

ACCOUNT
ADVENTURES
MADAME GODIN DES ODONAIS
IN THE AMAZONS RIVER

VOYAGE

OF

MADAME GODIN.

M. GODIN DES ODONAIS TO M. DE LA CONDAMINE.

SIR, *St Amand, Berry, 28th July 1773.*

You require of me a narrative of the travels of my spouse along the Amazons River, the same route I followed after you. The rumours which have reached your ears of the dangers to which she was exposed, and which she alone of eight persons surmounted, augment your curiosity. I had resolved never to speak of them again, so painful to me was the recollection of them; but, as an old companion in your travels, a distinction which I prize, I cannot refuse, in return for the interest you take in our welfare, and the marks of friendship you have shown me, to give you the satisfaction you require.

We landed at Rochelle on the 26th of June last, after a passage from Cayenne, effected in sixty-five days, having left this last place on the

21st of April. On our arrival, I made inquiries after you, and learnt, with much grief, that four or five months had elapsed since you were no more. While yet in tears, my wife and myself were delighted, on wiping them away, to find that at Rochelle the literary journals, and what regards the Academy, are far less read than the news which relates to commerce. Accept, Sir, for yourself and Mad. de la Condamine, our heartiest congratulations.

You will recollect, that the last time I had the honour of seeing you in 1742, previous to your leaving Quito, I told you that I reckoned on taking the same road that you were about to do, along the River of Amazons, as much owing to the wish I had of knowing this way, as to insure for my wife the most commodious mode of travelling, by saving her a long journey over-land, through a mountainous country, in which the only conveyance is on mules. You took the pains, in the course of your voyage, to give information at the Spanish and Portuguese missions established on its banks, that one of your companions would follow you; and, though several years elapsed from the period of your leaving them, this had not been forgotten. My wife was exceedingly solicitous of seeing France; but her repeated pregnancies, for several years after your departure, prevented my consent to her being exposed to the fatigues incident on so long a voyage. Towards the close of 1748, I received intelligence of the death of my father; and my presence thence becoming indispensable for the arrangement of my family affairs, I resolved on repairing to Cayenne by myself down the river; and planning every thing on the

way to enable my wife to follow the same road with comfort, I departed in March 1749 from the Quito, leaving Mad. Godin at that time pregnant. I arrived at Cayenne in April following, and immediately wrote to M. Rouillé, then minister of the navy, entreating him to procure me passports and recommendations to the court of Portugal, to enable me to ascend the Amazons, for the purpose of proceeding to my family, and bringing it back with me by the same channel. Any one but you, Sir, might be surprised at my undertaking thus lightly a voyage of fifteen hundred leagues, for the mere purpose of preparing accommodations for a second; but you will know that travels in that part of the world are undertaken with much less concern than in Europe; and those I had made during twelve years for reconnoitring the ground for the meridian of Quito, for fixing signals on the loftiest mountains, in going to and returning from Carthage, had made me perfectly a veteran. I availed myself of the opportunity afforded by the conveyance which took my letters, to forward several objects relating to natural history for the King's garden; among others, seed of the Sarsaparilla, and of the five species of the Butua; with these also a grammar, printed at Lima, of the language of the Incas, which I designed as a present for M. de Buffon, from whom I received no answer. By that with which I was honoured from M. Rouillé, I learnt that his Majesty had been pleased to direct that the governor and intendant of Cayenne should both furnish me with recommendations to the government of Para. Upon this, I wrote to you, Sir, and you were so obliging

as to solicit passports for me. You moreover favoured me with a letter of recommendation from Commander La Cerda, minister of Portugal to France, addressed to the governor of Para, with a letter from M. l'Abbé de la Ville, which informed you that my passports had been expedited and forwarded to Para. I inquired respecting them of the governor of that place, who expressed his entire ignorance of the fact. I repeated my letters to M. Rouillé, who then was no longer in the ministry. Since that time I renewed my letters every year, four, five, and even six times, for the purpose of obtaining my passports, and constantly without effect. Many of my letters were lost, or intercepted, during the war, of which I the less doubt, from your having ceased to receive any, notwithstanding I regularly continued my correspondence. At length, hearing casually that M. le Comte d'Herouville was in the confidence of M. de Choiseul, I ventured, in 1765, to write to the former of these noblemen, although I had not the honour of being known to him, explaining, in a few words, who I was, and entreating him to intercede with the Duc de Choiseul for the transmission of my passports. To the kindness of this nobleman alone can I attribute the success that followed this step; for, the tenth month from the date of my letter to M. le Comte de Herouville, I saw a decked galliot arrive at Cayenne, equipped at Para by order of the King of Portugal, manned with thirty oars, and commanded by a captain of the garrison of Para, instructed to bring me to Para, thence transport me up the river as high as the first Spanish settlement, to await there till I returned with my family, and ultimately re-

