

REFERENCE LIBRARY

Army Ordnance

COLBURN'S

UNITED SERVICE
MAGAZINE,

AND

NAVAL AND MILITARY JOURNAL.

1863, PART II.



LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

series. Each series menses, sleeps, and cleans the deck at the gun from which its No. is derived. The duties of every individual are so minutely specified in this "Réglement," that the particular objects to be cleaned by certain men, even the man-ropes which some have to scrub, are mentioned in its various articles. But what may strike an English officer as still more extraordinary, is the fact that the words of command of the various nautical evolutions, such as tacking, wearing, fidding top-gallant masts, and shifting sails and spars, are given at full length, and are accompanied by a detailed explanation, as are the words of command, in a book of gunnery or musket drill. Orders, we are told, are always to be given in the plural, and the word "*envoyez !*" is to be used on all occasions, such as swaying across yards, when several different things are to be done together.

But perhaps what chiefly merits our attention in these regulations, is the care that is taken that the *routine* shall be made intelligible to all who have to see it carried out. Each separate item is accompanied by a sort of commentary describing very closely what is expected to be done; and this part of the Instructions alone occupies more than fifty-six pages.

The duties of sentries, too, according to their different posts, are stated at length; and, even in this small particular, much trouble must be saved the commanding officer who has to fit out a ship, when he finds that he has only to transfer copies of these to the various order-boards.

It is not to be doubted that so penetrating a system of organization is repulsive to the character of British seamen in general, and that its adoption into our own Navy, in any but a very partial form, would be fraught with the greatest difficulty. Still we cannot but admire the cleverness with which the Government of France has supplemented, by an improved organization, that ability for maritime affairs in which the French seamen are so far behind our own. Discipline has almost invariably prevailed over simple valour, however great; and that discipline is undoubtedly the highest which rests upon the most perfect system of organizing a force that can be devised.

OCEAN STATIONS—A VOYAGE IN 1862.

COASTING—SINGAPORE.

The Cochin China coast soon loomed boldly on our starboard bow and the weather continued fine. Our chart was from a survey made by the French in 1798, and I was assured that there was none of a later date. On the 8th of November we experienced some heavy squalls accompanied by thunder and lightning, but they were very
U. S. MAG. No. 416, JULY, 1863. A A

transient, and left the atmosphere cool and balmy. A few days more and at sunset we were in sight of a group of no fewer than seventeen islands, all more or less of considerable size, and generally lofty, but apparently barren. Passing the lighthouse on the rocks of Pedra Branca we soon came in sight of Singapore, which is about thirty miles off. It was a humid, squally morning. The low-lying, richly-wooded coast of the Malay peninsula seemed, as no doubt it is, a fine retreat for beasts of prey.

This being my second visit to the grand *entrepôt* of Eastern Asia within a few months, I had little to expect in the way of novelty. There was still the pretty anchorage—the same wooded heights above the town; the old story of the disparity of one hundred and twenty to one between the combined Chinese, Malays, and Madrasses, and the heroic band of three hundred European officials and merchants.

Madras seems to have stamped its peculiarities upon this creation of Sir S. Raffles, not only as regards the style of the houses and laying out of the gardens, but likewise in the mode of living. A Madras regiment is generally in garrison, but this does not seem to allay the inquietude felt on account of the overwhelming Chinese population, a member of which—originally a Coolie—it has been deemed expedient to raise to the magisterial bench; and this functionary, besides bearing his faculties as meekly as might be expected, has, I believe on emergencies, justified the liberality of the local government, by proving himself a most politic mediator between his own countrymen and the former. The Chinese, when removed from the contagion of bad example, are by no means unfitted to govern in a subordinate capacity with integrity and ability; and it, perhaps, only requires time to develop their higher qualities in a larger field. Another cause of apprehension, in the event of an European war, would certainly be the proximity of the military (for commercial it surely is not) station, which our Gallic allies have established at Saigon.

