous about nothing but Eating and Drinking, and making Merry.

What hath been said of the Habits, Cattle and Fruit of the former, may also serve them: They tell us they live in Peace with all their Neighbours, and have no Notion of any other Enemy than the English, of which Nation they had taken some then, and publicly declared that they would endeavour to get as many of them as the two mentioned Ships had carried off of their Natives. These unhappy English were in danger of being Sacrificed to the memory of their Friends, which some of their Nation carried off.

I should now take leave of Cape Mizurado, if I did not find my self obliged to say something concerning the River, which discharges its self into the Sea, and is five or six Foot deep in the entrance, so that in calm Weather, it is easily Navigable with small Boats or Shalops. It takes its Course Westwards three Miles from hence, and Eastwards directly to Rio Sestre; whither the Natives daily pass in their Canoa's, and Trade either

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ther in the natural produce of the Country, or Elephants Teeth, by Reason that a much greater number of Ships come to Rio Sestre than here.

On the 28th. of we weighed Anchor, and left this Cape, steering East along the Shoar. The Coast bears, and the Land shews as above, for five Miles from Mizurado, where at three different places, we discover different Land: The first of which is not very high, the last higher, and the middlemost higher than both. We did not see so much as one Negro, or any Village, till we were advanced three Miles farther Eastward, where by reason of the Calm, we were obliged to Anchor, and towards the Evening we saw Fire on the Shoar, whence we conjectured that there was a Village; and the Natives made that Sign, to express their inclination to Trade with us; wherefore we continued there till next day: But no person coming near us in the Morning, we weighed Anchor, and persued our Voyage till Noon, when we cast Anchor once more in Rio Junk, and stayed till Evening, but saw neither Negro's, nor Canoa's. The Land hereabouts shews low and flat: But farther inland, discovers three Hills; the two first of which are situate West of Rio Junk, appearing perfectly round, and the largest in the middle.

The entrance of Rio Junk discharges its self into the Sea, and at the Point four high Trees discover themselves, two of which are adorned with Crowns or round tops, and the other two which are the highest, are somewhat Thorny. Hereabouts the Land shews chiefly even and doubled. A Mile East of Rio Junk, are two large Clefs, which render this Cape very distinguishable; beside that it may be easily known by the multitude of Rocks, of which the Shoar is full, and against which

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which the Sea continually beats in a terrible manner. We saw the Fires made by the Negroes, to advertise one another, that there were Ships in sight, but by reason no Body came on Board us, I am of Opinion, that they are Salt Villages. The Coast here extends from East to South, and from West to North.

We Sailed on till three Miles West of *Rio Sestre*, where a Canoa full of Negroes came on Board us, who desired us to Anchor before their Village, which was Situate in a pleasant Wood, which I did, they informing me that they had a good stock of Elephants Teeth.

This Village is called *Corra*, and not till this occasion known to the Seamen. The burning of the Sea, was so very fierce here, that it was impossible to come a Shoar with Boat or Shalop; wherefore I went into a Canoa, in which, tho' it was filled with water, the Negroes carried me safe on Shoar. I was so desirous of seeing this new discovered Country; that I heartily wished to meet with a good opportunity of Trading to detain me here.

As soon as I was Landed, I asked my black Pilot, where their Village or Dwelling was; he led me about a quarter of a Mile into the Wood, where I discovered two small miserably Built Salt Villages, one of twelve, and the other of six Houses, whose Inhabitants which were very busie in boiling Salt, seemed to be Wild Men, none of them besides my Guide, having ever I believe seen any White Men.

I could not speak one word with any of them: My Guide who should have been Interpreter, was so Ignorant of Tongues, that it was not without difficulty that I made him understand me with Words and Signs.