conduct me to Cayenne, all at the special charge of his Most Faithful Majesty; a liberality truly loyal, and such as is little common among sovereigns. We left Cayenne at the close of November 1765, in order to take in property belonging to me at the fort of Oyapoc, where I resided. Here I fell sick, and even dangerously so. M. de Rebello, the captain, a knight of the order of Christ, was so complaisant as to wait for me six weeks. Finding at length that I still continued too ill to venture on the voyage, and fearful of abusing the patience of this officer, I besought him to continue his route, and that he would permit me to put some one on board, to whom I might intrust my letters, and who might fill my place in taking care of my family on its return. I cast my eyes on Tristan D'Oreasaval, a person whom I had long known, and in whom I had confidence. The packet I intrusted to him contained the orders of the Father-general of the Jesuits to the Provincial of Quito, and the Superior of the missions of Maynas, for furnishing the canoes and equipage necessary for the voyage of my spouse. The instructions I gave to Tristan were simply to deliver those letters to the Superior, resident at La Laguna, the capital of the Spanish missions of Maynas, whom I entreated to forward my letters to Riobamba, in order that my wife might receive information of the vessel despatched by his Majesty of Portugal, at the recommendation of the King of France, to bring her to Cayenne. Tristan was further directed to wait an answer from Riobamba at Laguna. He sailed from Oyapoc on the 24th January 1766, and arrived at Loreto, the

first establishment belonging to Spain on ascending the river, in the month of July or August of the same year. Loreto is a mission established below that of Pevas, since the period of your coming down the river in 1743; nay, both this and the Portuguese mission of Savatinga, above that of St Pablo, which was before their last settlement up the river, have been founded since my passage descending in 1749. The better to comprehend what I now describe, it may be well you should cast your eyes over the chart made by you of the course of the Amazons, or that of the province of Quito, inserted in your Historical Journal of the Voyage to the Equator. The Portuguese officer, M. de Rebello, after landing Tristan at Loreto, returned to Savatinga, in conformity to the orders he had received of waiting there until Madame Godin should arrive; and Tristan, in lieu of re-dairing to Laguna, the capital of the Spanish missions, and there delivering his letters to the Superior, meeting with a missionary Jesuit, called Father Yesquen, who was on his return to Quito, by an unpardonable oversight, which had every appearance of a bad intent, delivered to his care the packet of letters. This was addressed to Laguna, some days' journey from the spot where Tristan was; but instead of attending to this circumstance, he sent it five hundred leagues beyond, to the other side of the Cordilleras, and himself remained in the Portuguese missions, carrying on trade.

You will please to notice, that, besides different articles which I had intrusted to him to dispose of for me, I had furnished him, in addition, with more than sufficient to defray all expense in travelling through the Spanish missions.

In spite, however, of his bad conduct, a vague rumour obtained circulation through the province of Quito, and reached the ears of Madame Godin, not only of letters addressed to her being on their way in the custody of a Jesuit, but also, that, in the uppermost missions of Portugal, a vessel equipped by his Most Faithful Majesty had arrived to transport her to Cayenne. Her brother, a monk of the order of Augustins, in conjunction with Father Terol, a provincial Dominican, exerted themselves much to induce the Provincial of the Jesuits to obtain these letters. The Jesuit who received them at length made his appearance, and stated he had delivered them to another; this other being interrogated, replied, he had committed them to a third; but, notwithstanding the most diligent inquiry, the letters never were found. With respect to the arrival of the vessel, opinions differed, some giving credit to, while others disputed the fact. To venture on a voyage of such length without any certainty, and preparatory thereto to arrange all family affairs, and part with her furniture, was what Madame Godin could not, without much risk and imprudence, resolve upon. She determined on the commendable medium of despatching a faithful negro, who departed with some Americans, but who, in consequence of obstacles, was obliged to return. His mistress sent him forward a second time with new instructions, and means of surmounting the difficulties which had prevented his progress before. More fortunate on this second trip, the negro reached Loreto, saw and communicated with Tristan, and, returning, acquainted Madame Godin of the reality of the