The plan of the town of Singapore seems at first irregular, but after a few drives in the convenient little palkee garries of the place, one perceives that the various races of the population keep as distinct from each other as practicable, the Malays occupying the one extremity, and the Chinese the other; the intermediate space being appropriated by the English. The landing-place is protected by a weak battery occupying the angle formed by a small estuary, which further up is spanned by light bridges connecting the villa quarter with the mercantile. In the former of these, and skirting the shore, there are several excellent hotels, a cathedral, court-house, and on a green eminence behind, the Government House.

The hotels of Singapore are commodious and inexpensive; the attendance excellent, as indeed it always is, where there are Madrassese servants; and the living is of the best description. The gardens which surround these agreeable places of resort are well kept, and contain many rare plants in addition to those

which are common to this zone, but vegetation here seems rather to be characterised by the beauty of the trees, than of the flowers. The climate is humid, and in consequence of the soapy red clay of the soil, the effects of a heavy fall of rain are experienced for many days after. I cannot say that I should like to make Singapore my place of residence. There is an oppressive monotony in its physical aspect. So long as the sun is shining, one may find sources of amusement and interest in the natural features and productions of the soil, but when good things of day begin to droop and drowse, and the harsh croaking of the frog is only relieved by the voices of countless insect tribes, and no breath of air can force itself into the damp lanes gloomy with sombre foliage matted together, one must be in robust health and buoyant spirits to endure such a locality.

The best index to the climate is the appearance of the European children. These poor little fleshless mites with pale cheeks, wan eyes, and feeble querulous voices, do not seem to make the same impression on their parents that they do upon strangers, who are able to contrast their blighted infancy with the rosy cheeks of England. I should imagine the soil of Singapore to be well adapted for the cultivation of coffee, but I confess to having serious doubts in respect of cotton, for which, I venture to surmise, that there is a nearer and better field in the waste lands of our Indian possessions.

The Malay boats are exceedingly elegant in their lines and are generally kept scrupulously clean—at least, those that ply for passengers. A mat shed in the centre, affords shelter from sun and rain; the fiery-eyed, wiry Malay in his picturesque costume of bright colours, chiefly red, is not a little proud of his personal appearance and of the skill with which he feathers his light oar; these boats are, however, unfitted for rough and squally weather. I have seen one of our crew obliged to swing himself backwards over the windward gunwale and hold on by a stay rope, to prevent the wind capsizing us as our snowy lateen sailed swelled before it. The Chinese have also their small crab-like shampan, generally sculled by one man, who stands up and works with two long oars so vigorously, that he is a serious competitor for the Malay, who, in consequence, has no word too bad for him; he works harder and charges less than the natives, and thus prevents an extortionate monopoly.

During our stay in this port, the ship was daily surrounded at daybreak by bumboats filled with golden bananas, in their chandelier whorls, shaddocks, mangosteens, "creepy"-looking ramostans, and green oranges. I know that there is a strong prejudice against allowing soldiers and sailors to purchase fruit on such occasions, but various circumstances that have come under my notice have led me to believe that this, like the mania with some of excluding the night air, is a snare and a delusion. Judiciously eaten, a fruit diet is, after a voyage, often attended with the best results; if unnecessary apprehensions do not interfere with the practice of nature.

Manias are peculiar to localities, as well as to certain seasons; and accordingly we, who had suffered so terribly from the Chinese and Japanese "curio" (endemics), now found ourselves rapidly succumbing to the "cockatoo" phrensy, which seemed at first to make its ravages amongst the sailors, each of whom boldly invested two or three dollars in the purchase of one of these noisy lemon-crested denizens of Golden-Chersonesian forests, or their cousins in various degrees—the red, the purple, and the green parrots.

