The land of parrots

Captain Pasfield Oliver

To cite this article: Captain Pasfield Oliver (1900) The land of parrots, Scottish Geographical Magazine, 16:1, 1-17, DOI: [10.1080/00369220008733116](https://doi.org/10.1080/00369220008733116)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00369220008733116>

Published online: 27 Feb 2008.

Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)

Article views: 9

View related articles [↗](#)

THE SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE.

THE LAND OF PARROTS.

By Captain PASFIELD OLIVER.

PART I.

AN EARLY FRENCH VOYAGE TO MADAGASCAR EXAMINED.

(*With two Maps.*)

IN response to a scheme suggested by M. Maupertuis¹ in the middle of the last century, M. le Président de Brosses, of the French Academy of Sciences, caused to be published at Paris, in 1756, two quarto volumes² containing a digest of all procurable information relating to voyages in the southern hemisphere. The object was to stimulate enterprise and discovery of habitable countries between Africa and America and to encourage the establishment of French colonies.

In the present notice it is only intended to examine the third article in the first of M. de Brosses' volumes, which deals with the narrative of one Binot Paulmyer de Gonneville and his alleged discovery in Australasia.

¹ Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, a famous geometrician and astronomer, born 1698, was one of the first to raise his voice in favour of Newton against Descartes, when he entered the Academy of Sciences in 1723. He measured a degree of the meridian under the Arctic circle in Sweden during 1736-37, and reorganised the Prussian Academy for Frederick II. at Berlin, where he was overwhelmed by the ridicule of Voltaire. He died at Basle. His *Lettre sur le progrès des Sciences*, 1752, mentions Gonneville.

² *Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes*. Contenant ce que l'on sait des mœurs et des productions des Contrées découvertes jusqu'à ce jour; et où il est traité de l'utilité d'y faire de plus amples découvertes, et des moyens d'y former un établissement.

TOME PREMIER.—Nec usquam Deus abscedit

Terras Oceano dissociabili.—HORAT.

À PARIS.—Chez DURAND, rue du Foin, au Griffon, M.DCC.LVI. Avec Approbation et Privilège du Roy (pp. 102-120 inclusive).

My attention was drawn to this narrative by a passage in the introduction of Captain Matthew Flinders' valuable record of his voyages,¹ wherein he identifies the land said to have been discovered as Madagascar. The gallant and unfortunate commander of H.M.S. *Investigator* writes thus:—

“Nor yet will much be said upon the plea advanced by the Abbé Prevost,² and after him by the President Debrosses, in favour of Paulmier de Gonneville, a French captain: for whom they claim the honour of having discovered Terra Australis in 1504. It is evident from the proofs they adduce, that it was not to any part of this country, but to Madagascar, that Gonneville was driven; and from whence he brought his prince Essomeric to Normandy.”

It is proposed in the following pages to follow up this clue and to discuss the various indications which served to induce Captain Flinders' sagacious opinion, since generally considered to be erroneous. The article of De Brosses reads as follows:—

“Extract from a judicial declaration made by the Sieur de Gonneville at the office of the Admiralty, at the request of the Procureur du Roi on the 19th July 1505, and inserted in the *Memoirs concerning the establishment of Christian Missions in the Third World, or Terra Australis*, printed at Paris, by Cramoisy, 1663,³ dedicated to Pope Alexander VII. by an ecclesiastic, an aboriginal native of Terra Australis.

“This ecclesiastic is not otherwise designated by himself than by the initial letters J.P.D.G. Indian priest, Canon of the Cathedral of S.P.D.L. It appears that the two first letters signify Jean or Jacques Paulmier, since his ancestors had taken the name of the family of Sieur de Gonneville.

“The said priest was born in France as well as his father and his grandfather, but his great-grandfather was one of the Australians whom Gonneville had brought back in his ship, and whom he married, in Normandy, to one of his relatives, after he had embraced the Christian religion. The great-grandson of this person, the author of these memoirs, animated by a great zeal for the establishment of the faith in his native land, spent all his life in inducing those engaged in foreign missions to send him back there and to influence the French Ministry to fulfil the promise given to his ancestors to return thither with another expedition.

“From the age of seventeen years he set to work, with the aid of certain manuscripts which remained with him and the traditions handed down in his family, to repair the loss of the journals of Gonneville, which, having fallen on his return into the hands of the English, had not since been recovered. He communicated his views to

¹ *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, 1801, 1802-1803. (London), 1814.

² *Histoire générale des Voyages*, Tome XVI. (*La Haye*), pp. 7-14.

³ Pope Alexander VII. Fabio Chigi, born at Sienna 1599, assumed the tiara on the death of Innocent x., 1655. He died 1667. Not Gabriel Cramoisy, as M. D'Avezac states, but André Cramoisy, one of a famous family of printers, and the last: he was publisher and translator as well as printer, from 1655 to 1715.

Louis Abély,¹ Bishop of Rodez, to Vincent de Paul, the Superior of the priests of the Mission, and to several other missionaries. We can conjecture from this at what date they were collated. Vincent de Paul² intended to present them to the Pope, but was prevented by death. They next came into the hands of M. Feret, Curé of St. Nicholas in Paris, and then reached M. Cramoisy, the bookseller, who published them. This detail has been necessary to establish the fidelity of the work, and the verity of an exceedingly old maritime expedition, which, without difficulty, assures to the French nation the honour of the first discovery of the Terra Australis,³ sixteen years previous to the departure of Magellan. These memoirs, however crude, appear in fact most faithful, and carry on their face the visible signs of veracity.

"There are reasons, however, to suppose that he has slightly flattered his country in the favourable portrait which he has drawn of it. The greatest fault, however, of which he can be accused is that he has omitted to indicate the latitude and longitude, the geographical section being that in which he appears to have been least informed, on account of which it is absolutely impossible to determine now the real position of this country.

