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C. Olivier

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- I. *Report on the Travels of C. OLIVIER and C. BRUGUIERE, undertaken by order of the French Government, through the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Persia, during the Years 1792, 93, 94, 95, 96 and 97. Read in the Sitting of the National Institute, February 14th. By C. OLIVIER.*

IN the year 1792 the provisional executive council, sensible of the advantages which might result to commerce, agriculture, natural history, geography, medicine, &c. by a tour through the Ottoman empire, Egypt and Persia; persuaded that these interesting countries had never been considered under a proper point of view, or had been considered only partially, and that we had still much to learn respecting them, made choice of C. Bruguiere and myself to accomplish that object.

After some delays, we at length sailed from Marseilles, in April 1793, in a neutral vessel, and, without touching any where by the way, arrived at Constantinople, after a pleasant voyage, on the 21st of May.

It would be difficult to express the different sensations excited in the traveller by the first view of that large city and

its inhabitants. The mixture of trees, houses and minarets; the canal of the Black Sea, the hills and valleys by which it is bordered, Scutari and the numberless villages situated on its shores, the sea of Marmora with its islands, Mount Olympus covered with snow, the variegated and fertile fields of Asia and Europe, all together present so many pictures which at once delight and astonish. One cannot help admiring the natural beauty of the environs of Constantinople, and reflecting at the same time on the happy situation of that large city, which can be so speedily supplied with provisions; which is so easy to be defended, and which enjoys the advantage of a port so safe, so commodious, and of such an extent. But if we cast our eyes a little farther, we behold the two shores of the entrance into the Black Sea, for the space of several leagues, convulsed by subterranean fires. Different strata of lava, decomposed rocks, porphyry and granites of various colours, more or less altered, attest the slow and successive action of a great volcano. If we ascend a few leagues, we discover, for a vast extent, a mine of coal, which the Turks have not yet found means to work.

We remained six weeks in this capital of the Ottoman empire, waiting till the envoy extraordinary of the Republic should receive from the minister orders respecting our mission and allowance; but the attention of government was at that time engaged with objects of more importance. Our letters remained unanswered, and we should have been thrown into great embarrassment had not our pressing wants been supplied by the envoy of the Republic.

After viewing this country, so interesting in every respect, and making an ample collection of plants, birds, fishes, insects, shells and minerals; and after sending two packages of seeds at different times to the national garden of plants, we set out for the Dardanelles, by which means we had it in our power either to proceed to the Archipelago in the spring, or to return to Constantinople in order to direct our course towards the southern shores of the Black Sea; to proceed
through

through Armenia, Georgia, Ghilan, or Chirvan, to the borders of the Caspian sea; afterwards to traverse Persia from north to south, and to return by the Persian Gulph, Busfora, Bagdad, Mesopotamia and Aleppo. As we did not, however, hear from government, and could receive only a part of our allowance, we confined ourselves to excursions to different places in the neighbourhood of the sea of Marmora, the channel of the Dardanelles, Troade, Tenedos, Scio, some parts of the coast of Natolia, Mycone and Naxia, from which we proceeded to Crete.

Agreeably to our instructions, we had transmitted to Constantinople, to be reared in the garden of the ambassador's palace, plants of a kind of apple-tree with oblong fruit of an excellent flavour, proper to be cultivated in any part of France, but more particularly in the southern departments; plants of three kinds of oak not found in our forests or gardens—one kind proper for ship-building—another à *grand cupule* known in commerce by the name of *avellonze*, which is the *quercus ægilops*; and lastly, that which furnishes the galls of the Levant: we added also several shrubs destined to enrich the national garden of plants.

Though several well informed Europeans have traversed this part of the Ottoman empire; though many of them have published interesting observations on the political relations of the Turks, their manners, usages, and religion; and though we have excellent works on the plants and ancient history of these countries, we, however, found that there is still an abundant harvest to be reaped, even in the best known part of natural history, that is to say, in regard to plants. But when we reflect that the reptiles, river fish, insects and terrestrial shells in those districts have not been observed by any traveller; that no one has made us acquainted with the riches which the Turks possess in mineralogy, mines of iron and copper, pozzolana, and coals at the very gates of the capital, marble of all kinds exceedingly abundant in the islands of the sea of Marmora and the Archipelago, agates,

cornelians and chalcedonies in the fissures of the volcanic rocks, mines of alum and sulphur, mineral waters of every kind; in a word, if we recollect that no traveller has considered this country in regard to geology, that part of natural history so interesting, which by enabling us to observe the different strata of earth and stones, the direction and structure of mountains, and to compare the different fossils that one meets with, must necessarily conduct to a certain knowledge of the antiquity of our globe, of the laws to which it is subject, and of the different catastrophes it has experienced, and of which some faint light has been transmitted to us by the fabulous history of antiquity, will be readily persuaded that our observations, directed to these objects, cannot fail of being highly interesting.