I observed a curious evidence of something above ordinary instinct, in a small monkey belonging to one of the sailors. The little animal was sitting pensively scratching his ear, in a way peculiar to his race, when I brought him a piece of bread; he nibbled it carelessly, and finding it not much to his liking, dropped it. I then gave him a banana, which he seized with avidity and began to eat with great gusto, when I again returned with a sprig of bread pills stuck on small wires, so as to represent rudely a cluster of berries. Instantly was the banana abandoned, and one by one with the greatest satisfaction were the fictitious berries transferred to his jaw pouches. Here was imagination—perhaps even a sense of the beautiful! In the meantime a more practical dog quietly walked off with the half-eaten banana.

Malacca canes as well as fine matting were also in demand; but it was in vain that the eager Chinese offered his Japanese cabinets at lower prices than they fetch in Hong Kong. That passion had decayed, and the elegant trifles by which so recently it had been gratified, had now to be reserved for the outward bound.

All the ordinary "curios" of the country which we had just left are to be had in this town, except ancient pictures and that matchless imperial porcelain only procurable in Northern China, and even there becoming scarce.

A Madrasede, who had attended on me at the *table d'hôte* of the Esperanza Hotel, received as an acknowledgment of his attention, a "chit" or recommendation, for which he appeared grateful. I asked him if he would accompany me to England, and he seemed pleased at the idea; but when I added, that he must be prepared to start next day, he excused himself: "I cannot go, Sir," said he, "so soon, because my mother stop with me; and before I could go to England I must put her back to the Madras." By a strange coincidence I had known the relations of this man many years before, at Poonamalee.

THE STRAITS OF RHIO, BANCA AND SUNDA.

Having waited until the last available moment for the outward English mail, we were obliged to say farewell to Singapore without it, and the same night we entered the southern hemisphere. The weather was cool and pleasant, and our course lay through the Rhio Straits, so called from a small Dutch settlement of that name, which may be observed, and barely observed, about seven miles off, and

seemingly perfectly oppressed by the plethora of vegetation, from which its scattered houses struggle into outer light.

These straits lie between the islands of Pulo Battam and Pulo Bintang, whose shores are magnificently wooded apparently to the water's edge, with here and there verdant satellite islets along their coasts. On the latter of these islands two isolated mountains, densely wooded to their summits, reach the altitudes respectively of 759 and 1,212 feet. In the absence of any evidences of human habitations, the scenery reminded me sometimes of the wider branches of the Sunderbunds, and at other times of the solitudes along the shores of the Gulf of Paria. The waters of this channel are comparatively shallow, for although between ten and twenty fathoms occur, our lead occasionally shewed only five and a half. There were several very elegant two-masted boats cruising about.

We had frequent light and picturesque squalls, which broke into the dense green forests and opened a passage for the gleams of sunshine, that often slanted forth at such moments with the most beautiful effect, and which forced from me an involuntary tribute to the genius of Poussin; although, by the way, I am privately of opinion that he has more than one successful rival amongst our living artists.

The following day we were slowly and cautiously feeling our way through the difficult straits of Banca, with wooded uplands on our left and long sandy spits on the opposite side. It was hereabouts, I believe, that the *Transit* was lost in 1857. Some of the detached mountain peaks of Pulo Banca are as high as fourteen hundred feet, but these interminable forests and isolated mountains soon become monotonous.

We observed two English barques hugging the low coasts of Sumatra, but as the navigation is a matter of some nicety, all three came to an anchor at dusk, and waited for daylight to resume progress. The scenery continued much the same. We were in nine fathoms when we observed a Dutch barque making signals of distress. She was to appearance, judging by our charts, in about four fathoms. We afforded such assistance as was in our power, and left her. After losing sight of land for about eight hours, it again loomed in bold outlines on our starboard bow.

We were now five days out from Singapore. Land was in sight all morning. Sunbeams were coursing over the mountain forests of Sumatra, while fierce squalls were ravaging the partially cultivated uplands of the fine Island of Java; far in the distance faintly loomed through the shower-streaked space, the bold island cone of Krakatoa, whose apex is 2,600 feet above the sea level. Almost in mid-channel we passed the romantic islet called "the Button."