How

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However Wild and Strange they might seem at first, they yet afterwards appeared very Civil and Courteous; for after I had walked through their Country, I designed to return because I saw no Teeth: But an old Man that looked like their Governour, would not suffer me, but caused my Canoa to be brought from the Shoar into his Village; and desired before my departure that I would Eat and Drink with him, which being Hungry, I readily consented to. The Old Man did every thing he was able to Treat me well; after which he consented to my departure, under condition that I would come again next day.

These *Negroes* are undoubtedly happy in a numerous Issue, and the Women very Fruitful, for I accidentally saw a Woman loaden with four Children, and asking my Interpreter whether they all came at one Birth, he answered in the affirmative, which induced me to bestow a Charitable Present on the Mother and her Children; after which I again step'd into the Canoa, and caused my self to be carried to our Shalop, sending my thanks to the Old Gentlemen, and telling them, that if they had any Goods to Trade with, they might come to *Rio Sestre*, where I designed to spend some days.

As soon as I came on Board, we weighed Anchor, and Sailed on to *Rio Sestre*, and arrived in the Road the 3d. of *December*. Before *Rio Sestre* the Land is very low, and beyond it there are two high Hills, one of which appears like a Semicircle or Rainbow.

About a Mile West of this Place, are two great Rocks, and about as far Eastward a Point of Land stretches into the Sea, so that this Place is easie to be known.

The Entrance of this River from the Sea, is full of Rocks, which yet lye six Foot under water,

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ter, wherefore it is easie to pass over them all with laden Boats and Shalops, except two of them which appear above water, and are to be avoided.

The Village is Situated close to the Shoar, on a rising Ground, and contains about sixty Houses, which are very neatly Built, and so high, that some of them appear three Miles out at Sea.

The Buildings here, differ from those of *Mizurado*, only in that here are more Stories.

Rio Sestre is a very fine and pleasant River. The Banks on each side are thick set with high and low Trees. Several Rivulets and small Springs, discharge themselves into this River, but what adds to the Charms of this River, besides the Trees, is the multitude of Villages all along its Banks; amongst which is that of the King, Situated about three Miles up the River, and composed of about thirty Houses.

The King who' is a Silver Haired very old Man, declares that all the Inhabitants of his Village, are really Descended from him; which is very probable, they not being very numerous. He like the Great or Principal Men hereabouts, assumes an *European* Name, which is *Peter*.

He is a very agreeable, obliging Man; and all his Subjects are very Civil; as well as very Laborious in Agriculture, and the pursuit of their Trade.

Their Habit, Fruits of the Earth, Cattle and Fish are the same with the beforementioned People.

These Countries seem to live in perfect Peace with other Countries; for all hereabouts, we hear of no other Wars, than a few Skirmishes which formerly happened with the Inland *Negroes*, who Burned their Village, by surprize. But they

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they took most of them Prisoners, and sold them, which entirely ended the War.

The Inhabitants, as I have already hinted, are very Industrious, especially in the Planting of Rice, which is their chief Employment.

Rice increases so prodigiously here, that in a very short time we easily get enough to load a Ship.

Those above the common Rank, drive a perpetual Trade in Rice, Malaget, and Elephants Teeth; tho' the quantity of the last is very small.

I cannot omit their strange manner of Burial, having had the opportunity of observing an instance of it, in the Interment of an old Woman, during the time of my Trading here. As soon as Dead, her Corps was covered with a Cloth, and the People of the whole Village, neither Old nor Young excepted, came and ranged themselves in very good order round the Corps, and each of them was provided with a few *Banana* Leaves to shade and defend the old Woman from the heat of the Sun.

The Men in a Desperate and Distracted manner, run about the House of the Deceased, continually and dismally howling, insomuch that if she had been but half Dead, it had been sufficient to have accelerated her Departure.

The Women which sat round the Body, also began to lift up their Voices, as not being willing to be outdone; and if I were to be Judge, I could scarce determine which of the Sexes made the greatest noise.

