

INDIGO, in botany. See INDIGOFERA.
INDIGOFERA, in botany, a genus of the diadelphia
decandria class. The calix is plain; the superior mar-
gins

gins of the alæ are connivent, and of the same shape with the vexillum; and the pod is strait. There are six species, all of them natives of the Indies. The tinctoria, anil, or indigo, grows about two feet high, with roundish leaves.

As to the indigo blue, it is a secular, or settling, made by means of water and oil olive out of the leaves of the anil, or indigo plant; there is a difference between that made by the leaves only, and that which is made of the leaves and small branches. The choicest of the former sort is that which bears the surname of Serquiffe, from a village of that name some leagues from Surat in the East-Indies. It is made also about Biana and Cossa near Agra; and also in the kingdom of Golconda. In making the feculæ of anil, in order to make indigo of it, they cut the herb with a sickle, when the leaves begin to fall upon touching them; and after they have stripped them from the branches, they put them into a sufficient quantity of water in a vessel called the steeping vat; and let them infuse there thirty or thirty-five hours; after which they turn the cock, in order to let the water run off, which is become of a green colour inclining towards blue, into a vessel of the nature of a churn, where it is worked by means of a roller or turner of wood, the ends of which are pointed and faced with iron: this they work till the water abounds with a lather; then they cast into it a little oil of olive, that is, one pound into such a quantity of the liquor as will yield seventy pounds of indigo, such as is saleable; and as soon as the said oil is thrown in, the lather separates into two parts, so that you may observe a quantity curdled as milk is when ready to break; then they cease working, and let it stand to settle; which when it has done some time, they open the pipe or cock of the vessel, in order to let the water clear off, that the feculæ which is subsided may remain behind at the bottom of the vessel like the lees of wine. Then taking it out, they put it into straining bags of cloth, to separate what water was left; after which they convey it into chests or boxes that are shallow, to dry it; and being dried, it is what we call indigo.

Chuse the indigo of Serquiffe in flat cakes, of a moderate thicknes, neither too soft nor too hard, of a deep violet colour, light, and such as swims on water, and when broken has no white spots in it; and lastly, such as is copperish or reddish on being rubbed with one's nail, and has the least dust and broken pieces in it.

The other sort of indigo is also the feculæ made from the anil; and differs nothing from the former, but as it is made of the whole plant, stalk and leaf; the best of which kind is that which bears the name Guatimala, that comes from the West Indies. In chusing this indigo, it should be as near the other kind as can be; but the surest proof of its goodness is its burning upon the fire like wax, and leaving only a little ashes behind. The second sort of indigo is that of St Domingo, differing nothing from the Guatimala, only that it is not of so lively a colour; the third is the Jamaica indigo; the fourth is that of the Leeward

islands; all which are better or worse, according as they are more or less neat and pure.

The use of the indigo is for the the dyer and landresses, serving the last to put among their linen. The painters use it to grind with white for painting in blue; for if it is used alone and neat, it turns black; ground with yellow, it makes a green: some confectioners and apothecaries preposterously use this to colour sugars with which to make conserves and syrup of violets, by adding some orice.