The scenery of the Straits of Sunda is exceedingly bold and picturesque, and in some respects resembles that on the coast of Trinidad in the West Indies. Some of the Sumatran mountains are of considerable height; that known as Raja Bassa attaining an altitude of 4,398 feet. I have already alluded to the characteristic of these

mountains—wooded isolation—the single blessedness of the passive world! Now occasional groves of cocoa-palms bespeak the homes of human beings, of whose existence, however, there is little else to remind one; but our eyes are straining rather in the opposite direction of Java.

JAVA.

Java, until lately, was less known for real natural beauties and undeveloped wealth, than for the policy of convenience, which put us in temporary possession of its government during our Napoleonic wars, and its name embroidered on the standards of a few of our regiments, keeps alive the memory of these events.

Anjer, although not the principal town of the island, is from its situation, perhaps, better known to seafaring Englishmen, than the capital, being on the coast, and convenient for ships passing through the Straits of Sunda.

In the face of one of those heavy squalls, so frequent in these latitudes, we steamed into the open roadstead of Anjer, where we found four other vessels straining their cables in the heavy sea that was running, but owing to the wildness of the day and the heavy surf, there were no small boats about; presently, however, on our approach, a frail canoe formed of the trunk of a tree, freighted with bananas and paddled by two Javanese, made its way to us, and was shortly followed by a larger well-managed boat, on board of which was the quasi agent of the Dutch harbour master. The background of lofty hills was partially obscured by heavy clouds and driving showers, while the little settlement itself cowered timidly to the beach with its red tiled houses, small fort, and conspicuous patriarchal tree, from the summit of which waved the tricolour of Holland. A large grove of cocoa-nut palms stretches away in one direction, and in the other a dense forest or jungle is apparently in full possession of its allodial rights.

As the waves were running high, and the pelting shower gave no signs of cessation, no one seemed disposed, even for the sake of our ready-written letters, to submit to such a ducking; so the task of posting these missives to friends, and which would be taken on by the next steamer to Singapore, devolved on myself. I had some difficulty in getting into the boat, however, as at one moment she was sunk ten or fifteen feet in a trough of the sea, and the next was cresting a wave that nearly reached our gangway. At last, watching my opportunity, I caught the hand of the harbour master's servant and jumped on board his boat.

This servant (or Captain, as he was called), was a slight man with a small moustache and blue black hair. An ill-rolled cheroot was never out of his mouth, while under his arm he carried an account book, and in his hand some official documents and a pencil. His costume was rich in colour although poor in material. Indeed, it was only in an æsthetic point of view that he could have been ad-

mired, and then merely as an accessory, to relieve the all-pervading greens of the landscape. His costume consisted of a blue and white striped banyan, over which was a loose buff muslin jacket with a deep orange arabesque pattern, loose payjamas of a greenish colour, with alternate broad and narrow stripes of blue. Thrown negligently across his right shoulder and round his waist was a bright crimson scarf crossed with lines of yellow, and bordered with stripes of dark blue. His *tout ensemble* was completed by a carelessly folded white muslin turban of voluminous proportions, sprigged with a brown seaweed pattern.

As we tore through the waves, under a press of canvas, this fellow remained imperturbably silent; but when the boatmen took to their oars (which latter by the way have scarcely any fluke, and are little better than leaping-poles), and raised their wild song, as we neared the threatening surf, he discharged volley upon volley of the grossest abuse, strange to say, in Hindostanee, although his auditors were Malays. Whether or no they understood what he said I cannot vouch; I trust, however, that they did not.

It was raining heavily all the while, and as the surf was breaking furiously on the shore I felt serious doubts about our affecting a landing, but I soon observed a well-constructed breakwater on either side of a long and narrow sluice. At the critical moment our oars were suspended, a huge curling wave bowled us up the sluice in long undulations, and deposited us safely about two hundred yards inland, underneath the overspreading branches of the large tree so conspicuous from the roadstead.