"It has been thought that it might possibly be on the same coast where our charts mark a cape called Terre de Vue or Cap des Terres Australes (long. 7° lat. 42°). Captain Bouvet,⁴ at the time of his voyage in 1739, supposed that the country of Gonneville was somewhere under this meridian towards the 48th degree of latitude, but the narrative of the author helps but little in these conjectures. The country in question appears to be more to the east and less to the south. There is a great probability that it is to the south of the little Moluccas, in the part which I have named previously Australasia. MM. Duval⁵ and Nolin, geographers of indifferent ability, without attending to what Gonneville says himself, that he found this country on the route to the Indies after he had doubled the Cape of Good Hope, have marked it in their charts to the south-west of this cape in about 48° lat. and 20° long. They name it Terre des Perroquets, I know not wherefore. Not content with this, they have, moreover, traced a long line of coast, which extends from thence almost close

¹ Louis Abély (*sic*) is best known as the responsible editor of the first life of Vincent de Paul, which had been compiled by the Lazarist priests of the Mission. His name is more properly spelled Abelly or Abelli, in which last form it appears in the *Biographie Universelle*.

² Vincent de Paul died in 1660.

³ An abridged translation of M. de Brosse's volumes by John Callander was published by Donaldson at Edinburgh in 1766, in 3 vols., in 8vo, entitled, *Terra Australis Cognita; or, Voyages to the Terra Australis or Southern Hemisphere, during the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*. This has been compared with the original, but it has been thought preferable to give M. de Brosse's account complete and unabridged. The 20 quarto pages of De Brosse are reduced by Callander to within 10 octavo pages, pp. from 63-72. Book ii., Art. iii.

⁴ Jean Baptiste Charles Bouvet de Lozier, born 1706, was sent by the French East Indian Company to discover Gonneville's Land in 1738. He was afterwards appointed Governor of the Isle Bourbon and Governor of the Isle of France in 1752.

⁵ Pierre Duval, geographer royal, a nephew of Nicolas Sanson, cartographer, 1618-1683.

up to New Holland, where Duval has placed the imaginary kingdoms of Psittac, Beak, Lucak, and Maletur.¹ Instead of having recourse to the Greek language to multiply these places, he might have contented himself by making one country of the kingdom of Psittac and of the Land of Parrots."

Thus, so far, writes De Brosse. We now give the introduction of the said extract from De Gonneville's journal by the ecclesiastic, Jacques Paulmier, as follows:—

"It could be wished that a better pen than mine were engaged to depict the features of the Southern regions of the world. But I must not, without betrayal of my trust, spare myself from performing my duty to the natives of Terra Australis, a duty which I owe to them by my birth and profession. The blood of my kindred race invites me, since a little while after the Portuguese had opened up the famous route to the East Indies, some French merchants, incited by the report of their rich commerce, fitted out a vessel which, whilst sailing thither, was cast by a hurricane on the shores of that great Southern land, *not far from the straight course to the East Indies.*

"The aborigines of these unknown countries received the Europeans with veneration and treated them for six months with extraordinary cordiality. They (the Europeans) being unwilling to return, without bringing with them some inhabitants of this new region, according to the usual practice of those who discovered new countries, practised with such ingenuity upon the credulous simplicity of their hosts, that they obtained from the chief of the nation one of his children, under the pretended promise of bringing him back instructed in the arts of Europe; especially in the secret of fire-arms and the means of subjugating their enemies, matters which the Southerners desired with an incredible passion.

"The Indian was then brought to France, where he lived long enough to have been seen by persons still living; and where he received, with baptism, the name and the surname of the captain who had brought him.

"This same captain, in recognition of the kind hospitality which the natives had shown him, and in order to acquit himself honourably of what he owed to a man whom he had transported by artifice from his country to a strange world, procured for him a small endowment and a marriage with one of his relatives. One of the children who sprang from this union is my paternal grandfather.

"The French have sworn to my compatriots to return to their country. The natural inclination which I feel towards it and the right that I have to represent here those from whom I take my origin, induces me to supplicate that the succour which they have been led to hope for will not long be refused to them. The priesthood with which I am

¹ In his map of the two hemispheres, "*Utriusque Hemispherii Delineatio*," Corneille Wytfliet locates these imaginary territories. See also the same author's map of the Australis Terra in his *Histoire Universale des Indes Orientales et Occidentales*, 1605.

invested forces me to insist with all my might and opens my mouth to declare the story of this expedition as taken from the original memoirs of my family.

"The celebrated Vasco da Gama having shown the way to the East Indies, Lisbon was, in a short time, filled with the riches of the East, of which the fame struck the eyes of certain French merchants trading at the port of that city. They formed the design of following in the tracks of the Portuguese and to despatch a ship to these famed Indies.

"The vessel was fitted out at Honfleur, at the mouth of the Seine. The Sieur de Gonnevillè, who was its commandant, weighed anchor in the month of June 1503¹ and doubled the Cape of Good Hope, where he encountered a terrible storm, which caused him to lose the course and left him to the wearisome calm of an unknown sea. Not knowing then which way to steer, the sight of some birds flying from the south determined his course in the hope of finding land where they could refit and find water. Here they met with what they desired, viz., a great country which is called in their report the South Indies, according to the custom of the time, when the name of the Indies was applied to all newly discovered countries. They anchored in a river which they compared to the Orne which flows under the walls of Caen. Their stay lasted about six months, which they employed in rebuilding their vessel damaged by the tempest; after which the refusal of the crews to go any farther, on account of the unseaworthiness and disrepair of the ship, obliged Gonnevillè to return to France.

"² During this long stay of six months he had leisure to note the features of the country and the characteristics of the inhabitants, of whom he has given many interesting details in his journal; but he was so unfortunate as to fall, when in sight of the French coasts near the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, into the hands of an English corsair, who deprived him of all that he had.

