

(1.) \*INDIGO. *n. f.* [*indicum*, Latin.] A plant, by the Americans called anil.—In the middle of the flower is the style, which afterward becomes a jointed pod, containing one cylindrical seed in one partition, from which indigo is made, which is used in dyeing for a blue colour. *Miller.*

(2.) INDIGO is a dye prepared from the leaves and small branches of the *Indigofera Tinctoria*. (See the next article.) Indigo is of two kinds, made from two different plants, the *true* and the *bastard*. (See N° 3.) Though the first is sold at a higher price on account of its superiority, it is usually advantageous to cultivate the other, because it is heavier. The first will grow in many different soils; the 2d succeeds best in those which are most exposed to the rain. Both are liable to great accidents. Sometimes the plant becomes dry, and is destroyed by an insect frequently found on it; at other times, the leaves which are the valuable part of the plant, are devoured in the space of 24 hours by caterpillars. This production ought to be gathered in with great precaution, for fear of making the farina that lies on the leaves, and is very valuable, fall off by shaking it. The plants when gathered are thrown into the steeping vat, which is a large tub filled with water, where in they undergo a fermentation, which in 24 hours at furthest is completed. A cock is then turned, to let the water run into the *mortar* or *pounding tub*. The steeping vat is then cleaned out, that fresh plants may be thrown in; and thus the work is continued without interruption. The water which has run into the pounding tub is found impregnated with a very subtil earth, which constitutes the *dregs* or blue substance that is the object of this process, and which must be se-

VOL. XII. PART I.

parated from the useless salt of the plant, because this makes the dregs swim on the surface. To effect this, the water is forcibly agitated with wooden buckets, full of holes and fixed to a long handle. This part of the process requires great caution. If the agitation be discontinued too soon, the part that is used in dyeing, not being sufficiently separated from the salt, would be lost. If, on the other hand, the dye were to be agitated too long after the complete separation, the parts would be brought together again, and form a new combination; and the salt re-acting on the dregs would excite a 2d fermentation, that would alter the dye, spoil its colour, and make what is called *burnt indigo*. These accidents are prevented by a close attention to the least alterations that the dye undergoes, and by the precaution which the workmen take to draw out a little of it from time to time in a clean vessel. When they perceive that the coloured particles collect by separating from the rest of the liquor, they leave off shaking the buckets, to allow time to the blue dregs to precipitate to the bottom of the tub, where they are left to settle till the water is quite clear. Holes made in the tub, at different heights, are then opened one after another, and this useless water is let out. The blue dregs remaining at the bottom having acquired the consistence of a thick muddy liquid, cocks are then opened; which draw it off into the fettle. After it is still more cleared of much superfluous water in this 3d and last tub, it is drained into sacks; from whence, when water no longer filters through the cloth, this matter, now become of a thicker consistence, is put into chests, where it entirely loses its moisture. In three months the indigo is fit for sale. It is used, in washing, to give a bluish colour to linen: painters also employ it in their water colours; and dyers cannot make fine blue without it. The ancients procured it from the East Indies; in modern times, it has been transplanted into America. The cultivation of it, successively attempted at different places, appears to be fixed at Carolina, St Domingo, and Mexico. That which is known under the name of *Guatemala indigo*, from the place whence it comes, is the most perfect. There are two kinds of indigo prepared in the East Indies, particularly on the coast of Coromandel, at Pondicherry, &c. Of these the worst kind is used for giving the body of colour to the dyed substance, the other being employed only to give it a gloss afterwards. The finest is prepared on the coast of Agra, Masulipatam, and Ayanoo, but especially in the island of Java; but this last, being extremely dear, is very little used by the dyers. The best floats on the surface of water; its colour is a very dark blue inclining to violet, bright and sparkling, especially when broken. It may be tried by dissolving a little in a glass of water: if pure, it will mix equably with the liquor; but if otherwise, will separate and fall to the bottom. Another method of trying the goodness of this substance is by fire; for the pure indigo will be entirely consumed, while the extraneous particles will remain. The pounded indigo is much more subject to adulteration than such as is sold in cakes or tablets; as the ashes or dirt with which it is mixed are very apt to sepa-

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rate from the pure colouring substance when standing in a liquid state, as it must always do before the moisture is evaporated: whence, on breaking a bit of indigo so adulterated, the extraneous matter will be perceived in strata of a different colour.