report, and that Tristan was at Loreto. Upon this she determined on her journey, sold part of her furniture, but left the rest, as well as her house at Riobamba, a garden and estate at Guaslen, and another property of ours between Galté and Maguazo, to her brother-in-law. Some idea of the length of time which elapsed since the month of September 1766, at which epoch the letters were delivered to the Jesuit, may be formed by computing how long the journey of the reverend father to Quito must have occupied, how much time would be lost in seeking the letters, in inquiry into the fact of the rumour, in hesitating about what was best to be done, and in the two journeys of the negro to Loreto and back to Riobamba, the sale also of our effects, and the requisite preparations for a voyage of such length; in fact, these prevented her setting out from Riobamba, forty leagues south of Quito, before the 1st of October 1769.

The arrival of the Portuguese vessel was rumoured at Guayaquil, and even as far as the shore of the South Sea; for M. R., who reported himself to be a French physician, coming from Upper Peru, and on his way to Panama and Porto Bello, in the view of passing thence to Santo Domingo, Martinico, or, at any rate, to the Havannah, and from that place to Europe, touching at Point St Helena, learnt there that a lady of Riobamba was on the point of setting out for the Amazons river, and embarking thence in a vessel equipped by the order of his Portuguese Majesty, to take her to Cayenne. This engaged him to change his route, and ascending the Guayaquil river, he proceeded to Riobamba, to entreat Madame Godin to grant him a pas-

sage, undertaking, in return, to watch over her health, and show her every attention. At first she answered, that she had no authority to grant his request; but M. R. applying to her two brothers, they represented to her so urgently that she might have need of the assistance of a physician on so long a voyage, that she at length consented to his accompanying her. Her two brothers, who likewise were setting out for Europe, hesitated not an instant to avail themselves of the opportunity which now offered of hastening their arrival, the one at Rome, whither he was called by business relative to his order, the other in Spain, where his private affairs required his presence. The latter took with him a son about nine or ten years of age, whom he wished to educate in France. M. de Grandmaison, my father-in-law, went on before to obtain every possible accommodation for his daughter on the road, to the point of embarkation beyond the Great Cordillera. He at first met with obstacles from the president and captain-general of the province of Quito, for you, Sir, are aware that the passage by the Amazons is forbidden by the Spanish court; but these difficulties were soon overcome. On my return from Carthagena, whither I had been despatched on matters relative to our company in 1740, I brought back with me a passport from the viceroy of Santa Fé, Don Sebastian de Eslava, authorizing our taking whatever road we pleased; and in consequence of the production of this, the Spanish governor of the province of Maynas and Omaguas, informed of the approach of Madame Godin, politely sent to meet her a canoe stored with refreshments, such as fruit, milk, &c. which reached her at a little distance from

the town of Omaguas; but to what misfortunes, what a horrible situation was she not exposed before that happy moment! She left her residence of Riobamba with her escort on the 1st of October 1769; and with these she reached Canelos, the spot at which they were to embark, situate on the little river Bobonasa, which empties itself into the Pastaca, as this last does into the Amazons. M. de Grandmaison, who preceded them a month on the way, found the village of Canelos well inhabited, and immediately embarked, continuing his journey, to prepare every thing necessary for the transport of his daughter at each stage of her way. As he knew that she was accompanied by her brothers, a physician, her negro, and three female mulattoes or Americans, he proceeded on to the Portuguese missions. In the interval, however, between his journey and the arrival of my wife, the small-pox, an European importation, more fatal to the Americans in this part than the plague, which is fortunately here unknown, is to the people of Levant, had caused the village of Canelos to be utterly abandoned by its population. They had seen those first attacked by this distemper irremediably carried off, and had in consequence dispersed among the woods, where each had his own hut, serving as a country retreat. On her departure, my wife was escorted by thirty-one American natives to carry herself and baggage. You know, Sir, that this road, the same pursued by M. de Maldonada, is impracticable even for mules; that those who are able effect the passage on foot, but that others are carried. The Americans who escorted Madame Godin, who were paid in advance, according to the bad custom in this coun-