"Gonneville, on reaching land, laid his complaint at the Court of Admiralty, and, at the request of the Procureur du Roi, accompanied it with a succinct account of his discoveries. This declaration, a duly authenticated document dated 19th July 1505, is signed by the

¹ The *Nouveau Collecteur des Voyages* gives this date, in error, as 1603 in the Chronological list. Tit. xi. p. 201.

² "It is noticeable that the author only commences his extract from the judicial declaration of Gonnevillè at the paragraph which describes the people of the country. Doubtless Gonnevillè had commenced by making mention of his arrival and of the position of the coast where he landed, which would be most important to ascertain at the present day. M. Count de Maurepas, Minister of Marine, had caused a search to be made in the archives of the Admiralty offices in Normandy, to find, if possible, the original of this declaration: but all the ancient depositions (*procès-verbaux*) in these registries have disappeared. The civil wars, an interval of two centuries and a half, and the want of order in which these papers were kept, account for their loss. The only information obtainable by M. de Maurepas was to the effect that there had always been a tradition that such a document existed in the Admiralty, but that no one knew at the present day what had become of it. I [M. de Brosses] learned this fact from Count de Caylus, who himself gave directions for the search for the declaration of Gonnevillè."

[It will be seen, in Part II., that what purports to be a copy of this document has since been discovered, and that it considerably upsets some of M. de Brosses' conjectures and theories.]

principal officers of the ship. I here transcribe some extracts from it in the very words used in the original, being sure that the unpolished naïveté of the style cannot prove unwelcome.

"They (the subscribers to the document) say that during their residence in the said land they conversed freely with its people, after they had become sociable with the Christians by kindness and small presents made to them. These same Indians being simple folk, only caring to lead a happy life without much labour, living by hunting and fishing and by what the earth afforded spontaneously, as well as by various vegetables and roots which they planted; going half-naked, the young and common people especially. They wear robes either of woven mats, skins or feathers, like those of the Egyptians and Bohemians (gipsies) in our own country, only perhaps shorter, with sorts of kilts girded about their hips, reaching to the knees of the men, and to the calves of the legs with women; for the men and the women are clothed in the same manner, except that the clothes of the women are longer and they wear necklaces of bone and shell; not the men, who instead carry bows and arrows, with points either of sharpened bone or of a species of very hard wood, burnt and sharpened at the end, which is all their equipment.

"The women and girls go with bare heads, having their hair neatly plaited with little twists of fibres of bright and glistening colours. As for the men, they wear long hair hanging down, with a head-dress of high plumes richly coloured and well arranged.

"They state further that they penetrated into the country for a good two days' journey and along the coasts besides, both to the right and to the left, and found the land to be fertile, provided with much cattle, birds, and fish and other remarkable things unknown in Christendom, and of which the late M. Nicole le Febvre of Honfleur, who was a volunteer in the voyage, and a gentleman of skill and science, had made drawings, which, however, were lost with the journals of the voyage when the ship was pirated, which loss is the cause which renders this account imperfect and many fine discoveries omitted.

"It is stated that the said country is populous here and there, the dwellings of the Indians are in hamlets of thirty, forty, fifty, or eighty huts, arranged like a market place, made of stakes driven into the ground, close to one another, interlaced with grass and leaves, with which also these huts are thatched, and for a chimney there is a hole to let the smoke out: the doors are of canes neatly interwoven, and they shut them with wooden latches like those of country stables in Normandy, and their beds are of soft matting filled with leaves or feathers, their clothes of mats, skins, or feathers, and their household utensils of wood, as also their cooking pots; but these are protected by a sort of clay, about an inch thick, which prevents the fire from burning them.

"They remarked that the country is divided into small cantons, each of which had its king; and although these kings are neither better housed and dressed than the others, nevertheless they are much revered by their subjects, and no one is so bold as to dare refusing or obeying them, having the power of life and death over their subjects, of which some of the crew saw a memorable example, viz., of a young lad of from eighteen to twenty years who in the heat of passion had struck his mother; having learnt of which, although the mother made no complaint, the chief sent in search for him and caused him to be thrown into the river with a stone at his neck, after he had assembled, by public notice, the young men of the village and other neighbouring places, and no one could obtain remission, not even the mother herself, who went on her knees to beg the pardon of her child.

"The king was the chief in the land where the crews stayed, and had the name Arosca; his country extended about one day's journey, and comprised about a dozen villages, each of which had its own chief, who all obeyed the said Arosca. This Arosca appeared to be sixty years old, a widower with six sons between thirty and fifteen years, and both he and they often came to the ship—a man of grave demeanour, middle stature, stout and benevolent aspect, in peace with the neighbouring kings; but he and they were at war with the people who were inland, against whom he twice fought whilst the ship stayed there, taking from five to six hundred men each time, and at the last occasion, on his return great rejoicing was exhibited by all his people for having won a great victory. Their so-called wars were nothing more than raids of a few days' duration on the enemy, and they were most desirous that some of the crew should accompany them with fire-arms (*bastons à feu*) and artillery to frighten and put to rout their enemies, but they excused themselves.

"They say that they did not remark any peculiar mark which distinguished the king from the other kings of the country, of whom at least five came to see the ship, except that the kings wore plumes on their head of one single colour, and voluntarily their vassals, at least the principal ones, also wore, in their head-dress of plumes, some tufts of feathers of the same colour as their chiefs, which was green for Arosca their host.

"They say that had the Christians been angels descended from heaven they could not have been better treated by these poor Indians, who were altogether amazed at the size of the ship, the artillery, the mirrors and other things which they saw in her; and above all that, by means of a letter despatched from on board to some of the crew who might be in the villages, they could ascertain what was wanted, nor could they understand how the paper could speak, and on this account they greatly feared the Christians.¹

"Yet for the sake of several little gifts made to them of ornaments, knives, hatchets, mirrors, glass beads and such baubles, the Christians were so beloved that for them they would do anything in the world, bringing them plenty of flesh and fish, fruit and victuals and whatever they saw would be pleasing to the Christians, as skins, feathers, and dye-roots; in exchange for which were given to them ironmongery and other articles of little value, so that nearly an hundred quintals of such commodities were collected, which in France would have realised a large sum.

