

to take some of it internally, which he did, in a few days his wounds were healed, and the inward pains were removed.

There grows in the gardens of Jericho a shrub known in the Hebrew language by the name of *copher*, which the Latins call *cyprus*. It is common in that island, and I have described it under the name of *kenna*.

Rose-bushes are found also in the fields here, but of a species much inferior to those so much extolled in the Bible, the flowers of which some naturalists pretend to have in their cabinets. The rose shrub of Jericho is a small plant, with a bushy root, about an inch and a half in length. It has a number of stems which diverge from the earth: they are covered with few leaves; but it is loaded with flowers, which appear red when in bud, turn paler as they expand, and at length become white entirely. These flowers appear to me to have a great resemblance to those of the elder tree; with this difference, that they are entirely destitute of smell. The stems never rise more than four or five inches from the ground.

This shrub sheds its leaves and its flowers as it withers. Its branches then bend in the middle; and becoming entwined with each other to the top, form a kind of globe. This happens during the great heats; but during moist and rainy weather they again open and expand.

In this country of ignorance and superstition, people do not judge with a philosophical eye of the alternate shutting and opening of this plant: it appears to them to be a periodical miracle, which heaven operates in order to make known the events of this world. The inhabitants of

the neighbouring cantons come and examine these shrubs when they are about to undertake a journey, to form an alliance, to conclude any affair of importance, or on the birth of a son. If the stems of the plant are open, they do not doubt of success; but they account it a bad omen to see them shut, and therefore renounce their project if it be not too late.

This plant is neither subject to rot nor to wither. It will bear to be transplanted; and thrives, without degenerating, in any kind of soil whatever. I do not know why it is called the rose of Jericho, as it did not grow originally in that plain. I am inclined to think that travellers who gave it the above name, were ignorant that it was brought from Arabia Petrea.

I observed in this district several other plants, which appeared to be worthy of notice, on account of their utility, and the odour of their flowers. I collected a great number of them, which on my return I gave to Dr. Manetti. He delivered his observations on them at a public meeting of the philosophical and botanical society of Florence.

In a word, no vegetable productions are wanting to this plain which can render it abundant and happy: beside all those which are common in Europe, it contains a great number peculiar to itself.

Josephus ascribes this great fertility to the heat of the atmosphere, and the abundance of water; the one makes plants expand, and the other refreshes them.

This plain of Jericho is covered also at present with rich crops of wheat and barley, which begins to ripen about the end of April.

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On the USES that may be made of COUTCHOUC, ELASTIC GUM, or INDIAN RUBBER, in ARTS and MANUFACTURES, with an Account of the Manner of obtaining and manufacturing it.

**T**HIS substance, called *coutechouc*, is denominated *elastic gum*, or *elastic resin*, by philosophers in Europe; but it is now generally known in the shops by the name of *Indian rubber*; a substance that few of our readers are not acquainted with. It is a firm, tough, pliable substance, greatly resembling some kinds of leather; but it possesses a degree of elasticity that cannot be equalled by any known substance in nature. It admits of being stretched out in every direction to an astonishing degree; and when the distending power is removed, it recovers its former shape and appearance. It neither can be dissolved in

water, in ardent spirits, in acids, nor alkaline liquors, in the ordinary state of our atmosphere. Oils, in some measure, act upon it; but the vitriolic æther is the only complete solvent of it that is as yet known. It is inflammable, and burns with a clear steady flame, emitting then a slight smell, not at all disagreeable. When exposed to a cold air, it is more hard and rigid than under a milder temperature, but it neither becomes fluid, nor loses its elasticity, till it is exposed to a much more intense degree of heat than is ever experienced in any climate on the globe. It may, however, be melted by a very intense degree