This jarring Discord continued incessant for the space of Twenty four Hours. But on the second day there was a small cessation; by reason that an empty Canoa was brought just before the

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Dwelling of the Deceased, into which the Corps was layed; next which was placed a Pot of Rice, and another of Palm-Wine, in order to supply her, if she happened to be either hungry or thirsty on her Journey; and after that the Canoa was filled with all sorts of green Plants.

After this the mourning Cry was renewed, and continued about half an Hour; next to which appeared ten young vigorous Fellows, who took up the Corps and Canoa, both which they carried to the River, in order to be transported to the Place of her Nativity, and Buried there.

Which I at first conjectured to be in Obedience to the last Testament of the Deceased; but was afterwards informed, that it was Customary for every Person to be Buried at the Place of his Birth, tho' he happened to Die at never so great a Distance from thence; and that tho' the Deceased had not left any Effects behind to defray the Expence, the Neighbours were yet obliged to bear the Charge.

The Old Woman was then carried up the River and Buried, and three Days afterwards the Friends and Relations returned home, and brought with them a Sheep and a good quantity of Palm-Wine, to keep the Burying Feast. I kept near them, in order to observe them; but they no sooner saw me, but invited me to participate with them; which I was easily persuaded to, by reason I had been dealing for Rice the whole Day, and had not eaten. I eat and drank very heartily with them, as long as either Wine or Edibles lasted, thinking I had been very well treated, but next Morning found

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found my Error; for the Relations and the whole Company came and brought me a scurvy Reckoning, and I could not get rid of them, without making each of them a particular Present, when I summ'd up the matter, I found that the Expence of the whole Feast was defray'd out of my Pocket, which obliged me to clap down as a Memorandum in my Note-Book, never again to venture to an old Woman's Funeral.

This, Sir, is all I have to say concerning *Rio Sestre*, which I should have gone farther up, and have more particularly visited the Country, if any body had been with me to take care of our Trade, or we had not been bound farther. But the *English* Ships generally come so thick upon this Coast, that without utmost Diligence in my Post, I could not expect to do any thing.

Nay at last we found Trade here at such a low Ebb, that we were oblig'd to leave this Place on the 11th. of *December*, not staying here above eight Days.

Sailing then from *Rio Sestre* we found the Shoar plain double Land. The Coast extends North-West and South-East. Three Miles below *Rio Sestre* is a great Mountainous Rock, on which grows a very high Tree. This Place is called *Little Sestre*; and about a Mile and half farther East, a Point butts into the Sea; on the Land next which appears a great Rock, which is white at the Top, and at Sea looks like a Ship under Sail.

A little below this we drop'd Anchor before the Village of *Sanguin*, where we could deal but to a small Value.

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Whilst we lay here the Negroes of Boffoe and Bottewa came on Board us with a Canoe laden with Malaguet, for which they desired only Annabasses; so that I disposed of all I had to them in two Days time.

I found no other Difference of the Negroes of Sanguin, than that these were bigotted to a very pernicious Opinion, that dextrous Robbery is very lawful and expedient. Wherefore we are obliged to deal very cautiously, for they readily buy whatever Commodities they see, but are sure never to pay for them.

The Land about Sanguin is easily distinguished, by several high Trees, which shew themselves Eastwards of it:

About a Mile East of Sanguin lies Boffoe, which may be known by a plain Sand Point, is environed with large and small Rocks. Here a Negroe came on Board, who called himself James, and pretended to be Captain of Boffoe; he spoke a confused sort of Language, being a mixed Jargon of English and Portuguese. He seemed a great Lover of the Female Sex, which was the whole Subject with which he entertained us. He told us (unasked) That he had ten Wives, and out of good Husbandry graciously now and then bestowed one of them on his Son Joost, who was on Board with him.

When we represented to him the Wickedness of such an Action, and told him, That no Place in the World allowed it, he laughed aloud and said, That they were then Fools to insist on such a Trifle; and that as his People were better informed, they acted accordingly.

We

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We sent these Heroes on Shoar and left Boffoe, in order to pursue our Voyage.