Following the official of the voluminous turban, I sprang ashore in front of the small custom-house, where the chief Dutch functionary was seated in the verandah, surrounded by a group of picturesque natives, each holding in his hand his remarkable hat, which I mistook for a very gaudy target.

The hard-featured old Batavian received me courteously, and buttoning up his white cotton jacket authoritatively—not suspiciously—took me under cover of his large umbrella to his own house. Here I posted my letters, for this officer performs all the functions of the Government and executive, and had some difficulty in exchanging my Mexican dollars without loss.

My new acquaintance spoke of a recent English traveller in Java, as having given his pen to one of the two parties in the island, from which in return he received much valuable information that otherwise was not within his reach.

Presently the harbour-master, &c., rang a tiny French hand-bell, on which a boy brought in a *veletah*, on an iron rod fixed to a pedestal like a gaff-boom, a box of cheroots, and sundry bottles of Scheidam, &c. The lad was then ordered to gather me a bunch of the best flowers in the garden, while the lady of the house made her appearance, and presented me with two beautiful large lemons. She spoke English perfectly well, and was slightly coloured. Her

husband alluded to the affairs of China, and noticed the joke in "Punch" about the Elgin Marbles, on which the lady, to show her acquaintance with contemporaneous history, remarked, in her sweet artless way, "It is very strange, is it not, what they say, that this very same Lord Elgin's father once went to China long ago to get marble too?"

I had not the heart to destroy the pleasant coincidence, perhaps the only (quasi) political fact, which had ever made an impression on her tender domestic mind.

In this old gentleman's drawing-room, there was a very fine portrait painted in oils on oak. It arrested my attention the moment that I entered; and observing the effect it produced, he informed me that it was the likeness of one of his sturdy ancestors, by the hand of no less an artist than the great Sir Anthony himself, and, in truth, its merits justified the assertion. The artist had invested the lineaments of the old Batavian worthy's countenance with a grim vitality, and had happily individualised its every peculiarity, from the angular high forehead to the small, firm, and avaricious mouth, as none but a master could. This able, but somewhat illiberal face, was set in a broad-plaited white cambric ruff, which seemed almost to bear the impress of the laundress's skill. Such was the portrait of "Roelef Warmolts, of Gröningen," and I trust that I may never owe such a man a farthing, much as I may respect him.

The walks in the harbour-master's garden were laid down with fragments of coral instead of gravel. It is a pity that the variety known as the *Astraea*, and indeed the rock corals generally, have not been adopted by the architect in the pavements of conservatories and bath-rooms, where not only their beauty in transverse slabs, but their porous nature would make them very desirable.

Amongst several unfamiliar plants, I noticed one which emitted at night, as I afterwards discovered from its leaves only, a delightful fragrance like that of common garden sage.*

A number of natives offered me Java sparrows, and a beautiful variety of small blue-headed parrot, at comparatively trifling prices; but then the trouble and risk of taking them a long voyage to England are, under ordinary circumstances, sufficient to deter a casual visitor from trying the experiment.

MAURITIUS.

Each break in a long voyage seems to renovate both the mental and the physical nature, not so much by any actual novelty—for, indeed, there is little new under the sun to an old voyager in the outward aspect of things—but rather by the reappearance of those outward objects which are generally associated with our earliest recollections or impressions. After living for weeks within the narrow limits of shipboard, and in contemplation of the serener

* It bears a striking resemblance to the "*Bryophyllum Calcinum*."

beauties of sea and sky, with their solemn associations, what a relief to gaze again on quiet villages nestling amongst trees, on verdant pastures, or on leafy uplands, mingling their green tints with the neutral violets of the far distance! It is then that the ruddy wanderer of the deep seems intuitively to recognise his own "complimentary colour."

Several small islands, for the most part barren, intercept the approach to Port Louis, in Mauritius, and dangerous reefs are encountered at a league's distance from the shore.