try, a custom founded on mistrust, at times but too well founded, scarcely reached Canelos before they retraced their steps, either from dread of the air being infected, or from apprehension of being obliged to embark,—a matter obnoxious in the extreme to individuals who had perhaps never seen a canoe in their lives but at a distance. Nay, such excuses are possibly superfluous, for you well know how often we are abandoned by them on our mountains, on no pretence whatever. What, under such circumstances, was to be done? Had my wife been able to return, yet the desire of reaching the vessel waiting her, together with her anxiety to rejoin a husband from whom she had been parted twenty years, were incentives powerful enough to make her, in the peculiar circumstances in which she was placed, brave even greater obstacles.

In the village only two Indians remained free from the contagion. These had no boat, but they engaged to construct one, and pilot it to the mission of Andoas, about twelve days journey below, descending the river of Bobonaza, a distance of from one hundred and forty to one hundred and fifty leagues; she paid them beforehand. The canoe being finished, they all departed from Canelos. After navigating the river two days, on the succeeding morning the pilots absconded; the unfortunate party embarked without any one to steer the boat, and passed the day without accident. The next day at noon, they discovered a canoe in a small port adjoining a leaf-built hut, in which was a native recovering from illness, who consented to pilot them. On the third day of his voyage, while stooping over to recover the hat of Mr K., which had fallen into the water, the poor man fell

overboard, and, not having sufficient strength to reach the shore, was drowned. Behold the canoe again without a steersman, abandoned to individuals perfectly ignorant of managing it. In consequence, it was shortly upset, which obliged the party to land, and build themselves a hut. They were now but from five to six days journey from Andoas. Mr R. proposed to repair thither, and set off with another Frenchman of the party, and the faithful negro belonging to Madame Godin, taking especial care to carry his effects with him. I since blamed my wife for not having despatched one of her brothers to accompany Mr R., but found that neither of them, after the accident which had befallen the canoe, were inclined to trust themselves on the water again without a proper pilot. Mr R. moreover promised, that within a fortnight a canoe should be forwarded to them with a proper complement of natives. The fortnight expired, and even five-and-twenty days, when, giving over all hopes, they constructed a raft on which they ventured themselves, with their provisions and property. The raft, badly framed, struck against the branch of a sunken tree, and upset, all their effects perishing in the waves, and the whole party being plunged into the water. Thanks to the little breadth of the river at this place no one was drowned, Madame Godin being happily saved, after twice sinking, by her brothers. Placed now in a situation still more distressing than before, they collectively resolved on tracing the course of the river along its banks. How difficult an enterprise this was, you, Sir, are well aware, who know how thickly the banks of the rivers are beset with trees, underwood, herbage

and lianas, and that it is often necessary to cut one's way. They returned to their hut, took what provisions they had left behind, and began their journey. By keeping along the river's side, they found its sinuosities greatly lengthened their way, to avoid which inconvenience they penetrated the wood, and in a few days they lost themselves. Wearied with so many days' march in the midst of woods, incommodious even for those accustomed to them, their feet torn by thorns and brambles, their provisions exhausted, and dying with thirst, they were fain to subsist on a few seeds, wild fruit, and the palm cabbage. At length, oppressed with hunger and thirst, with lassitude and loss of strength, they seated themselves on the ground without the power of rising, and, waiting thus the approach of death, in three or four days expired one after the other. Madame Godin, stretched on the ground by the side of the corpses of her brothers and other companions, stupified, delirious, and tormented with choking thirst, at length assumed resolution and strength enough to drag herself along in search of the deliverance which providentially awaited her. Such was her deplorable condition, she was without shoes, and her clothes all torn to rags. She cut the shoes off her brothers' feet, and fastened the soles on her own. It was about the period, between the 25th and 30th of December 1769, that this unfortunate party (at least seven of the number of them) perished in this miserable manner; the date I gather by what I learn from the only survivor, who related that it was nine days after she quitted the scene of the wretched catastrophe described before she reached the banks of the Bobonasa. Doubtless this interval must have