About three Miles farther is the Village of Bottewa, situate on the Shoar; and half a Mile West of it, a great Rock appears in the Sea; and about a Mile below Bottewa, another Rock very like the former discovers its self; a Mile beyond which the high Land of Bottewa appears, consisting of a Multitude of high Hills. We Traded for some Grain or Malaguet while we were sailing, without so much as Anchoring; for which reason I had no opportunity of observing the Country and its Inhabitants, tho' I believe they do not much differ from those of Boffoe.

A Mile and half beyond Bottewa is the Village Sino, which is distinguishable by a great Rock upon a Sand-point, butting a little into the Sea; behind that is a great River, which, according to the Report of the Negroes, extends its self far in-land, and is not much less considerable than Rio Sestre. I could not come at any farther Information; for the Negroes speak such a Barbarous Language, that they are not to be understood without Difficulty. The Coast extends its self here South-East and by East, and North-West and by West; the Land is very even.

We sailed from hence and came the 20th. of December to Sestre Crow. The Land is here flat and low, the Village is beautiful and large, and rather larger and more extensive than Elmina. Behind it the Land is higher, and adorned with a good Number of large, tho' leaveless, Trees. There are two great Rocks on the Shoar, about half a Mile distant from

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each other, by all which Marks this Place is easily known.

The Negroes here seemed to be a good sort of People, honest in their Dealings, and much more regular than those who live higher up. Their Language is utterly unintelligible; wherefore it is impossible to learn any thing of their Manners and Customs. The Cattle and Fruits here are like those at other Places, they being well furnished with both. The Fishery and the Fish are not at all different from those on the Gold-Coast.

Having finished our Trading Affairs here we sailed on to the Village Wappo, about three Miles distant from Sestre Cron. The Marks of this Place are several high stragling Trees, which appear upon a high Hill beyond the Shoar; the Tops of these Trees appear very red at a Distance. Before Wappo a very large Rock discovers its self, which seems separated from the Shoar, tho' really on it. As we sailed by the Land, it appeared but faintly, if at all. The Coast stretches East South-East, and West South-West; all, or at least as far as we could see of it flat Land, to about three Miles West of Cabo das Palmas, where a Point of Land butts into the Sea, which at a distance looks like a Dolphin, and hath a large Village on it, and four Trees in the midst of it, which we took to be Coco's

We made our usual Sign to invite the Negroes on board us; but none coming, we did our best to double the mentioned Cape, which sometimes proves difficult enough, if we are too near the Shoar. We passed it notwithstanding in the Night, the 25th. of December, and not observing any Villages or Negroes next Day,

we

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we pursued our Course to Druwin. The Coast from Cape Palm to Druwin bears East and by North, and West and by South, about six and twenty Miles, all high and flat Land.

On the 26th. ditto in the Evening, and next Day some Negroes in three Canoa's laden with Elephants Teeth came on Board us, and after giving them their Dasje or Present, I dealt with them for the Ivory at the dearest Rate.

I never yet saw more covetous Men, or greater Savages. They begged every thing they saw; and if we deny them, or speak warmly to them, as to other Negroes, they immediately leap over Board and make to Land; so that we can scarce Trade with these People, otherwise than to considerable Loss.

Their Teeth with which they eat Human Flesh, when they can come at it, were as sharp as Awls; wherefore I should not advise any to set Foot on Land here, who is not fond of being buried in their Bellies.

The Land-marks here are very plain, and render this Country easily distinguishable, partly by its Height and lofty Trees, but principally by reason of three or four large Villages which there discover themselves, each of which is situate about half a Mile from the other. Behind the last Village appears a high Point to the East, where the Land begins to grow into a Promontory, in which is the large River of St. Andrew, which discharges its self into the Sea, and takes its Course, according to the Negroes, Westwards, and is so wide and deep, that it is navigable with Barks, with which we might come in and Trade, if we were but assured the Natives would not molest us, which no Person is able to give us a satisfactory Assurance

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of, since here the Inhabitants are the greatest Brutes on the whole Coast; and whoever Trades here, ought to keep Spies aloft to prevent his being surprized by them.