"They say that wishing to leave tokens in the country that it had been the abode of Christians, a large wooden cross was made thirty-five feet in height, and well painted, which was planted on a rising ground in view of the sea with great and devout ceremony to the sound of drum and trumpets on a day expressly chosen, viz., the Easter day of one thousand five hundred and four; and the cross was carried by the captain and principal officers of the ship, bare-footed, and assisted by the chief Arosca and his children and other Indian notables, invited to honour the occasion and seemingly joyful, while the crew followed under arms,

¹ "Rer Moume perceived that my countenance chang'd whilst I was reading the Letter; and ask'd me, What was the Matter? I told him, That the captain desir'd to speak with me. . . . How do you know all this? says the Prince; Can you conjure? . . . Rer Moume took the letter, and turning it over and over, said, He had heard of such Methods of conveying Intelligence to one another, but never actually saw it before; and could not conceive which Way it could be done without Conjurat[i]on. I endeavour'd to demonstrate to him as well as I could, how we learn'd in our Infancy the characters first, and then we put them together."—(*Madagascar; or Robert Drury's Journal*. Edition of 1729, p. 425. Do., "Adventure Series." Unwin, 1890, p. 291.)

chanting the litany, and a large crowd of Indians of all ages, whom for some time previous they had entertained, quiet and most attentive to the mystery. The cross having been erected, several discharges of musketry and artillery were fired. Feasting and handsome gifts to the chief Arosca and leading Indians, and for the populace plenty of largesse in the shape of baubles of little value, but prized by them, all that could be done to impress their memory. They were given to understand by signs and otherwise, by whatever means available, that they were to preserve and hold in honour the cross, and on one side of it were engraved the names of our holy father, the Pope of Rome,¹ of our king, of the Admiral of France, of the Captain, of the owners and members of the crew from the highest to the lowest, and for performing this work the carpenter of the ship received a present from each of the sailors.

"On the other side was engraved a distich in Latin, composed by Master Nicole le Febvre, who, in a pretty manner, set forth the date of the year of the erection of the Cross and who had set it up and placed it there :—²

*HIC sacra pa L MariUs, pos UIt gonIVILLa bInot Us,
GreX, soCIUs, parIterqUe progenies.*

(*Binot Paulmier Gonnevillle & toute la troupe qui l'accompagne, tant de la race d'Europe, que de celle des Indes ont ici posé ce monument sacré.*)

"Binot Paulmier Gonnevillle placed here (these) sacred (emblems).

"The numeral letters of this Latin distich together form the number 1504.

"They say further that, at last, the ship having been refitted (*gallifrestée*?) and victualled, as well as could be done, for the return was delayed in its departure for France, and as it was the custom with those who arrived at new countries in the Indies, to bring back to Christendom some Indians, by fair pretext, the Chief Arosca was induced to permit one of his young sons who had been on good terms with the crew to go to Christendom, and it was promised to the father and son, to bring him back within twenty moons at the latest (for thus they were given to understand months) and, what gave them more pleasure, they were made to believe that they would teach those who came artillery, which they desired greatly to overcome their enemies, and to construct mirrors, knives, axes and all that they saw and admired among the Christians. Such was their promise, as to a Christian might be promised gold, silver, jewels or the knowledge of the philosopher's stone. The which offers firmly believed in by Arosca, he was glad enough that they should take away his young son who had the name Essomericq, and gave him as a companion an Indian from thirty-five to forty years, named Namoa, and he himself and his people accompanied them to the ship, bringing provisions and beautiful feathers and other rarities, as presents on his part to our King: and the Chief Arosca and his people awaited the departure of the ship, making the Captain swear to return within twenty moons, and when the ship set

¹ Pope Julius II. (Giulio della Rovere), 1503-1513.

² Compare this with Don Manuel de Faria's account of King Bruto Chembanga of Fansaria (that is, Fanshere) on east coast of Madagascar, in 1613. *Vide infra*.

"The Portuguese set all hands to work to build a house and chapel for the two Jesuits and four Portuguese who were to remain, and when the work was finished, mass was solemnly said on shore, many of the natives coming to learn how to make the sign of the cross. One day while the king was looking on and saw several men labouring hard to carry a cross that was meant to be erected on a rock, he went half naked and bareheaded, and carried it without assistance to the place appointed."—(Kerr's *Voyages*, vol. vii. p. 7.)

sail all the people made a great cry and gave them to understand that they would preserve well the cross, making the sign of it also by crossing two fingers.

"They say that they departed from these southern Indies on the 3rd day of July 1504, and saw no land until the morrow of St. Denis, having encountered diverse fortune and been severely distressed by a malignant fever, with which the sailors of the ship were attacked, and four of them died, to wit, Jean Bicherel of Pont'-Pévêque, surgeon of the ship, Jean Renoult, soldier of Honfleur, Stenoz Vennier of Gonnevillle sur Honfleur, (varlet) of the captain and the Indian, Namoa. It was debated whether he should be baptized to escape the perdition of his soul, but the said Master Nicole said this would be a profanation of the Saint Baptism in vain, for Namoa knew not the creed of our mother Church, as those who receive baptism on reaching riper years ought to do. And this Master Nicole was trusted as being the best scholar in the ship; and nevertheless although with some scruple, on the other young Indian Essomericq falling ill, and in peril, he was, by his advice, baptized, and he administered the Sacrament to him, and his godfathers were Captain de Gonnevillle and Antoine Thierry and in place of the godmother Andrien de la Mare was taken as a third sponsor, and he was named Binot, the baptismal name of the Captain. It was the 14th September that this was done, and it seems that the said baptism served as medicine both to the soul and body, for straightway the Indian got better, recovered and is now in France," etc. . . .