The former, in general configuration, somewhat resemble those that lie scattered about the Straits of Sunda, but on a nearer approach the absence of umbrageous vegetation forms a marked distinction. Here a large rocky islet, hoary and streaked with guano, is known as "Le Colombier;" near it is a long spit of land, with patches of green, speckled with white houses, which terminates in a bold headland crowned by a light-house. Still nearer the coast is the "Gunner's Quoin," which sloping from the sea at a sharp angle terminates suddenly in a precipice, whose perpendicular face of strangely and apparently closely stratified rock, rises to a height of (I should suppose) fully 600 feet. Sea-birds are ever soaring about its lofty summit, or gyrating on snowy wings about the black and gloomy recess that marks the entrance to a large cavern.

The first impressions of the island of Mauritius are very pleasing. Highly cultivated fields in all shades of green undulate in rich crops from the yellow surf-beaten beach, near the scene of Virginia's apocryphal shipwreck, to the accumulating spurs that unite in a lofty range of mountains, whose grotesque peaks rise to the height of nearly three thousand feet, and are swept by eddying mists. The numerous white chimneys of sugar-boiling houses, the neat cottages of the peasantry, and the larger residences of the upper classes, even at the distance from which we saw them, conveyed the impression of a thriving colony, and a charming natural combination of the useful and the romantic.

The opportune arrival of a pilot on board hastened our entry into the harbour of Port Louis, which is land-locked, and protected by two small forts, one on either side of the narrow entrance.

The clouds that had rested in the early morning on the background of mountains at whose base the town is situated, now cleared away gradually, first disclosing the peak called the Pousse, then the Cap of Liberty, and in a higher range, the Peter Botte, towering in basaltic majesty into the blue empyrean, like the spire of some wonderful cathedral. Yet this celebrated mountain in some respects disappointed the most of us. Its form was not exactly that of the Impracticable Straight-Jacket, as represented to our boyish admiration in ancient Penny Magazines, but had certainly all the fulness of rocky skirts more conformable to modern fashion, and the peculiar shape, from our first point of view of its rocky head, being strictly perpendicular on one side, presents a *coup d'œil* far more

like the flowing contours of a modern belle than that of any straight-laced old Batavian.

From the aforesaid woodcut, many an unreflecting lad has grown old in the faith that the wondrous ascent was made in the face of that fearful angle subtending the abyss, but alas! it is not so, a bight in the rock where it is simply vertical, enabled the first, as it has since enabled several other enterprising visitors, to accomplish what would otherwise seem to be an impossibility.

On the right of the harbour on entering, a long row of light and tall Madagascar pines* (as they are here called) and low white walls, mark the graveyard, and place of public execution; and stretch away from Fort William, or as it was named formerly by the French, Fort Blanc, to the town, which latter is connected with the opposite fort by a narrow causeway about a mile in length. In the basin thus formed the shipping is closely moored, stem and stern.

Port Louis, as might be supposed, in its general features is a close approximation to many of the towns of the West Indies, where the French and other European colonists still give a tone to the locality. The houses, too, are built much in the same style, with verandahs and jalousies, and a surrounding garden or shrubbery, where during our visit the superb Flamboyant,† being then in bloom, ruled with undisputed sway the empire of flowers, and seemed to absorb in his lofty crimson masses even the aspiring glories of the brilliant Poincianas. This tree is perhaps the most intensely flaming, as indeed its name imports, of any I remember having seen, and, if I am not mistaken, might even dispute for precedence with the Amherstia, of recent notoriety. Popularity, even in the botanical world, depends at first on accident as much as on desert, and many plants of the most eminent beauty are still born to blush unseen, until rescued from undeserved obscurity by some casual observer who does not forget its claims because it seems to be common in its own locality.

Opposite the landing-place there is a fine statue of M. de la Bourdonnais, who governed the island during its occupation by the French from the year 1744 to 17—; and further on, about the centre of the town, there is a pretty grove of ornamental trees enclosing an elegant fountain.

