

IV. *A description of a new kind of Walnut tree, discovered by Monsieur Reneaume, of the Royal Academy of Sciences.*

THe Walnut-tree, which the Greeks called sometimes *Χάσση Βασιλική*, and sometimes *Περσική*, in Latin *Nux Juglans sive Regia*, is a Tree known to every Body. 'Tis described by very many Authors, who (nevertheless) seem to have known but six Species of it, tho' I can reckon nine. They confounded (unless I'm deceiv'd) with the *common sort*, that which the Country people call *Noix Anglaises*, which one may call *Nux Juglans putamine durissimo*, which appears to me to be that which in *Hermolans*, and in the *Historia Lugdunensis* is called *Moratia moracillæ*, and which *Cæsalpin* calls *Surdæ*.

I don't see that the same Authors have distinguished another Species, which might be called *Nux Juglans fructu præcoci*, because they are sooner ripe than the others, and eaten about the Feast of *St John en Cerneaux*, which has given them, amongst the Country people, the name of *Noix Joannettes*. As for that species I am to treat upon, I can't find any Author that knew of it, and therefore I shall call it *Nux Juglans, folio eleganter dissecto*, or *Acanthi-folia*.

I shall not speak of the uses of the Walnut-tree, nor of its Fruit, which it yields in great plenty. I will only say, that the Oil which is pressed out of it, in certain Provinces is used instead of Butter and Oil-Olive. In *Berry*, where they have very good Wool, and where they Trade very much in Cattle, they have yet but very little Butter; and that little which they have is worth nothing, and is very dear; so that they use Nut-Oil in dressing

dreſſing their meat to eat. For this Reaſon, there are an infinite number of Walnut-trees planted in the middle of the Plough'd-lands, in ſuch fort, that aſar off one would take theſe Lands for Woods of Walnut-trees.

The want of theſe Trees in this Country obliges the Inhabitants to cultivate them, and they take care to nourish them in a particular places, as in a ſort of Nurſery, in order to plant them aſreſh when they die, whether it be of Age (which is rare) or whether they decay, or that they are fell'd, for the Wood to workwith.

The laſt *Autumn*, I being gone to ſee one of my Kinſmen, who was at his Countrey houſe, two Leagues from *Selles in Berry*, in the Pariſh of *Lis*, as I walked in an Orchard looking upon ſome Plants, near a place where they bred up a vaſt number of young Walnut-trees, I perceiv'd in the middle, a ſort of Leaf (or foliage) which I had never taken notice of before. I went thither forthwith (with much eagernels) and having examin'd it, as I knew not the ſubſtance of this Leaf, I taſted it. The taſte, ſmell, wood and figure of the Tree, perſwaded me to believe that it was a Walnut-tree, and I concluded that this was one, tho I did not remember that I had ever read, or heard of any ſort like this.

This Tree is very young, and did never yet bear any Fruit, perhaps, becauſe it may be (*in a manner*) choak'd up, and that there is neither air nor nourishment enough, by reaſon of the great number of other Walnut-trees, which grow round about it. It is near ſix foot high, and two inches Diameter at the bottom. 'Tis adorned at the top with many branches, and (as the Country people ſaid) was about eight or nine years old, and that they had always found its Leaves like thoſe which I ſaw.

I cut off a little Branch of it, but having no Paper or Book with me, I cou'd not preſerve the Leaves ſo well as I wiſh'd.

The (*common*) Walnut-tree bears its Leaves by pairs, upon a stalk which terminates with a like Leaf, that is ordinarily bigger than the rest: And it has very seldom above three pairs upon each stalk.

This has sometimes four or five pairs, and sometimes more, which are one while opposite, another while alternate, altho its Leaves appear smaller than those of the common Walnut-tree, because of the Cuttings or *Slashes*. They are nevertheless as big, if one minds their circumference taken from the extremities of these *Slashes*.

The first Pair, and sometimes the second are less *cut* than the rest, being so only upon the circumference: but the others are cut so deep, that it looks as if the Nerve in the middle of the Leaf was only a stalk. And the *Cuts* of the Leaves are sometimes by pairs, sometimes single on one side. These Leaves are sometimes forked at the end, and sometimes end with a point. There are also some places, where it looks as if the Leaf was torn on purpose, almost like the *Angelica Canadensis, foliis quasi præmorsis*. There are others, where it seems that they are double, as if the Stalk or the Nerve was Winged, just as the Winged Stems or Trunks or *Caules alati*.

All these Cuts and Slashes are not like Indentures or Notches, but finish with a Round. And notwithstanding all these Irregularities, they look so pretty, that I can't compare them better (*to any thing*) than those Wrought Leaves, which serve for ornaments to the Painters, almost like those which adorn the Capital of (*Columns of*) the *Corinthian Order*, or that which in Heraldry they call *the Mantles*, or that which the Botanists term *Acante* or *Branch Ursine*, which is the first Original of this sort of Ornament.

I will add here, by the by, that *Dalechamp* has observ'd an aerial Honey of a yellowish Colour, upon the Leaves of a Walnut-tree, during the greatest Heats of the Summer. Which can be nothing but an effect of the
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Transpiration of this Tree, as of all other (*Trees*) wherein the same thing is to be found, as I have had the Honour to prove, in speaking of the Sycamore the last year.

I have desired that they would let me have some of the first Fruits of this Tree, in order to be entirely convinced that its Nature is altogether that of the Walnut-tree.

I shall endeavour, one day, to publish a System for explaining these Slashes, as well as those of all other Plants in general.

V. *An Abstract of a Letter, wrote some time since, by Signior John Ciampini of Rome, to Father Bernard Joseph a Jesu Maria, &c. concerning the Asbestus, and manner of spinning and making an incombustible Cloath thereof.*

After some account of the Name of the *Asbestus* Stone, he mentions four sorts, of which he has Specimens in his *Museum*. The first sent him from *Corfica* or *Corfu*, long, of a woody form, of half a palm length and more, of a whitish colour, something inclining to a reddish. The second of a Silverish Lead colour, softer and shorter, about three inches, this was from *Sestri di Ponente* in *Liguria*. The third (which is the worst of all) is like Scales or *Laminae* one upon another (as he represents it like an Onion) of a blackish earth colour, with some white, black and dark red veins interspersed, scarce two parts of an inch *Roman* long, therefore fitter for making of Paper, than spinning or weaving. The fourth sort, given him by Signior *Boccone*, found in the *Pyreneans*, some whereof were a *Roman* Palm long; its filaments, the long