"Such" (writes Jean Paulmier de Gonnevillle, the Indian priest) "is the portion we learn of the declaration of Gonnevillle, with regard to which we can remark two things. The first that the southern countries are inhabited by people intelligent and capable of instruction; the other that the French have an especial interest in returning thither, as much for the honour of keeping the oath which was made, as well as to sustain in the eyes of other nations the advantage which they have had to have landed on the *Terrae Australes* before any of the other nations of Europe.

"Fortune has hitherto given the principal glory to Magellan,¹ who discovered something of it a little time afterwards, at the expense of Charles v.,² a prince endowed with brilliant genius and born for grand enterprises. Can it be wondered at, therefore, if an obscure and fortuitous voyage, by a private individual, has remained overshadowed by the *éclat* of an important expedition performed at the expense of a great sovereign, followed with a constancy which has crowned it with success, celebrated by so many pens, published by so many mouths?

"Their noise has easily stifled the voice of a simple individual declaring the little advantage which chance had offered against his hope, and that the French nation, which could gain as much profit as glory, has managed so badly that the memory of it only survives in the dust of a record office of an Admiralty Court. I will not refrain from declaring that it is necessary for the honour of France to keep faith with our sovereign Arosca, who received the French so cordially. This old debt must be paid and at the same time paid with interest for the delay. Can it be needed to press so long on a project so advantageous in itself? Can

¹ Fernand Magellan (Magalhaens) passed through the straits bearing his name in 1521.

² Charles v., Emperor of Spain, born 1500, died 1558.

it be that the interest which I take in the cause of a people, for whom my blood inspires me with some affection, obliges me to seek some one who will speak to France in favour of so many millions of men? Hear what a Frenchman has to say on this subject, who from the year 1582 has exhorted the nation to cast their eyes on these southern lands:—

“I only ask every one” (writes La Popelinière in his history of the world),¹ “to animate the courage too dormant in France to attempt some voyage afar after the example of their neighbours, for the honour, at least, of the nation by some noble exploits. There yet remain countries to discover not hitherto known to modern explorers, which cannot be less rich in treasures, rarities, and miracles of nature, if we have the address to go to seek them towards the south where no other nation has reached. The Portuguese have sailed to the east and the Spaniards to the west, Germans and English to the north. No one has made any attempt to the southern regions which are so great and consequently subject to all sorts of temperatures, as well as the rich America. They cannot be less provided with riches and singular objects than the other parts of the universe, witness their width and large extent which causes us to term them the unknown world. It is there where the princes of these days should demonstrate their enterprise in things beautiful and profitable, by the exploration of this third world. It is to deny nature herself and the duty of humanity not to labour to obtain honour and profit from an undertaking so advantageous to the whole age in which we live; for (if we can judge of the resemblance by the truth, and the things unknown by those which do exist) witness the situation and extent of that third world, it is impossible that there must not be things wonderful in delight, richness and other commodities of the human life. When he can find nothing worthy of memory, research will ever be praiseworthy in a prince who will explore it. It is very well to say that we no longer have those incentives of virtue which led the ancients to undertake such lofty enterprises, which the more difficult they found the greater trouble they took in their pursuit. We work so hard to gain a battle, to take a town, to conquer a small country, in short, to procure an advantage which we find of but brief duration and ill assured. Here is a world filled with all sorts of good and excellent things. It has only to be discovered. We have only to follow the example of other nations who have opened out so fine a road. Renown promises to the Captain who is destined to make its discovery an illustrious rank with Columbus, Vespucius, Magellan, Cortez, and Drake.”—Lanc. Voisin de la Popelinière, *Histoire de Trois Mondes*, liv. 3.

President de Brosses next proceeds to give some

NEW ELUCIDATIONS ON THE AUTHOR OF THE MEMOIRS

ABOVE QUOTED.

“I draw these notes” (writes M. de Brosses) “from a copy of the memoirs which I have just found in the library of M. Falconet,² of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Literature. Although this copy may be of the same edition as that of which I have made use, we do not find

¹ Lancelot Voisin, sieur de la Popelinière, the historian, born in 1540, published, in 1582 *Les Trois Mondes*, giving a description of the three divisions of the world, including a notice of the *Terrae Australes*, till then but little heard of. He died in 1608.

² Camille Falconet, a literary savant of Lyons, whose library was the resort of many celebrated writers. He died in 1762. The catalogue of his library by Barrois is still extant.

there a notice in which the author, under the name of a third person, complains that the bookseller, Cramoisy, had printed these memoirs in 1663, without his knowledge, declaring that he had for a long time delayed the publication to which he had only, in fact, consented reluctantly.

"On the other hand, the dedicatory epistle to the Pope Alexander VII. is signed at full length, 'Paulmier prêtre indien,'¹ chanoine de l'église cathédrale de Lisieux.' This copy had been given by the author himself to M. de Villermont, who has written opposite the following note:—

'M. Abbé Paulmier, Canon of Lisieux, Resident of the King of Denmark in France, presented me in 1664 with this book, of which he is the author. He has great erudition and considerable knowledge of foreign affairs; he has travelled over nearly all Europe, being employed on a mission, as in Poland² for the late Vincent de Paul. He died at Cologne during the Congress of the plenipotentiaries of peace.

'He told me two curious things. The first is a suit which was preferred against him by the partisans who have instituted a tax on foreigners, which they tried to make him pay, as being the issue of a savage of Terra Australis, against which he pleaded so effectually in his own person that he was absolved from the tax, having argued among other reasons that he, from whom he was descended on the female side,³ had only come to France on the ship of Captain Gonneville on the promise which the Captain had made to his father, who was a minor king of the country from whence he had been brought, to carry him back within a certain time; which promise not having been executed, he was within his rights in complaining of the bad faith which had been used towards him, and which exposed him to the persecution of partisans.