There is an excellent market, but provisions are on the whole dear, a fault traceable here, no doubt, as in some of the West Indian islands, to mismanagement. What fish I tasted was of an inferior description. I believe that many kinds are poisonous, and I was shown some excellent coloured drawings of a few remarkable varieties, and amongst them the dull grey mud-fish, a wound from whose sharp dorsal spines is said to be fatal.

French bijouterie is conspicuous in the shop windows, but there seemed to be no indigenous arts. Seed bracelets and tortoise-shell combs are made for sale, but clumsily; and the latter are far more

* Casuarinas.

† A species of Acacia.

expensive than in England. The small stained rush caps, and red and yellow matting, come from Madagascar. Excellent light claret is to be had at ten shillings a dozen, but fruits on the other hand are correspondingly dear. The mangosteen has been successfully cultivated, and bananas, pine apples, cocoa nuts, and mangoes, are plentiful, and just coming into season, while we were in harbour. Tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, brenjals, &c., &c., are to be had in abundance. Animal food is remarkably expensive, and apparently this is the result of unavoidable causes.*

This colony is one of those interesting ethnological crucibles, in which it seems to be our especial mission to fuse and amalgamate the various races of mankind, and that too with no inconsiderable success. The population consists of English, French, Chinese, Indians, and Africans, and all their intermediate varieties. The concomitant diversity of peculiar manners, and sumptuary tastes, are as interesting as they are often amusing, from the tortuous embellishment of intractable wool, to the pale brow and delicate features, shaded by dark flowing braids, where large-petalled flowers seem to sleep, of the not unworthy successors of Virginia herself, as they lean over a balcony, or show their frilled or lace-worked Bloomers at garden-gates. A proportion of Artillery, Engineers, and two regiments of the line, constitute the strength of the garrison, one of the latter being generally broken up into detachments to occupy various small outposts.

Amongst the amusements of the island, I heard of fishing, as well as deer-stalking. Shell collecting is also carried on to a great extent, and there are several valuable collections in the island, which it is to be hoped will at some future period find their way into the public museums of the mother-country. It is to be regretted that such collections by remaining in private hands come in the ordinary course of events to be broken up or lost.

The Mission to Madagascar,† which was lately sent to congratulate the new sovereign of that imperfectly known island, on his accession to the throne, had just returned, and was one of the chief topics of interest at the period of our visit. The published report, although rather meagre, throws out some indistinct sug-

* No pasturage apparently in the island.

† " Papers relative to the Congratulation Mission of (sic) Radama, Queen of Madagascar, laid before Council on the 29th November, 1861."

Although the Mission was avowedly non-commercial, we showed a very laudable desire to make the royal palate acquainted with some of our most popular comestibles, for in the list of presents forwarded by the Governor of Mauritius, we find 14 cases of tongues and sausages, 20 cases of preserved European fruits, 50 hams and 20 Cheddar cheeses, besides such other luxuries as a pair of gold epaulettes, a thermometer, and a revolver "complete."

In this curious document there occurs some names which would sound almost familiar to the translators of Pali inscriptions, and the collectors of Bactrian coins. Thus "Radama" writing by his secretary "Rahaniraka," from his capital "An-tanarivo" adverts to the death of his mother "Ranavalomanjaka."

gestions relative to the future commercial intercourse between the two islands.

The object of the visit is stated to have been purely of a friendly nature, and entirely unconnected with commerce or politics, but of course such professions should be taken at what they are worth. It was no doubt a politic step on the part of the Governor, to secure the friendship of his strange neighbour—a man, be it remarked, who had in early life visited England, and who appears to be far in advance of his subjects.