appeared to her of great length; and how a female so delicately educated, and in such a state of want and exhaustion, could support her distress, though but half the time, appears most wonderful. She assured me that she was ten days alone in the wood, two awaiting death by the side of her brothers, the other eight wandering at random. The remembrance of the shocking spectacle she witnessed, the horror incident on her solitude and the darkness of night in a desert, the perpetual apprehension of death, which every instant served to augment, had such effect on her spirits as to cause her hair to turn grey. On the second day's march, the distance necessarily inconsiderable, she found water, and the succeeding day some wild fruit and fresh eggs, of what bird she knew not, but which, by her description, I conjecture to have been a species of partridge. These with the greatest difficulty was she enabled to swallow, the œsophagus, owing to the want of aliment, having become so much parched and straitened; but these and other food she accidentally met with, sufficed to support her skeleton frame. At length, and not before it was indispensable, arrived the succour designed for her by Providence.

Were it told in a romance that a female of delicate habit, accustomed to all the comforts of life, had been precipitated into a river; that, after being withdrawn when on the point of drowning, this female, the eighth of a party, had penetrated into unknown and pathless woods, and travelled in them for weeks, not knowing whither she directed her steps; that, enduring hunger, thirst, and fatigue to very exhaustion, she should have seen her two brothers, far more robust than her, a nephew yet

a youth, three young women her servants, and a young man, the domestic left by the physician who had gone on before, all expire by her side, and she yet survive; that, after remaining by their corpses two whole days and nights, in a country abounding in tigers and numbers of dangerous serpents, without once seeing any of these animals or reptiles, she should afterwards have strength to rise, and continue her way, covered with tatters, through the same pathless wood for eight days together till she reached the banks of the Bobonasa, the author would be charged with inconsistency; but the historian should paint facts to his reader, and this is nothing but the truth. The truth of this marvellous tale is attested by original letters in my hands, from many missionaries on the Amazons, who felt an interest in this event, and by other proofs, as will be seen in the sequel of this narrative. These misfortunes would have been avoided altogether but for the infidelity of Tristan, but for his neglect, instead of stopping at Loreto, of delivering, as instructed, in person, my letters to the Superior at Laguna; with this precaution, on his part, my wife would, as her father had done, have found the village of Canelos peopled with natives, and a canoe ready to convey her forward.

To return, it was on the eighth or ninth day, according to Madame Godin, after leaving the dreadful scene of the death of her companions, that she found herself on the banks of the Bobonasa. At day-break she heard a noise at about two hundred paces from her. Her first emotions, which were those of terror, occasioned her to strike into the wood; but, after a moment's reflection,

satisfied that nothing worse could possibly befall her, than to continue in her present state, and that alarm was therefore childish, she proceeded to the bank of the river, and perceived two native Americans launching a boat into the stream. It is the custom of these people, on their landing to pass the night, to draw their canoe either wholly, or partially on shore, as a security against accidents; for, should it be left afloat, and the fastening tackle break, it would be carried away by the current, and leave the sleepers on shore in a truly helpless state. The natives, perceiving Madame Godin, advanced towards her, on which she conjured them to transport her to Andoas. They had been driven by the contagion prevalent at Canelos, to withdraw with their wives to a hut they had at a distance, and were then going to Andoas. They received my wife on board with kindness truly affectionate, showed every attention to her wants, and conducted her to that village. Here she might have stopped some days to rest herself and recruit her strength, (and well may it be conceived she had great need of rest), but, indignant at the conduct of the missionary at whose mercy she was left, and with whom for that reason she was obliged to dissemble, she resolved on making no stay at Andoas, nor would even have stopped a single night had it been possible to avoid it.

A great revolution in the missions of Spanish America dependent upon Lima, Quito, Charcas, and Paraguay, founded and administered by the Jesuits, for from one to two centuries, had recently taken place. An unexpected order from the court of Madrid expelled them from all their colleges and missions; they had in consequence

been every where arrested, put on board, and transported to the Pope's dominions. This event, however, had occasioned no more disturbance than would have done the change of a village-rector. In lieu of them, the secular clergy were substituted, of which class was the individual who officiated as missionary at Andoas, an individual whose name I wish to banish from my memory. Madame Godin, stripped of almost every thing, not knowing otherwise how to testify her gratitude to the two Americans who had saved her life, took from her neck two chains of gold, such as are usually worn in this country, of about four ounces weight, and gave one to each of them, whose admiration at the richness of the present equalled that they would have experienced had the heavens opened before them; but the missionary, in her very presence, took possession of the chains, and gave the poor Americans in their room about three or four yards of coarse cotton, such as is manufactured in the country, and called Tucuyo. Conduct thus infamous exasperated my wife to such a degree, that she instantly demanded a canoe and men, and the next day set out for Laguna. A female American at Andoas made a cotton petticoat for her, which she sent to pay for immediately on reaching Laguna, and which she preserves with care, with the soles of the shoes of her brothers, converted by her into sandals—mournful tokens, rendered dear to me as they are to herself!