We remained four months at Candia; and though two years had elapsed since our departure from Paris, we had received no intelligence from government. We were, therefore, of opinion, that it would be absolutely necessary for us to renounce our first plans; but as we were desirous of employing our time in the most useful manner possible, we resolved to proceed to Egypt, and to traverse that country so abundant in subjects of observation, and as interesting for the politician and statesman, as for the philosopher, naturalist and antiquarian.

The situation of the French in Egypt was extremely disagreeable: their commerce had been interrupted, and they were in a state of oppression at Cairo. Some of them had been maltreated by the government, and the consul of the Republic enjoyed no consideration. Our first care was to study the monstrous government of the Mamelouks, their military force and their manners; to make ourselves acquainted with the revenues of Egypt, the present state of its commerce, and that which it might be susceptible of under a just and enlightened government. We examined the ports of Alexandria, the road of Aboukir, the Delta, the course of the Nile, its periodical inundation, the canals which the
negligence

negligence of the Mamelouks has suffered to be filled up, the monuments reared to gratify the pride of kings, and those which have been constructed in consequence of religious duties. We directed our view, at the same time, to the natural productions of Egypt, and those which might be introduced into it by cultivation; the fertility of its soil, and the diseases to which the inhabitants are exposed. We enquired into the cause of the periodical winds. In the last place we examined whether the plague, that malady so sudden and so terrible in its effects, has its source in Egypt, as some travellers have asserted, or whether it be there only casual and epidemic. Our harvest, in regard to natural history, has been very abundant: we had an opportunity of transmitting to the national garden of plants a third box of seeds from the Archipelago, Candia and Egypt.

On the 23d of March we received letters from the envoy extraordinary, by which he invited us to quit Egypt and to return to the shores of the Bosphorus; because the time was at length arrived for carrying into effect the plans we had formed. "Regions lying farther to the East," said he, "now invite you, and I wish to confer with you before you proceed thither."

Under the same cover there were two letters of C. Desforgues, minister of foreign affairs. One was a copy of that which the minister wrote to C. Descorches; in which he requested from him an estimate of the sums necessary to be expended, in order that we might properly discharge our mission. He authorized him to supply us with whatever sums might be requisite, to procure such guides and information as the nature of our mission required, and to obtain those documents which were indispensibly necessary for our researches and observations. He concluded his letter with the following words: "In all cases these two observers of nature will be subordinate to your commands; they will give you an account of all their operations, and at the end of each month you will transmit to me the result of their

observations on the arts, sciences, natural history, commerce, and political state of the countries through which they pass, in order that I may give a faithful representation to the executive council, of their zeal, their labours, and their discoveries."—In the other, the minister informed us, that he had requested C. Descorches to give him an account of the ordinary expences to which we would be subjected. He concluded by desiring us to transmit our submission in writing to C. Descorches, and to conform to the dispositions contained in the letter which he had addressed to him.

We embraced the earliest opportunity of complying, both with the orders of the minister, and those of the envoy. We transmitted our submission; and, having terminated our observations on Cairo and the neighbourhood, repaired, without delay, to Alexandria. We sailed from that port on the 30th of April, and arrived at Constantinople after a navigation of forty-eight days. We had the pleasure of touching at the isles of Rhodes and Lero, which we had not before seen. The repairing of a leak in our vessel obliged us to remain eight days at the former; and we were detained as long at the latter on account of the North winds.