The purely French inhabitants of Mauritius are accused by the English of being unsocial and exclusive, while the mixed population of the lower orders consider them as hard taskmasters. How far the latter may be true I cannot say; but as regards the former it seems not unlikely that there may be faults on both sides, and that the French might with equal justice retort that Englishmen in receipt of large salaries abroad, have an overweening desire of saving money to spend it on sociality at home, and that in consequence of the levity and indiscretion of a few of our youthful spirits they have resolved on keeping aloof. Moreover, with their morbid sensitiveness and great national pride, Frenchmen can never be well affected under English rule.

The tombs of Paul and Virginia, about six miles from Port Louis, and near the Botanical Garden, are considered amongst the lions of the island, and thither flock the majority of visitors to pay an unconscious tribute to genius; for it is a remarkable fact, that of all my acquaintance who performed the pilgrimage with such eager enthusiasm, one only had ever read the story, or knew what it was about, beyond the bare names and the fact of a shipwreck—a tale “signifying nothing.”

These tombs were felt to be one of the requirements of the age and in consequence they were erected, and no doubt are very pretty objects, which, if they serve to keep alive the sentiment embodied in a tale of perennial freshness, will in a certain degree have done their duty well, but to mortuary distinction they have no claim so far as concerns the lovers of St. Pierre.

It was not without a feeling of regret that we bid adieu so soon to ancient Peter Botte and his group of grotesque offspring, that rear their gnome heads about the paternal knee. We had heard of genuine deer forests where there were *bona fide* trees, of pleasant waterfalls, and shady walks bordered by lilies, and the pink-eyed tropical periwinkle (*vinca rosea*), and of tamarind, and other delicate trees, plaiting their branches overhead. Of rural retirements, where the juicy sugar-cane rustles in the sea-breeze, and the homely sounds of well-kept poultry-yards have a cheery music of their own. There was also something to be seen in the French phase of the colony, and perhaps even amongst a few of us a lingering ambition to belong to the select band of those, who had surmounted the difficulties of standing on the head of the local genius, “Peter Botte!”

Still as we passed ever-varying profiles of mountains, and the rich woodlands that skirt the western shores, our glasses were focussed to pierce those leafy coverts, or climb the rocks as gradually they faded into azure—— * * *

Another day, and we were passing the island of Bourbon, in a heavy swell, and under a troubled sky.

THE FRENCH CAMPAIGN IN COCHIN CHINA.

By the treaty negotiated between the French Bishop of Adran and Djallong, the dethroned monarch of Cochin China, in 1787, the latter ceded to the French the district of Tourane in return for military assistance which the former were to give him in recovering his throne. This assistance was not, however, given him, at least not directly, or to any appreciable extent; the only services he received being from French adventurers sent to him from the West Indies. It does not appear to us at all clear that a cession of territory made on conditions which were never fulfilled can be binding on the person who ceded it, or that a just claim can be based on such a document. Be this as it may, the ambition of France is gratified by the conquest of a province likely to be of more value to her than Algeria, and which is of great extent, comprising all Lower Cochin China lying between Cape St. Jacques and the river Saigon to the east, the river Cambodge to the west, and the province of Laos to the north. Before the termination of the war in China the French Government resolved that a portion of the forces engaged in that expedition should be sent to strike an effective blow in Cochin China. Vice-Admiral Charner was the officer to whom the command of this expedition was entrusted. Dividing the naval force under his orders into two parts, he left one under the command of Rear-Admiral Protet to look after French interests in China, with injunctions to send first one ship and then another at short intervals to Japan, with the view of impressing on the Japanese the power of France.

The necessary arrangements having been made with Baron Gros and General Montauban, the embarkation of the troops destined for Cochin China commenced. This operation was performed under circumstances of the greatest possible discomfort. The winter had set in, the thermometer marked from 10° to 12° below zero, the rigging and every part of the vessels was covered with hoar frost, and the chopping sea breaking against the sides of the boats sent the spray flying over the men and wetted them to the skin. The crews of the gunboats that had been stationed for two years previously in the high temperature of Cochin China were great sufferers. These gunboats had rendered most important services during the Chinese campaign. Not only were they of great assistance in the