While my wife was yet wandering in the woods, her faithful negro, with a party of Americans from Andoas, ascended the river. M. R. thinking more of his own affairs than forwarding the boat which should recal his benefactors to life, scarcely reached

Andoas before he departed with his companion and baggage for Omaguas. The negro, on reaching the hut where he left his mistress and her brothers, traced them through the woods, in company with his companions, until he came to the spot where their corpses laid, already putrid and unrecognizable. At sight of these, persuaded that no one had escaped death, the negro and his companions returned to the hut, collected what had been left there, and again reached at Andoas before my wife arrived there. The negro thence repaired to M. R. at Omaguas, and delivered to him the property of his mistress. This man was not ignorant that M. Grandmaison, who had reached Loreto, awaited there with impatience the arrival of his children. A letter in my possession even proves that my father-in-law, informed that the negro Joachim was at Omaguas, advised Tristan to repair thither and bring him forward; but neither Tristan nor M. R. thought fit to satisfy him, and so far from complying with his request, M. R., of his own accord, sent the negro back to Quito, keeping the property he had brought back with him.

"You know, Sir, that Laguna is not situate on the Amazons, but some leagues up the Guallaga, a tributary of the former river. Joachim, dismissed by M. R., did not in course proceed to Laguna in search of his mistress, whom he imagined dead, but returned to Quito, and thus have we lost his services. You will certainly be far from guessing the excuse of M. R. for sending away a faithful servant, who was so much wanted by us. "I was afraid," said he in answer to this inquiry, "that he would murder me."—"What," replied

I, "could have given birth to a suspicion of such intention in a man whose zeal and fidelity were so well known to you, and with whom you so long had travelled? If you apprehended he might dislike you, from imputing the death of his mistress to your negligence, what prevented your sending him forward to M. Grandmaison, who exacted this of you, and who was so nigh at hand? At least, what hindered your putting him in prison? You lodged with the governor of Omaguas, who would readily have complied, had you made him such a request."

In the mean time, Madame Godin, with the canoe and crew from Andoas, had reached Laguna, where they were received with the greatest politeness by Dr Romero, the new chief of the missions, who, by his kind treatment during six weeks that she remained with him, did much towards reestablishing her health, but too much impaired, and making her forget her misfortunes. The first care of this respectable character was, to forward an express to the governor of Omaguas, to inform him of the arrival of Madame Godin, and the languid state of her health. Upon this intelligence, M. R. could do no less, having promised to render her his services, than hasten to join her, bringing with him four silver dishes, a silver saucepan, a velvet petticoat, one of Persiana, and one of taffety, some linen, and other trifles, belonging to her brothers as well as herself; adding, that all the rest were rotten, forgetting that bracelets, snuff-boxes, and rosaries of gold, and ear-rings set with emeralds, were not subject to rottenness, any more than various other effects. "Had you," said Madame Godin, "had you

brought back my negro, I should have learnt from him what he had done with my property found in the hut. But of whom, respecting it, am I now to inquire? Go your ways, Sir; it is impossible that I can ever forget that, to you, I owe all my misfortunes and all my losses; manage henceforward as you may, I am determined you shall make no part of my company." My wife had but too much reason on her side, but the intercessions of M. Romero, to whom she could refuse nothing, and who represented to her that, if she abandoned M. R., his condition would be deplorable, at length overcame her repugnance, and induced her to consent he should yet continue with her.