These Barbarians are possessed of a Country which affords them an envied Plenty of all manner of Provision; for Milhio, Jammes, Paquovens, Banana's, and in short, whatever the Gold-Coast produces, is here very plenty; and they have besides great abundance of Kine, Sheep, Poultry, &c. as also Wild Beasts, and indeed want nothing necessary to the Support of Life; all which we may justly grudge them, because out of pure Crossness they will not sell any, except the worst Part of them, which they do not like themselves; and that at a very dear Rate.

We find even in this Age several who doubt, whether there are any Wild Men in the World, so far degenerated from Human Nature as to kill and eat their own Species; for say they, *If there were any such, they would not be distinguished from Brutes by any thing but their Speech, which seems to clash with the Divine Goodness, which endowed Man only with a rational Soul, that he might know what was necessary for him:* Besides which, they take it for granted, That no Man can properly be called Wild, but such an one as like the Beasts, separated from all Society, passeth his Life in Woods and Wilderneses, without any Regard to Divine or Human Laws; and that since none of these Men were ever observed from the beginning of the World, they venture to conclude, that there never was, nor never will be any such. But this Argument seems very weak; for Experience hath long since convinced us, That there are Men-eaters

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in the World. Antiquity hath left us Accounts of it; and it is from time to time confirmed by a crowd of Authors. Our North-Holland Preacher hath clearly proved it; and tho he is not always in the right, yet what he saith of the *Brasilians* and other Neighbouring Nations, is undoubted Truth. But what need I apply to other Witnesses, whilst you your self have experienced the Truth of it in those in-land *Negroes* which come from the Country beyond *Ardra*, who imagine, that we buy them and carry them off only in order to eat them; which Jealousie would not probably enter their Thoughts, if they did not certainly know that there were Man-eaters in the World: And as to what they farther say concerning Wild Men, I will readily own, that there are no such Wild Men as they describe in the World, if they will but allow on the other side, that some Men differ from the other so much, that some may be comparatively called Wild, or Brutes, which doth not proceed from this, that they as well as we are not endowed with a Rational Soul; but from their reasonable Soul's being degenerated by barbarous Usages, and for want of Conversation with civilized Nations. Nor are Examples wanting of Men, who by Accidents which happened in their Youth, have been obliged to continue several Years in the Woods, which in process of time rendred them so Wild, that they afterwards became afraid of and fled from all Men. But enough of this, let every one believe what he pleases.

On the 29th. we left this Progeny of *Cham*, and steered South-East and by South; *i. e.* after sailing a Mile and half we came to the Six-

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teen Red Cliffs, which take up in all about three Miles in length, and in clear Weather are visible six or seven Miles out at Sea. I found here neither *Negroes* nor Villages. The Coast bears as above; and from *Druwyn* to Cape *Lahoe* is about 27 Miles.

On the 30th. *Ditto*, we anchored before Cape *Lahoe*. The Land declines here, and is very low on the Sea-side.

The Village is very large, and seems to stretch about a Mile along the Shoar. Betwixt the Houses throughout the whole Place are Multitudes of Coco Trees, as at *Axim*; and if this Land were so high as that, and had a Fort built in the midst of the Town, it would not be much unlike that in any thing besides the largeness of the Village.

About three Miles on Land beyond the Village, are several high Hills; and a Mile West of Cape *Lahoe* is a large River, which runs to the River of *St. Andrew*, and a great many Miles into the in-land Country, as also Eastwards, tho' not very far; for sailing but a few Miles Eastward, our Course is stop'd by Land.

The *Negroes* seem here affable and civil, and were very easy to be dealt with, only they held their Elephants Teeth somewhat dear at that time. But that was occasioned by the great Numbers of *English* and *Dutch* Interlopers, tho' most of the first, which had lately been here.

