

easy as to this point, and not give a loose, as they often do, to unjust and idle suspicions.

Were we desirous to obtain an evident and undoubted sign of virginity, we should search for it among those barbarous nations who, incapable of instilling, by education, the sentiments of virtue and honour into their children, secure the chastity of their daughters by an expedient which nothing could have suggested but the rudeness of their manners. The people of Ethiopia, and other parts of Africa, of Pegu, Arabia Petræa and other nations of Asia, draw together by a kind of needlework, the part which Nature has separated, leaving only a space sufficient for the necessary evacuations. As the child grows, the parts gradually adhere; insomuch that, when the time of marriage arrives, they must unavoidably be disunited by incision. For this infibulation of girls, as it is a substance not subject to corruption, they use the fibres of the ambestos. Some tribes only use a kind of ring; to this practice, wives as well as girls are subjected; with this single difference, that the ring allotted to the latter cannot be removed, and in that allotted to the former there is a lock of which
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