'He also told me that the Captain Gonneville who had brought into France his ancestor, seeing that those with whom he had been associated in his voyages, and who were nearly all his relatives and heirs, were unwilling to contribute new funds towards the equipment of a ship designed to return to the same place, and to acquit himself of his word to the father as well as towards the son, had made the last his residuary legatee, by a principle of equity, to prevent his falling into poverty in this country, not being able to take him back to his own, where he needed for nothing. The goods left him by Captain Gonneville enabled him to marry well with an heiress from whom M. Paulmier is descended on the female side. The captain obliged him by his will, both him and his male descendants, to assume his name and arms.

'It was at the houses of MM. the bishops of Heliopolis⁴ and Berytus that I first saw M. the Abbé Paulmier, where we met commonly with the late M. de Flacourt, who had commanded in Madagascar, and M. Fernel, the father of the Superior of the foreign seminary.

¹ It will be seen, in Part II., that "*prêtre indien*," is, in reality, to be read "*prêtre indigne*."

² Vincent de Paul sent out a mission to Poland, at the request of Marie Louise de Gonzagna, in 1651. Lisieux in Calvados, Normandy.

³ "This is" (subjoins M. de Brosses) "an error of the memo. of Sieur Villermont. Paulmier was the issue of the savage by the *male* side. Apart from the fact that the suit brought against him and the name which he bore form evident proofs of it, he himself states that the savage was his paternal great-grandfather."

⁴ The Abbé Palus was Bishop of Heliopolis in *partibus infidelium*; and the Abbé Lambert, Bishop of Berytus.

'There the Abbé Paulmier did his utmost (this was in 1653) to persuade them that nothing was more worthy of their zeal than an establishment in the Terra Australis, and he brought us two manuscript copies of these memoirs that each of us might examine them and express his opinion of them. They contained many other things which are not printed here. I have known few persons better instructed in proper navigation than him and in voyages of which he has made a deep study. He has not less knowledge of literature and history, especially of sacred history, and of all that concerns his profession, as theology and the canonical laws,' etc.

Following the above, M. Falconet¹ has added this note :—

"At the end of the second volume of the voyages of Coréal (Paris 1722, p. 390)¹ is the history of Binot Paulmier, called Captain Gonneville, gentleman of Normandy, of the house of Buschot, who departed from Honfleur in 1503, and brought from the Terra Australis Essomérík, one of the sons of king Arosca, whom he caused to be baptized, giving him his name and his surname. This Essomérík lived until nearly 1583 [there has possibly been a fault in this date, De Broses] and left posterity under the name of Binot. One of his grandsons, J. B. Binot, President of Treasurers of France, in Provence, left only one daughter who married the Marquis of la Barbent." See le P. Anselme, *Histoire généalogique*, Tom. viii. page 300, where occurs the following :—"Jacques de Forbin, Lord of la Barbent, married 4th May 1725 to Charlotte Paulmier, daughter of Jean Baptiste (I believe it should be Jean Binot) Paulmier, President of Treasurers general of France, in Provence, and of the Marquise d'Andrea and leaves issue."

The existence, well authenticated, of this family, come from Terra Australis and brought to France by Captain Gonneville, is a proof without reply of the truth of the voyage of this Captain, on which some persons yet entertain doubts."

So far the account by the learned and serious President of the Burgundian Parliament² in the year 1756. Now let us compare the story with that told by Robert Drury in 1728, which has a curious bearing on the foregoing relation, from several points of view.

It has been pointed out in the pages of the *Antananarivo Annual*³ that there is reason to suppose that [Daniel Defoe?], the editor of Robert Drury's journal, had access to French works and notably to Flacourt's *Histoire de la Grande Isle de Madagascar*. The editors of that *Annual* are, as is well known to their readers, in favour of the substantial veracity of Drury's relation. A certain amount of examination seems to show a remarkable coincidence between one of Drury's historical and traditional anecdotes [at least so it is alleged by his editor], actually heard by him and accurately remembered after several years' interval, "exactly as the people themselves told" him and the account published by the so-called "Indian" priest in Paris, in 1663, just forty years before Drury was wrecked in Madagascar when a boy of fifteen years of age.

¹ "Vide ante, p. 10, M. Falconet of the Academy in whose library above-mentioned memoir was found."

² This extract is not to be found in the edition of Holland of 1722, which I have consulted (M. de Broses). Charles de Broses, First President of the Parliament of Burgundy, born 1709, died 1777.

³ Vide *The Antananarivo Annual*, 1865, pp. 17-26. "Robert Drury's Madagascar. Is it a fiction?"

Drury's editor, a writer of undoubted literary ability indeed, seems to have a dim idea that some such story had been heard before, and therefore Drury prefaces his following history with a few remarks to forestall any such rude criticisms which might possibly suggest that he was retelling an ancient tale,¹ or cribbing it from a recent French historian. Here it is!

KING SAMUEL'S HISTORY.

"King Samuel's History being very singular, I shall here relate it as I learn'd it at Times from the Natives. Whether any of the French Authors of Voyages have wrote any Thing of him I know not; nor have I had the Opportunity of seeing their Histories of Madagascar to compare with this of mine. It is exactly as the people themselves told me, and I shall not alter, or vary from their Account of it, whether it is agreeable to what others have said or no.

"This Part of the Country, to which the French have given the Name of Port-Dauphine, is called in the Madagascar Language, Antenosia. About ninety years ago, there came hither two French Ships; on what Account, Voyage or Business they were I can't learn; but they came to an Anchor close under the Land in a very good Harbour. The Captains observing that there were Plenty of Cattle and all Provisions, as also a very good Soil, concluded that one of them should stay here and make a Settlement; hereupon they cast Lots who should remain on the Island, and he on whom the Lot fell was Captain Mesmerico. [I must here desire my Reader to take Notice, that this is the Name the Natives told me, who, very likely, being unlearned, may pronounce it very different from the true Name; but besides, as it is also some Time since, and they have no Writings or Records of Things, so consequently, they can have no History, but by Tradition, as the Father tells the Son, and so on to succeeding Generations.] This Captain Mesmerico landed with two hundred white Men, well arm'd with Store of Ammunition and other Necessaries proper for the building of a Fort which they immediately began. The Natives no sooner observed their Intention, but they endeavour'd to hinder them; this caus'd a War, in which the French were the Conquerors, who took at several Times many Prisoners: In this War, the King of Antenosia and his Brother were kill'd; and amongst many other Children which were taken, the King's Son was one. When the French had suppress'd the Natives, and built their Fort, the Ships sail'd away to France, and carry'd this young Prince and many other Captives with them."