When Madame Godin was somewhat recovered, M. Romero wrote to M. Grandmaison, informing him that she was out of danger, and requesting him to despatch Tristan to accompany her to the Portuguese vessel. He likewise wrote to the governor, acquainting him that he had represented to Madame Godin, whose courage and piety he could never sufficiently admire, that she was yet merely at the beginning of a long and tedious voyage; and that, though she had already travelled upwards of four hundred leagues, she had yet four or five times that distance to pass before she reached Cayenne; that, but just relieved from the perils of death, she was about to incur fresh danger; concluding with offering, if she chose to return, to cause her to be escorted back in perfect security to her residence of Riobamba. To these he added, that Madame Godin replied, "She was surprised at his proposals; that the Almighty had preserved her when alone amid perils in which all her for-

mer companions had perished; that the first of her wishes was to rejoin her husband; that for this purpose she had begun her journey; and, were she to cease to prosecute her intention, that she should esteem herself guilty of counteracting the views of Providence, and render useless the assistance she had received from her two dear Americans and their wives, as well as all the kindness for which she was indebted to him, and for which God alone could recompense them." My wife was ever dear to me, but sentiments like these add veneration to tenderness. Tristan failing to arrive when expected, M. Romero, wearied with waiting for him in vain, equipped a canoe, and gave directions for the transport of Madame Godin, without halting any where, to the Portuguese vessel. Then it was that the governor of Omaguas, knowing of her coming, and that she was to stop no where by the way, despatched a canoe to met her, loaded with refreshments.

The Portuguese commander, M. de Rebello, hearing of her approach, fitted out a pirogue, commanded by two of his men, and stored with provisions, to meet her, which they did at the village of Pevas. This officer, the better to fulfil the orders of his master, with great labour, and by doubling the number of oars, worked his vessel up the river as high as the mission of Loreto, where he received her on board. I learn from her, that from that instant till she reached Oyapok, throughout a course of nearly a thousand leagues, she wanted for nothing to render her comfortable, not even the nicest delicacies, and such as could not be expected in the country; wine and liquors which she never uses, fish, game, &c. were supplied by

two canoes which preceded the galliot. The governor of Para, moreover, had sent orders to the chief part of the stages at which they had to halt, with additional refreshments.

I forgot to mention, that the sufferings of my wife were not at an end, and that one of her thumbs was in a very bad state, owing to its being wounded by thorns in the wood, which had not yet been extricated, and which had not only occasioned an abscess, but had injured the tendon and even the bone itself. It was proposed to take off the thumb, but, by dint of care and fermentations, she had only the pain to undergo occasioned by the extraction of two splinters at San Pablo, but she entirely lost the use of the tendon. The galliot continued its course to the fortress of Curupa about sixty leagues above Para. M. de Martel, knight of the Order of Christ, and major of the garrison of Para, arrived there the succeeding day, by order of the governor, to take command of the galliot, and conduct Madame Godin to Fort Oyapok. A little beyond the mouth of the river, at a spot off the coast where the currents are very violent, he lost one of his anchors; and as it would have been imprudent to venture with only one, he sent a boat to Oyapok, to seek assistance, which was immediately forwarded. Hearing by this means of the approach of Madame Godin, I left Oyapok on board a galliot belonging to me, in view of meeting her; and, on the fourth day of my departure, fell in with her vessel opposite to Mayacare. On board this vessel, after twenty years' absence, and a long endurance on either side of alarms and misfortunes, I again met with a cherished wife, whom I had almost given over every

hope of seeing again. In her embraces I forgot the loss of the fruits of our union, nay, I even congratulated myself on their premature death, as it saved them from the dreadful fate which befel their uncle in the wood of Canelos beneath their mother's eye, who certainly could never have survived the sight. We anchored at Oyapok the 22d July 1770. I found in M. Murtel an officer as much distinguished by his acquirements as by his prepossessing exterior. He has acquaintance with most of the languages of Europe, is an excellent Latinist, and well calculated to shine on a more extensive scene than Para. He is a descendant of the illustrious French family of similar name. I had the pleasure of his company for a fortnight at Oyapok, whither M. de Fiedmont, governor of Cayenne, whom the commandant of Oyapok, advised of his arrival by express, immediately despatched in a boat with refreshments. We caused the Portuguese vessel to undergo a repair, which it much wanted, and refitted it with sails to enable it to stem the currents on its return. The commandant of Oyapok gave M. Martel, moreover, a coast-pilot, to accompany him to the frontiers. I offered to go so far as his consort on board my galliot, but he would suffer me to proceed no farther than Cape D'Orange. I took my leave of him with those feelings which the polite attention and noble behaviour of that officer and his generous nation were so well calculated to inspire in me, as well as my wife, a conduct on the part of either, which I was led to expect from what I had individually experienced on my former voyage.

