opinion ; but it was a vain endeavour, and only served to depress himself. At length his physicians advised his na­tive air for his recovery, and he set out in February 1761; but was so fatigued by his journey, that upon his arrival at Bosworth, he betook himself to his chamber, and grew con­tinually worse till the day of his death, which happened on the 14th of May, in the fifty-first year of his age.

Simpson's *Island,* in the south Pacific Ocean, discovered by Captain Carteret in 1767, four miles west from Carteret’s Island. Long. 159. 20. E. Lat. 8. 26. S.

SIMSON, Dr. Robert, professor of mathematics in the university of Glasgow, was born in the year 1687, of a respectable family, which had held a small estate in the county of Lanark for some generations. He was, we think, the second son of the family. A younger brother was pro­fessor of medicine in the university of St. Andrews, and is known by some works of reputation, particularly a *Dis­sertation on the Nervous System,* occasioned by the dissec­tion of a brain completely ossified.

Dr. Simson was educated in the university of Glasgow under the eye of some of his relations who were professors. Eager after knowledge, he made great progress in all his studies; and, as his mind did not, at the very first openings of science, strike into that path which afterwards so strongly attracted him, and in which he proceeded so far almost without a companion, he acquired in every walk of science a stock of information, which, though it had never been much augmented afterwards, would have done credit to a professional man in any of his studies. He became at a very early period, an adept in the philosophy and theology of the schools, was able to supply the place of a sick rela­tion in the class of oriental languages, was noted for histo­rical knowledge, and one of the most accomplished botanists of his time.

It was during his theological studies, as preparatory for his entering into orders, that mathematics took hold of his fancy. He used to tell in his convivial moments how he amused himself when preparing his exercises for the divi­nity hall. When tired with vague speculation, in which he did not meet with certainty to reward his labours, he turned up a book of oriental philology, in which he found something which he could discover to be true or to be false, without going out of the line of study which was to be of ultimate use to him. Sometimes even this could not relieve his fatigue. He then had recourse to mathematics, which never failed to satisfy and refresh him. For a long while he restricted himself to a very moderate use of the cordial, fearing that he would soon exhaust the small stock which so limited and abstract a science could yield ; till at last he found, that the more he learned, a wider field opened to his view, and scenes that were inexhaustible. Becoming acquainted with subjects far beyond the elements of the science, and with numbers of names celebrated during that period of ardent research all over Europe, he found it to be a manly and important study, by which he was as likely to acquire reputation as by any other. About this time, too, a prospect began to open of making mathematics his pro­fession for life. He then gave himself up to it without re­serve.

His original incitement to this stuoy as a treat, as some­thing to please and refresh his mind in the midst of more severe tasks, gave a particular turn to his mathematical studies, from which he never could afterwards deviate. Perspicuity and elegance are more attainable, and more discernible, in pure geometry, than in any other parts of

the science of measure. To this therefore he chiefly de­voted himself. For the same reason he preferred the ancient mode of studying pure geometry, and even felt a dis­like to the Cartesian method of substituting symbols for operations of the mind, and still more was he disgusted with the substitution of symbols for the very objects of dis­cussion, for lines, surfaces, solids, and their affections. He was rather disposed, in the solution of an algebraical pro­blem, where quantity alone was considered, to substitute figure and its affections for the algebraical symbols, and to convert the algebraic formula into an analogous geometri­cal theorem. And he came at last to consider algebraic analysis as little better than a kind of mechanical knack, in which we proceed without ideas of any kind, and obtain a result without meaning, and without being conscious of any process of reasoning, and therefore without any conviction of its truth. And there is no denying, that if genuine un­sophisticated taste alone is to be consulted, Dr. Simson was in the right ; for though it must also be acknowledged, that the reasoning in algebra is as strict as in the purest geo­metry of Euclid or Apollonius, the expert analyst has little perception of it as he goes on, and his final equation is not felt by himself as the result of ratiocination, any more than if he had obtained it by Pascal’s arithmetical mill. This does not in the least diminish our admiration of the alge­braic analysis ; for its almost boundless grasp, its rapid and certain procedure, and the delicate metaphysics and great address which may be displayed in conducting it. Such, however, was the ground of the strong bias of Dr. Simeon’s mind to the analysis of the ancient geometers. It increased as he went forward ; and his veneration for the ancient geometry was carried to a degree of idolatry. His chief labours were exerted in efforts to restore the works of the ancient geometers ; and he has nowhere bestowed much pains in advancing the modern discoveries in mathematics. The noble inventions, for example, of fluxions and of loga­rithms, by which our progress in mathematical knowledge, and in the useful application of this knowledge, is so much promoted, attracted the notice of Dr. Simson ; but he has contented himself with demonstrating their truth on the genuine principles of the ancient geometry. Yet was he thoroughly acquainted with all the modem discoveries; and there are to be seen amongst his papers, discussions and investigations in the Cartesian method, which show him thoroughly acquainted with all the principles, and even expert in the *tours de main,* of the most refined symbolical analysis.@@1

About the age of twenty-five, Dr. Simson was chosen professor of mathematics in the university of Glasgow. He went to London immediately after his appointment, and there formed an acquaintance with the most eminent men of that bright era of British science. Amongst these he always mentioned Captain Halley (the celebrated Dr. Ed­mund Halley) with particular respect ; saying, that he had the most acute penetration, and the most just taste in that science, of any man he had ever known. And, indeed, Dr. Halley has strongly exemplified both of these in his divination of the work of Apollonius *de Sectione Spatii,* and the eighth book of his *Conics,* and in some of the most beautiful theorems in Sir Isaac Newton’s *Principia.* Dr. Simson also admired the wide and masterly steps which Newton was accustomed to take in his investigations, and his manner of substituting geometrical figures for the quan­tities which are observed in the phenomena of nature. It was from Dr. Simson that the writer of this article had the

@@@, In 1732 the writer nf tbiβ article, being then bis scholar, requested him to examine an account which he gave him of what he thought a new curve (a conchoid having a circle for its base.) Dr. Simson returned it next day with a regular list of its leading properties, and the investigation of such as be thought his scholar would not so easily trace. In this hasty scrawl the lines related to the circle were familiarly considered as arithmetical fractions of the radius considered only as unity. This was before Euler published his Arithmetic of the Sines and Tangents, now in universal use.