Now this story reads remarkably like the romantic episode said to have occurred in 1503 by the Abbé Paulmier de Gonneville. The question at once arises where did Drury's editor obtain his mutilated version of the tale, for it is almost self-evident that Drury could himself hardly have obtained the facts from the Natives themselves; yet, he expressly denies having learned it from any of the French authors.

¹ See *Robert Drury's Journal*, p. 106.

Now we find the following history in Flacourt's narrative; but first, I would observe that, on reading M. de Brosse's account given above, I was interested by noticing that M. de Villermont states that he met the Abbé in company with M. de Flacourt at the houses of the Missionary Bishops of Heliopolis and Berytus; for if the country described by M. Paulmier had been Madagascar, surely M. de Flacourt would have recognised the coincidence and similarity; but strange to say M. de Flacourt seems not to have recognised the curious parallelism of the French visit to Arosca with the Portuguese adventures at Anossi in Madagascar. The identity of the original source of the information obtained by Drury's editor is obvious.

THE STORY AS RELATED BY THE SIEUR DE FLACOURT.¹

"The French," writes de Flacourt (in 1658), "can boast that no Christian ship has discovered Terra Australis before the French vessel, which left, in 1503, Honfleur, a seaport town in the Bailiwick of Rouen, and of the Diocese of Lisieux in Normandy, under the command of Binot Paulmyer, called the Captain de Gonnevillle, of the family of the Seigneurs of the Buschet fief and the seigneuries in the parish of Gonnevillle lez Honfleur.

"This gentleman and some other adventurers put to sea with the design of sailing to the East Indies, to which the Portuguese, by doubling the Cape of Good Hope, had opened the way, some five or six years previously. But having been surprised by a long and boisterous tempest, being about the latitude of this cape [observe how careful Flacourt was to follow the old deposition; he does not say doubled the Cape] which had been formerly named rightly the Cape of Storms [le Cap tourmenteux], and having lost their track, they found themselves cast on the coasts of the Terrae Australes, which their journal, deposited at the office of the Admiralty, following the ancient custom, calls the Southern Indies [les Indes Méridionales] on account of their situation.

"They sojourned in this country nearly six months, as much to repair their vessel as to freight it for the return, which was determined upon partly by the bad state of their ship, and partly by the refusal made by the crew to proceed farther. Their account says nothing against the temperature of the country, praises its fertility, and describes its inhabitants as people endowed with the simplicity of the golden age, reasonable, inquiring, and who received the French with admiration, respect, and love. Our Frenchmen spoke well of the good reception they met with on the part of these Indians, and among others from their king, Arosca, who ruled over the country for the space of two or three days' journey in the neighbourhood of the localities where the ship of Captain de Gonnevillle had cast anchor.

¹ *Relation de l'Isle Madagascar*, pp. 465, 466.

This notice of Gonnevillle's voyage has been reproduced, in an abridged form, in an appendix to the *Voyages de François Coréal aux Indes Occidentales*. Nouvelle édition, revue, corrigée et augmentée d'une nouvelle Découverte des Indes méridionales et des Terres Australes. Paris, 1722, 2 vols. in 12; tome ii. pp. 390-392; with maps by Nolin.

"This Captain, moved by the usual desire common to the discoverers of new lands, availed himself of the natural curiosity of the Indians and of the influence he had gained over their spirits, so far, that he obtained from this petty king one of his children, named Essomeric, to come with him to Europe, under promise to bring him back, at the latest, within twenty moons (it is thus they counted the months) and to bring him back instructed in the invention of our artillery and of an hundred other things which they admired of ours and which they eagerly desired.

"Essomeric was carried off and not taken back; he was baptized and received the name of this Captain, who was his godfather, and subsequently conferred on him his surname, together with certain advantages, by which the Captain hoped to repair the wrong which he had done in evading his oath which he had sworn to take him back to his country. He arranged for him a marriage with one of his relations, and dying without children, he left divers testamentary legacies in favour of this Indian, who lived until 1583, leaving many children, of whom no male posterity remains, except one of the youngest, who bore also the name of Binot, the Sieur de Courthonne, who left a number of male children. Of whom two only married, one of the name of Jean Baptiste, President of the Treasurers of France, in Provence, who left only one daughter, wife of the Marquis of Barben, of the house of Fourbin in Provence; the other, Olivier, Sieur de Courthonne, who left Jean Gabriel and Robert Paulmyer, brothers; these two are still living at an advanced age, and the eldest is an Ecclesiastic and Canon in the Cathedral Church of Lisieux."¹

Now it is, I consider, just possible that the Abbé Paulmyer, evidently an enthusiast and a devoted missionary, may have, somehow or other in 1661, confused the tradition of his great-grandfather's alleged arrival in France in 1503 with the conversion of the Malagasy prince by the Portuguese in 1613-17, according to De Flacourt.

The following accounts are given by De Flacourt, and Don Manuel de Faria.²

FLACOURT (p. 33).

"³ Soixante ans après vint un Navire de Mozambique, qui enleva le fils de Dian Tsiamban, nommé Dian Ramach, & le mena à Goa: où ayant esté instruit par les Jesuites, baptisé par eux & tenu sur les fonds par le Vice-Roy, fut nommé Don Andre de Susa de Sahauedra.

