occurrence. There are numerous brooks and torrents, making their way to the sea between blocks of granite. The islands are green and fresh at all times, particularly during the wet season from November to May. The total rainfall for 1881 was 113.50 inches. The extreme range of the thermometer in 1881 and 1882 was only 22° (minimum 71°, maximum 93°). The heat is seldom sultry and oppressive. The Seychelles lie too far to the north to receive the hurricanes which occasionally sweep over Bourbon and Mauritius, and even thunderstorms are rare. The population at the census of 1881 was 14,081 (7179 males and 6902 females)—500 white (mostly French creoles), 11,500 black, and 2000 coolies. Since 1881 the population has considerably increased in consequence of a tide of immigration from Mauritius. Men and women of exceptionally great age are frequently met with, and the death-rate for 1880 amounted to only 13·1 per 1000. The prevailing language is a French patois, but English is taught in the schools.

These islands were discovered at the beginning of the 16th century, but never occupied, by the Portuguese. In 1742 the French took possession of them, calling them at first Îles des Labourdonnais, but afterwards the Seychelles, from Count Hérault de Seychelles, an officer of the East Indian fleet. The first settle­ment was made in 1768 at Mahé, now Port Victoria. In 1794 the English wrested them from the French along with Mauritius, and they are now ruled by a board of six civil commissioners, as a dependency under the governor of Mauritius. In 1834 slavery was abolished, and since then the plantations have been in a declining state. In 1884 there were in the islands 20 primary schools aided by Government grants and attended by 1620 children. There are 16 churches belonging to the Roman Catholics (the dominant faith) and 11 to the Church of England. The main product is the cocoa-nut, but tobacco, coffee, rice, maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc are raised for homo consumption, while cotton, pepper, cinnamon, and other spices grow wild. Many of the trees display simultaneously blossoms and unripe and ripe fruit. The so-called sea or Maldive double cocoa-nut, “coco de mer,” the fruit of the palm-tree *Lodoicea Sechellarum,* is peculiar to certain of these islands. It was long known only from sea-borne specimens cast up on the Maidive and other coasts, was thought to grow on a submarine palm, and, being esteemed a sovereign antidote to poisons *(Lusiad,* x. 136), commanded exorbitant prices in the East. This palm will grow to a height of 100 feet, and shows fern-like leaves of enormous size. Sensitive plants from America spread like lawns over the soil and quake at every step taken over them. The cocoa-nut palm flourishes in the gardens, overtopping the houses and most other trees, lining the shore, climbing high up the mountains, and in many places forming extensive forests. There are no native mammals, and domestic animals are scarce. The birds comprise gannets, terns in great numbers, and white egrets. Tortoises are common,—among them the gigantic turtle and black turtle, whose flesh is exported. The sea abounds in fish, many of them distinguished by splendid colours, and yields the inhabitants not only a large part of their animal food but also material for building their houses,—a species of massive coral, *Porites gaimardi,* being hewn into square building blocks which at a distance glisten like white marble.

The principal harbour is Port Victoria, situated on Mahé island. The total value of imports here in 1884, including Rs. 27,097 specie, was Rs. 428,605, and of the exports, including Rs. 21,582 specie, Rs. 392,175. The chief imports were coffee and cotton manufac­tures ; the chief exports, cocoa-nut, cocoa-nut oil, and sperm oil. The fiscal receipts for 1884 amounted to Rs.130,047. The cultiva­tion of cocoa is progressing favourably, but the same cannot be said of the vanilla and clove plantations, which suffer from want of regular labour, attributable to the widespread share system, which the negroes prefer to regular work. The leaf disease affect­ing coffee has done great injury, and cocoa-nut plantations have suffered from the ravages of an insect, but no effort seems to have yet been made by weeding the plantations to stamp out the disease. Of the 34,749 acres of land making up Mahé, 12,000 acres are laid out in cocoa-nut, 500 in vanilla, coffee, and cloves, and 1500 are in forest ; of the uncultivated land 8000 acres are well suited for vanilla, cocoa, and coffee plantations.