This Place is as Plentifully blest'd with Provisions as *Druwyn*, with this Difference only, that it is better and cheaper. I cannot say much more concerning this Place, only inform you, what the *Negroes* told me, That they were
very

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very Populous, and were ruled by one Chief Captain or Governor.

Having done our Business we weighed Anchor, and pursued our Voyage to *Faque Lahoe*, about three Miles farther, the Coast bearing in the same maner.

We were informed by the *Negroes*, that they had no stock of Elephants Teeth; wherefore we resolved to sail to the Bottomless Pit (so called from an Imagination that it really is so; but the contrary hath been experienced) about four Miles farther.

The Land from below, or a little Westward of Cape *Lahoe* to *Faque Lahoe*, is distinguished in the Maps and Charts by the Name of the *Quaqua-Coast*; but wherefore so called I cannot determine, unless it be, that some compare the Speech of these *Negroes* to the Noise of Ducks, which I cannot confirm to you, because I could not observe so remarkable a Difference betwixt their Language and that of other *Negroes*, as should make it sound like Quoaking. The Natives call their Country *Adoum*, and themselves *Adoumsians*; but we follow our Chart and call them *Quaquans*.

You are probably acquainted with the expert Swimming and Diving of these *Negroes*, which I have several times seen with Surprise. Whenever they were on Board, and I threw a string of Coral, or any thing else into the Sea, one of them would immediately dive after it, and tho' almost got to the bottom fetch it up again. This they seldom missed of, and were sure of what they brought up as their Reward.

We passed the Night in the Bottomless Pit, and arrived in the Morning at *Affinee*, which we
guess

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gues to be about seven Miles below the mentioned Pit. The Coast here bears East by South. Here are no Elephants Teeth, but Gold to be traded for; but we had no Orders to deal in that Commodity; wherefore we failed by *Assinee*.

Notwithstanding which some *Negroes* in a Canoa came on Board me. I asked them, *How they agreed with the French?* They answered, *That all the Caboceroes of Assine, together with their Subjects, were gone from thence, and had settled a Mile above the Village; where they continued at present, without entertaining the least Commerce or Correspondence with the French, who had only a bare Lodge on the Shoar encompassed with Palisadoes, and provided with five pieces of Canon, and then guarded by eight Men, who were well furnished with Provisions, lest there by the French Ships, but were sometimes in great want of Water, which the Negroes always endeavoured by force to keep them from; so that these Negroes were of opinion, that the French, unless they received some Assistance from Europe, could not long subsist there, but would be oblig'd to abandon the Place upon the first opportunity.*

Time will discover what part of this Relation deserves Credit, tho' I believe that the *French* are not in such a wretched Condition as they represented them.

The Coast from *Assinee* to Cape *Apollonia* bears East South-East; the Coast is in all Parts furnished with great and small Villages: But no *Negroes* came on Board us; wherefore I cannot give you any Account of this Country or their Inhabitants.

The

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The now mentioned Cape appears to be low plain Ground; behind it are three high Hills, which are its distinguishing Marks; without them it would not deserve the Name of a Cape, than which it is nothing less, and would be failed by without ever being seen.

From hence to *Axim* seems to me about seven Miles, tho' others think it more. The Land betwixt both Places is very low, and adorned with thousands of Coco Trees. The Shoar is extraordinary broad, flat, and looks as if paved with Brick, and is a fine Road to travel on with Coaches, or *Chaises*, as in *Holland*.

At the end of this Shoar is *Rio Cobre*, about half a League above *Axim*; but you your self being better acquainted with this Coast than I can pretend to, I shall conclude this Account of my Voyage, with humbly desiring your kind Acceptance of my Relation, assuring you, that I have not failed to note every thing which was remarkable. Wherefore, after requesting the continuance of your Favours, I take the Liberty to subscribe my self,

Your Obedient Servant

John Snoek.

From on Board the Yacht Johanna Jacoba before Axim, Jan. the 2d. 1702.

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