During this interval C. Descorches had been succeeded by C. Verniac. We therefore delivered to the latter a sketch of our operations, from the period of our arrival in the Levant; a statement of the sums we had received; and a minute memoir on the situation of the French in Egypt, the government of the Mamelouks, the productions and revenue of the country, the cultivation of the land, on its commerce, and lastly on the improvements of which the country was susceptible. This memoir concluded with reflections ex-
cited

* The following extract from Norden's Travels, respecting a tradition in Egypt, that the country would be visited by spies, who would report its state, and at last bring a great number of Franks who would conquer it may amuse some of our readers, and by some will be thought perhaps not inapplicable to C. Olivier's mission, and the events that have followed it:

“ January

cited by the order which C. Descorches had given to the consul and French at Cairo, to repair provisionally to Alexandria, and put themselves under the protection of the port captain of the Grand Signior; and to wait there until more favourable circumstances should enable the consul to resume his functions at Cairo, and the merchants their commercial operations. We forwarded to the national garden of plants a fourth box of the seeds from Egypt, Rhodes, Lero, and the shores of the channel of the Dardanelles, as well as a live ichneumon which we had reared for four or five months.

Persia, a prey to the horrors of civil war since the reigns of the latter Sophis (the family of the Sephevi), gave reason to hope for a flourishing kingdom under a monarch who had triumphed over all his rivals, and had destroyed each of them in succession. The opportunity was then favourable

“ January 4, 1738.—On this day (Saturday) the Danish traveller, Captain Norden, with his attendants, arrived at Deir, or Derri, the first large village or town in Nubia. The cacheff of that place, a notorious plunderer of all who fell in his power, conducted himself towards the travellers in so infamous a manner, as to oblige the captain to relinquish his design of proceeding further, and return to Cairo. When disputing about some of the exorbitant demands of the cacheff, one of the company reminded him that they were under the protection of the Grand Signior. To which he answered in a passion; ‘ I laugh at the horns of the Grand Signior: I am here Grand Signior myself, and I will teach you to respect me as you ought. I know already what sort of people you are. I have consulted my cup; and I have found by it, that you are those of whom one of our prophets has said: That there would come Franks in disguise, who, by little presents, and by soothing and insinuating behaviour, would pass every where, examine the state of the country, go afterwards to make a report of it, and bring at last a great number of other Franks, who would conquer the country, and exterminate all. But I will take care about that; and without further delay you must quit my bark.’ After being plundered by him, in various ways, till the evening of the following Monday, the travellers thought themselves very fortunate in being permitted to escape with their lives.—[*Dr. Templeman's Translation of Norden's Travels*, 8vo. edit. 1757, vol. ii. p. 150.] EDIT.

for travelling into the interior parts of this country, so interesting in every point of view. C. Verniac allowed us the whole of our appointment, authorised us to engage a dragoman, gave us a letter to the chief minister of the king of Persia, another to the pacha of Bagdad, and, at the same time, various instructions both verbally and in writing.

At the moment of our departure, the Porte had a design of constructing in the harbour of Constantinople a bason after the model of that of Toulon; and some Armenian merchants wished to prevail on us to communicate to them a discovery we had made of an excellent kind of pozzolana, by offering us the sum of 30,000 piaſtres. As we were here under the orders of the Republic, we did not think ourselves at liberty to enter into any treaty with Armenians, in regard to our discoveries, until we had apprised the envoy of the Republic. C. Verniac, who intended to get this bason constructed by French engineers, desired us to reject the offers of the Armenians, promising to procure us a more ample recompence from the Porte; and he immediately sent the first dragoman of the legation to the Turkish government, to communicate our discovery, and make an offer of our services. The Porte seemed to accept this offer with gratitude; and having requested a note on the subject, we embraced the earliest opportunity of transmitting to it a memoir, in which we said that we had discovered pozzolana of an inferior quality near the channel of the Black Sea, in Prince's islands, and various islands of the Archipelago; and some of a superior quality, or at least equal to that of Italy, in the island of Santorin. The memoir concluded with a few details respecting the method of employing both.

The ministers of the Porte, when they received this memoir, informed the dragoman, that the Armenians had demanded for the discovery 60,000 piaſtres, though they had offered us only 30,000. They added, that they would never forget the service which we rendered to them, and that their gratitude would be boundless if we could effect what we promised.

promised. On this subject we had two interviews with the Chelebi-Effendi; and that minister twice gave us reason to hope that the Porte would reward, in a manner worthy of itself, the important discovery we had communicated.

