

VIII. *An Account of a prodigiously large Feather of the Bird Cuntur, brought from Chili, and supposed to be a kind of Vultur; and of the Coffee-Shrub. By Hans Sloane, M. D. S. R. S.*

THE Magnitude ascribed to the *Cuntur* of *Peru*, as well as its great force and strength, have been the cause that many have doubted its Being. Capt. *John Strong*, Commander of a Ship which went into the South Seas, through the Straights of *Magellan*, and returned after 23 Months Voyage in the Year 1691. gave me this Account, together with a Wing or Quill-Feather of the Bird: That on the Coast of *Chili* they had met with this Bird in about 33°. S. Lat. not far from *Mocha*, an Island in the South Seas, and before they came at a place called *Herradura*: That his Men were very much amazed at the bigness of it, and that after they had killed it, it was 16 Foot from Wing to Wing extended. The *Spanish* Inhabitants there told them, it was the *Cuntur*, and that they were afraid of these Birds, lest they should Prey on, or injure their Children. The Feather he gave me is 2 Foot 4 Inches long, the Quill-part is 5 Inches $\frac{1}{2}$ long, an Inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ about in the largest part, which is of about $\frac{1}{2}$ Inch Diameter; it weighed 3 Drams 17 Grains and $\frac{1}{2}$, and was of a dark brown colour, very hollow or concave on one side, and convex on the other. The Seamen shot it sitting on a Cliff by the Sea-side, and eat it, not being very nice, and taking it for a sort of Turkey, which I suppose they did on some similitude there was between this and Turkeys; in which mistake likewise the first comers to *Jamaica* were with

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with a Bird in that place, called a Carrion-Crow, which is a sort of Vultur, of which kind I believe this is. But lest this should appear Romantick, it will not be amiss to set down the words of *Joseph Acosta* and *Inca Garcilasso de la Vega* about it, omitting those of *Delaet Ind. Occidental. Lib. X. Cap. 5.* being only copied from the former.

Contrariwise (*to the Humming-Birds, or Tomineios, of which he was speaking*) those which they call *Condorez*, be of an exceeding greatness, and of such a force, that not only they will open a Sheep and eat it, but also a whole Calf. *Joseph Acosta, Natural and Moral History of the Indies, lib. 4. cap. 37.*

There are other Fowls which we may reckon with those of Prey, which are of a large size, called *Cuntur*, and by the *Spaniards* corruptedly *Condor*. Many of these Fowls having been killed by the *Spaniards*, had their Proportion taken, and from one point of their Wing to the other measured 15 or 16 Foot, which being reduced to Yards, makes 5 Yards and a Third. Nature to temper and allay their Fierceness, denied them the Talons which are given to the Eagle, having their Feet tipped with Claws like a Hen; howsoever their Beak is strong enough to tear off the Hide, and rip up the Bowels of an Ox. Two of them will attempt a Cow or Bull, and devour him; and it hath often happened that one of them alone hath assaulted Boys of Ten or Twelve Years of Age, and eaten them. Their colour is black and white like a Magpye; it is well that they are but few in number, for if they were many, they would very much destroy the Cattel. They have on the fore-part of their Heads a Comb, not pointed like that of a Cock, but rather even in the form of a Razor. When they come to alight from the Air, they make such a humming noise with the fluttering of their Wings, as is enough to astonish or make a Man deaf.

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Inca Garcilasso de la Vega Royal Comm. Tom. 1. Lib. 8. Cap. 19.

The Figure, Description, and Account of the Coffee-Shrub which are hitherto published, being in some Particulars defective, it was thought convenient to have them mended, by giving a Figure and Description of it, taken from a dried Branch brought from *Moba* in *Arabia Fælix* by Mr. *Edward Clyve*, who as he was the first who has brought any of its Branches and Leaves into these Parts, he very frankly gave leave to take a Figure of it, and likewise imparted the other Particulars in this short Account to Oblige the Curious in these Matters.

This Branch, which was taken off a Tree seven or eight Foot high, is about five Foot long, and covered with a gray almost smooth Bark: The Wood is white, and the Pith not very large; the Twigs are covered with a darker colour'd very smooth Bark, and arise opposite to one another by pairs, standing cross to one another, coming out of opposite sides of the Branch, or the two pairs next to one another, cutting each other at right Angles. After the same manner stand the Leaves on the Twigs, as the Twigs on the Branches, at sometimes an Inch, and sometimes two Inches distance each pair of Leaves from the other: The Leaves have $\frac{1}{2}$ Inch foot-stalks, being about four Inches long and two broad in the middle where broadest; whence they decrease to both extreams, ending in a point. They are smooth, whole, and without any incisures on their edges, somewhat like the Leaves of a Bay. The Fruit comes *ex alis foliorum* hanging or sticking to the Twig by $\frac{1}{2}$ Inch long strings or foot-stalks, and sometimes 1, 2, or more at the same place. For the Fruit and outward Husk, &c. they are already well described by others, only it will not be amiss to give this further Account of these Shrubs. That they are Planted in *Arabia Fælix*, called *Jaman*, every where in a Rich Ground or Mold

in great plenty, and that they are watered in times of Drought as other cultivated Vegetables there by Artificial Channels from Rivers cut on purpose to nourish them; and that after 3, 4, or more years bearing, the Inhabitants are forced to Plant new Shrubs, because the old ones become not so Fruitful after that time. It is likewise worth taking notice, that in those Parts they dry them in the Sun, and afterwards take off the outward Husk of the Berries by means of Hand-Mills, as they do here the Husks of several sorts of Grain, to fit them for use; and that the *Arabians* themselves in Summer heats use these Husks roasted after the manner of Coffee-berries, esteeming that Drink more cooling, it being sourish to the taste.

A. A. Represents the Shrub, wherein is observable the manner of its branching, and of the growing of the Leaves and Fruit.

a. a. a. a. The Fruit growing 2, 3, or more at a place on the Twigs.

B. One of the Leaves of the Natural bigness.

C. C. The Fruit of the true size and figure.

c. c. The Fruit with the Husk on.

e. e. The Fruit with the outward Husk taken off.

i. i. The Berry with both the Husks off.