"Trois ans apres fut amené à son Père par deux Pères Jesuites, qui demeurèrent en la maison de Pierre avec six autres Portugais, ou Espagnols; mais Dian Ramach estant avec son pere, prist aussi-tost la pague: & quitta la Religion Chrestienne, & a vescu ainsi jusques à la mort, qui luy est arriüée, à cause de sa perfidie, ayant voulu massacrer les François sans aucun sujet. . . ."

¹ It will be remembered that the Abbé's book was published in 1663, *after* Flacourt's death in May 1660. (He was blown up in a fight with pirates, 30th May.)

² See *Kerr's Voyages*, vol. vii. pp. 7, 8. De Faria relates how the king subsequently attacked the Portuguese, who repulsed them, but abandoned the mission.

³ 1613.

FLACOURT. (Chapitre xvi. p. 46.)

"... Il s'appelloit Andian Ramach, duquel i'ay parlé cy-dessus, & apres sa mort Andian Maroarieu.¹ Il a esté Chrestien & baptisé à Goa, nourry chez les pères Jesuites, & entretenu par le Vice-Roy de Goa, puis ramené en son pays & remis entre les mains de son père, qui appelloit Andian Tsiamban. Il scauoit toute sa croyance, scauoit les prières Chrestiennes, escrire & lire en caracteres de l'Europe, non en Arabe, parloit bon Portugais, & rendoit raison de la croyance des Chrestiens. Mais si tost qu'il fut avec son pere il quitta la profession du Christianisme & embrassa plus qu'aucun les coustumes & superstitions du pais. Il fut tué par les François lors qu'ils furent attaquer le Village de Fans-her, où estoit sa demeure, & frappé d'un coup de fuzil entre les espauls; lors qu'il s'enfuit laschement & un sien fils aussi nommé Dian Tsanza; apres auoir fait auparauint plusieurs menaces & s'estre fiez par trop aux Ombiasses, & à leurs carractères ridicules, sorts, & charmes, desquels nous nous sommes tousiours moquez."

MANUEL DE FARIA.

"King Chembanga requested that a Portuguese might be sent along with him to his residence, and left his nephew as an hostage for his safe return. Accordingly the master, Antonio Gonzales, and one of the priests named Pedro Freyre, were sent, who at twelve leagues' distance came to his residence called Fansaria,² a very populous and magnificent place. At first he treated them with much kindness, after which he grew colder towards them, but on making him a considerable present he became friendly, and even delivered to them his eldest son to be carried to Goa, desiring that the two Jesuits and four other Portuguese might be left as hostages, to whom he offered the island of Santa Cruz to live in. . . .

"De Costa demanded that the king's son, who had been promised, should be sent, but he denied having ever made any such promise, . . . and a party of Portuguese soldiers was sent armed against the King, who endeavoured to resist, and the King's son, a youth of eleven years of age, was brought away, the natives being unable to contend against fire-arms.

"Several messages were sent offering a high ransom for the boy; but, on being told by the captain that he would lose his head if he did not carry him to the Viceroy, they went away much grieved. This happened about the end of 1613, and towards the end of 1614 De Costa arrived safe at Goa with the boy, whom the Viceroy caused to be instructed in Christianity by the Jesuits, and stood godfather at his baptism on St. Andrew's day, when he was named Andrew Azeveda. The Viceroy treated him with much honour and magnificence, in hopes that, when he succeeded to his father, he might encourage the propagation of the gospel in Madagascar; and when he was supposed to be

¹ This seems to be the first notice of the change of name after death and the termination "arrivo" being added. The Malagasy apotheosis!

² Fanshere, now Fanjahira, north-west of Fort Dauphin.

sufficiently instructed he was sent away, accompanied by four Jesuits. On this occasion a pink¹ and a caravel² were sent to Madagascar, commanded by Pedro de Almeyda Cabral, and Juan Cardoso de Pina, who sailed from Goa on the 17th of September 1616. . . . On the arrival of the two Portuguese ships in the port of S^ta Lucia,³ in Madagascar, the King and Queen of Matacassi received back their son with the strongest demonstrations of joy, and gave back the hostages left on taking him away. . . .”

In Part II. I propose to consider the opinions of later geographers and navigators respecting the so-called Terre des Papagaux towards the Antarctic regions. We may in conclusion quote the quaint sonnet of Sieur François Fabri, a contemporary of Cabral:—

“ Si tu veux voir quels peuples Antipodes
Habitent l’Inde, habitent le Peru,
Et tous les lieux sous ce pole incognu,
Sans qu’à courir les mers tu t’incommodes :
Il n’est besoin qu’au gré des vents tu rodes
L’onde où Pilote est Colombe venu ;
Cy tout se voit escrit par le menu,
Leur teint, leurs moeurs, leurs habits, & leurs modes.
Cy sont depeints leurs riuages, leurs bois,
Fleuves & monts, leurs villes & leurs loix,
Leurs corcelets, leurs arcs & leurs sagettes ;
Et cy se voit leur aveugle fureur,
Auant qu’on ayt les tirez de l’erreur
Qui si loing temps tint leurs ames suiettes.”

THE NEW SIBERIA.

By J. Y. SIMPSON, M.A.

(*Read at Glasgow and Dundee, December 1899.*)

IN days when for the second time there has come from the East a call to universal peace, whatever be the nature of the response, men are naturally interested in that particular portion of the globe whence the summons has emanated. But even about that Asiatic portion of the corporate Russian Empire to which our attention is now turned, most of us have already formed some idea. Siberia is at once the reservoir of Russia and its cesspool. In the latter aspect it has been long known—the Siberia of Dr. Lansdell and Mr. Kennan—a country whose characteristic feature is dreary convict stations buried somewhere amidst snowy wastes, a land of gloom and desolation, to most who enter it the highway

¹ A sloop.

² Caravel or Carvel was a swift despatch-vessel with three lateen sails and square sail on foremast.

³ S^ta Lucia, or Mangafiafy, north of Fort Dauphin.