In the mean time we were just on the point of proceeding on our journey to Persia. The necessary preparations were already made, and we were looking out for a caravan going to Diarbekir, when the Porte required that we should repair to the isles of Santorin, Milo, and Argentiera, and transmit to it some bags of pozzolana, in order that previous experiments might be made. For this purpose it freighted a French vessel, and sent a chiaous to accompany us and bring back the specimens. We were obliged to touch at Metelin to receive from the captain pacha, then lying at anchor before that island, the necessary firmans.

The inhabitants of Santorin, alarmed at this discovery, and fearing that the Ottoman government would cause the earth to be dug up at their expence, and of course send Turkish officers into the island, immediately assembled to execute the Grand Signior's orders, and to devise means for warding off the blow with which they were threatened. They thought they could do nothing better than to send the primates to the Latin bishop at whose house we lodged, and to offer us a present if we would inform the Porte that we had discovered none of the above substance in the island. We, however, rejected the offer of these primates, and transmitted to Constantinople several bags filled with pozzolana of an excellent quality, which was in great abundance, and exceedingly easy to be dug up. We depended on C. Verniac for the promised recompence to which we thought ourselves entitled by the importance of the discovery, by rejecting the offers of the Armenians, and the trouble, dangers, and delay we had experienced.

The island of Metelin, almost entirely volcanic, is remarkable on account of its great fertility, its immense ports, and its warm mineral springs. Argentiera, known formerly
under

under the name of Cimolus, is entirely volcanic. We remarked, with pleasure, that the Cimolian earth, which it furnishes in abundance, is produced by a flow and gradual decomposition of the porphyries occasioned by subterranean fires. I collected specimens of that earth in all the states through which it passes. This observation will be interesting, no doubt, to mineralogists, and make them acquainted with the origin of a substance hitherto little known. The island of Milo is altogether volcanic. It presents a vast port, on the borders of which is a spring of warm aluminous water; a very warm grotto, where feather alum is formed; a volcano still burning, and a prodigious quantity of catacombs. The island of Santorin is remarkable for the changes effected in it by a volcano, and the sinking down of a great part of the island; from which has resulted a kind of port, more than two leagues in extent, and from the bottom of which three isles have been thrown up at different known periods. The rupture occasioned by the almost circular sinking down of the island exhibits different strata of volcanic substances, among which we observed several kinds of pozzolana. That which we sent to Constantinople, and of which I have specimens, may one day serve for such maritime constructions as the French may think proper to make in Egypt, when they are once firmly established in that country.

We touched a second time at Rhodes, proceeded thence to Baruth, and afterwards to Sayd, with a view of going to Damascus to take advantage of the departure of a caravan for Bagdad, as we had been taught to expect; but, the caravan having departed a long time before, we were obliged to return and take the route to Aleppo. We were unwilling to quit the coast of Syria without paying at Tyre a tribute of admiration to which that city was so justly entitled.

As the road from Latakia to Aleppo is never safe, we waited some days for the departure of a caravan. During that time we transitted to the national garden of plants
a fifth

a fifth box of seeds, from the islands we had visited, and the coasts of Syria. On our arrival at Aleppo we employed ourselves in examining the situation of the French in that city. We collected information respecting the commerce carried on by the Europeans with the inhabitants, and sent to C. Verniac a memoir on that subject. We also made various observations in regard to natural history and geology. We procured several birds, and a few quadrupeds: after which we set out, towards the end of winter, in company with a caravan; and, passing through Orfa, Merdin, Nefbin, and Moful, arrived at Bagdad without any accident.

(To be concluded in the next Number.)

II. *Process of making Attar, or Essential Oil of Roses.* By
Lieut. Col. POLIER. From the Asiatic Researches.

THE attar is obtained from the roses by simple distillation, and the following is the mode in which I have made it.

A quantity of fresh roses, for example forty pounds, are put in a still with sixty pounds of water, the roses being left as they are with their calyxes, but with the stems cut close. The mass is then well mixed together with the hands, and a gentle fire is made under the still: when the water begins to grow hot, and fumes to rise, the cap of the still is put on, and the pipe fixed; the chinks are then well luted with paste, and cold water put on the refrigerator at top: the receiver is also adapted at the end of the pipe; and the fire is continued under the still, neither too violent, nor too weak. When the impregnated water begins to come over, and the still is very hot, the fire is lessened by gentle degrees, and the distillation continued till thirty pounds of water are come over, which is generally done in about four or five hours: this rose-water is to be poured again on a fresh quantity (forty pounds) of roses, and from fifteen to twenty pounds of

water