SEYMOUR, Edward. See Somerset, Duke of.

SEYNE, La, a town of France, in the department of Var, 5 miles south-west of Toulon, with a population of 9788 in 1881. It owes its importance mainly to its ship­building, the Société des Forges et Chantiers de la Médi­terranée having here one of the finest building yards in

J Europe, in which more than 2000 workmen are employed ; contracts are executed for private shipowners, for the great Messageries Maritimes Company, and for various Govern­ments. The port, which has communication by steamer and omnibus with that of Toulon, is 6 acres in extent, and admits vessels of the largest tonnage.

SFAX, a city of Tunis, second in importance only to the capital, is situated 116 miles south of Mahadia, on the coast of the Gulf of Gabes (Syrtis Minor) opposite the Kerkenah Islands. It consists of three distinct portions : —the new European quarter to the south, with roads, piers, and other improvements carried out by the muni­cipality ; the Arab town in the middle with its tower- flanked walls entered by only two gates ; and to the north the French camp. Round the town for 5 or 6 miles to the north and west stretch orchards and gardens and country houses, where most of the Sfax families have their summer quarters. Dates, almonds, grapes, figs, peaches, apricots, olives, and in rainy years melons and cucumbers, grow there in great abundance without irrigation. Two enormous cisterns maintained by public charitable trusts supply the town with water in dry seasons. Sfax was formerly the terminus of a caravan route to Central Africa, but its inland trade now extends only to Gafsa. The export trade (esparto grass, oil, almonds, pistachio nuts, sponges, wool, &c.) has attained considerable dimensions. Fifty-one English vessels (34,757 tons) visited the port in 1884. The anchorage is 2 miles from the shore, and there is a rise and fall of 5 feet at spring tides (a rare phenomenon in the Mediterranean). In 1881 the popula­tion was said to be about 15,000 (including 1200 Arabs, 1500 Tunisian Jews, 1000 Maltese, &c., 500 Europeans); in 1886 it is stated at 32,000 (1200 Maltese, 1000 Euro­peans).

Sfax (the Arabic Asfákis or Safákus, sometimes called the City of Cucumbers) occupies the site of the ancient *Taphrura.* In the Middle Ages it was famous for its vast export of olive oil. The Sicilians took Sfax under Roger the Norman in the 12th century, and the Spaniards occupied it for a brief period in the 16th century. The bombardment of the town in 1881 was one of the principal events of the French conquest of Tunis ; it was pillaged by the soldiers on July 16th and the inhabitants had afterwards to pay a war indemnity of £250,000.

SFORZA, House of. See Milan, vol. xvi. p. 293, and Italy, vol. xiii. p. 479.

SHAD is the name given to certain migratory species of Herrings *(Clupea),* which are distinguished from the herrings proper by the total absence of teeth in the jaws. Two species occur in Europe, much resembling each other,

—one commonly called Allis Shad (*Clupea alοsa),* and the other known as Twaite Shad *(Clupea finta).* Both are, like the majority of herrings, greenish on the back and bright silvery on the sides, but they are distinguished from the other European species of *Clupea* by the presence of a large blackish blotch behind the gill-opening, which is succeeded by a series of several other similar spots along the middle of the side of the body. So closely allied are these two fishes that their distinctness can be proved only by an examination of the gill-apparatus, the allis shad having from sixty to eighty very fine and long gill-rakers along the concave edge of the first branchial arch, whilst the twaite shad possesses from twenty-one to twenty-seven stout and stiff gill rakers only. In their habits and geo­

graphical distribution also the two shads are very similar. They inhabit the coasts of temperate Europe, the twaite shad being more numerous in the Mediterranean. While they are in salt water they live singly or in very small companies, but during May (the twaite shad some weeks later) they congregate, and in great numbers ascend large rivers, such as the Severn (and formerly the Thames), the Seine, the Rhine, the Nile, &c., in order to deposit their