



A French Abbot Writes About Jaribots, Tonibrots, Baricot Trees, And Birds That Carry Men On Their Backs!

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them, fearing them (as 'tis believed) by their Cries, which are not unlike the crowing of our Cocks, tho' a hundred Times louder; for in a still Night I have heard them ten Leagues. But what is indeed astonishing, is, that tho' these Birds are of so huge a Size, yet their Eggs are no bigger than Goose Eggs; which makes the Portugueze say the same thing of them that, by way of Admiration, is said of the Crocodile; *Sic crescit ab Ovo!* The Governor has a Tame one, that has been taught to fly with a Man upon his Back who guides him with a little Cord that is drawn through his Beak. They say this Bird with this Weight on his Back would fly full twenty Leagues an Hour, if a Man should take a Fancy to ride Post on so odd a Sort of a Hackney. He carries a Man with as much Ease, as a Falcon trusses a Pigeon. I have been an Eye-Witness of this Prodigy, which is in my Opinion the most wonderfull thing here.

The Surprising Jaribots

And yet the Jaribots are scarce less surprising, they are the little Savages that dwell on the Tops of the Mountains; their bodies are very often covered with thick Hair, as long as that of a Goat; but they have none on their Face nor Hands. Their Feet are like ours, except the Soles, which are armed with a callous or horny Substance, thick as a Horses Hoof; the tallest of these Dwarfs are not eighteen Inches high, they live sociably together like other Men, their chief Occupation is Hunting by which they get their Food, they likewise eat the Kernels of little Apples. Their drink is Water, in which they bruise Strawberries and red Gooseberries, of which they have plenty in the Woods and Mountains. They are continually at War with the large blue-tailed Baboons. The Europeans who traffick to this Coast, bring them pocket Pistols, with which they fright the Baboons, and even kill some of them. These little Moppets are as fierce as Lions, they breed up animals like our Foxes, and of the same Size on which they ride a-hunting over the most craggy Rocks, and along the Sides of the steepest Mountains. They keep Kennels of Animals of the Shape and Size of the Weasel, with these they hunt the Mountain Rats, and take more of them, than our Sportsmen do of Hares, with their Hounds and Greyhounds; these rats are as good to eat as Rabbits, nay, I think they have a more exquisite Taste.

They have a sort of Sacrificers, who alone are set apart and appointed to take the whole Care of their Religious Worship, for none but they who have taken that Office upon them ever pray to their Gods. They hold that the Care of Religion, and serving the Gods, ought to be left to those, who having devoted themselves entirely to it, discharge the Duty more worthily than the rest, and therefore when any Misfortune befalls them, they lay the Blame of all on their Tonibrots, for so they call their Sacrificers, who (say they), have not faithfully perform'd their Duty, and therefore this Mischief has happen'd to us. In these Occasions they cut them short of their Allowance of Provisions; for you must know they are maintained at the Publick Expense, that they may be the better able to discharge the Duties of their Function. For this Reason lest a Woman should be any Hinderance to them therein, they suffer them not to come into their Company, and when they catch a Tonibrot with a Woman, they punish him in a pleasant Manner; they take the Leaves of Trees, and make as near as they can the Figure of a Woman, then they bind the Tonibrot to that, and both together to a Tree, where they leave the Lecher to mortify his Flesh till he be dead with Hunger.

The Olive Oil Lake

At the Foot of the Mountain, where dwell the Dwarfs, there is a Lake two Leagues broad and six long. The Water of it is very clear after Noon, but from Morning till then, the Surface of it is covered with an Unctious Liquor, nothing different in Colour or Taste from Oil of Olives. They gather it up every Morning, and put it in Barrels to keep it all the Year, for this Manna is never found but in the Month of May. They eat it in their Sallads, and use it instead of Butter to their Sauce for Fish. 'Tis not known from whence this Miracle in Nature proceeds. In this Lake they take a Sort of Fish a Foot and a-half long, much like a Trout; and this Fish, nourishing itself with the Oily Liquor that swims on the Water, carries its Sauce with it; for whether it be fry'd, boil'd or roasted, 'tis no sooner cut up, than it fills the dish with so delicious a Juice or Gravy, that there needs nothing else to make it go down. This Fish is called Loutari.

These, my dear Friend, are all the most remarkable Things I have observ'd here, not thinking it worth while to trouble you with what you may read in other accounts.

Yours, ———

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