I should previously have told you that, when I descended the Amazons in 1749, with no other

recommendation to the notice of the Portuguese than arose from the remembrance of the intimation afforded by you in 1743, that one of the companions of your travels would follow the same way, I was received in all the Portuguese settlements, by the missionaries and commandants of the forts, with the utmost courtesy. On passing San Pablo I purchased a canoe, in which I descended the river to Fort Curupa, whence I wrote to the governor of Grand Para, M. Francis Mendoza Gorjad, to acquaint him of my arrival, and beg permission of sailing from Curupa to Cayenne, whither I intended to repair direct. He favoured me with so polite an answer, that I made no hesitation of quitting my intended cruise and taking a longer, in order to thank him and pay him my respects. He received me with open arms, and insisted on my making his house and table my own during a week that I stopped with him; nor would he suffer me to depart before he set off himself for St. Louis de Marinhan, whither he was about to go on his circuit. After his departure, I remounted the river to Curupa with my canoe, escorted by one of greater dimensions, sent with me by the commandant of that fort on my voyage to Para, a city which, as you have justly remarked, stands on a large river, considered, but improperly, the right arm of the Amazons, as the river of Para merely communicates with the Amazons by a channel hollowed by the tides, and called Tagipuru. At Curupa I found waiting for me, by order of the governor of Para, a large pirogue of fourteen oars, commanded by a serjeant of the garrison, and destined to carry me to Cayenne, whither I repaired by Macapa, coasting along the left of the Amazons

to its mouth, without, like you, making tour of the great island of Joanes, or Marajo. After similar courtesies, unprovoked by express recommendations, what had I not to expect, seeing his Most Faithful Majesty had condescended to issue precise orders to expedite a vessel to the very frontiers of his dominions, for the purpose of receiving my family on board, and transporting it to Cayenne?

To resume my narrative.—After taking leave of M. de Martel off Cape D'Orange with those reciprocal salutes common with sailors, I returned to Oyapok, and thence to Cayenne.

Here I was engaged in a lawsuit. Tristan demanded of me the wages I had promised him of sixty livres per month. I offered to pay him for eighteen months, the utmost time the voyage could have required, had he strictly followed his instructions. The sentence pronounced by the superior council of Cayenne condemned him to render me an account of from seven to eight thousand franks, the value of effects I had committed to his care, deducting one thousand and eighty for the eighteen months's salary I had offered him; but the wretch, after dealing treacherously with me as he had done, after causing the death of eight persons, including the American who was drowned, and all the misfortunes which befel my wife; in short, after dissipating the whole of the effects I had intrusted with him, proved insolvent; and, for my part, I judged it unnecessary to augment the losses I had already sustained by having to support him in prison.

I conceive, Sir, that I have now complied to the full with your request. The narrative I have given, by recalling the mournful scenes I have de-

picted, has cost me infinite anguish. The lawsuit with Tristan, and the illness of my wife on reaching Cayenne, a consequence but too natural of the sufferings she had undergone, did not admit of my venturing to expose her earlier than the present year (1773), to so long a voyage by sea. At present she is, with her father, in the midst of my family, by whom they have been tenderly received. M. de Grandmaison had originally no intention of proceeding to France, but merely meant, by his voyage, to see his daughter safe on board the Portuguese vessel; but finding old age creep on apace, and penetrated with the most lively grief at the intelligence of the sad death of his children, he abandoned all, and embarked with her, trusting the care of his property to his other son-in-law, M. Savula, who resides at Riobamba. For my wife, however solicitous all about her to enliven her spirits, she is constantly subject to melancholy, her horrible misfortunes being ever present to her imagination. How much did it cost me to obtain from her the relations requisite for the judges in the course of my lawsuit! I can even readily conceive that, from delicacy, she has abstained from entering into many details, the remembrance of which she was anxious to lose, and which, known, could but add to the pain I feel. Nay she was even anxious that I should not prosecute Tristan, compassionating even that wretch; thus following the gentle impulse of a heart inspired with the purest benevolence, and the genuine principles of religion!

THE END.