

wall 10000 stadiums long, which reaches from the eastern ocean to the province of Xansi: not that the length is so great as they speak it; but if you follow all its windings, it will really appear to be more than 500 leagues. You must not conceive it a plain wall, for it is fortified with towers much like the city walls I have mentioned; and in the places where the passes might be more easily forced, they have raised two or three bulwarks one behind another, which may give themselves a mutual defence, whose enormous thickness, and the forts which command all the avenues, being all guarded by great numbers of forces, protect the Chinese from all attempts on that side.

China being divided from Tartary by a chain of mountains, the wall has been carried on over the highest hills, and is now tall and then low, as the ground allowed; for you must not think, as some have imagined, that the top of it is level throughout, and that from the bottom of the deepest vales it could have been raised to be as high as the tallest mountains. So when they say that it is of a wonderful height, we must understand it of the spot of ground it is built on, for of itself it is rather lower than those of their cities, and but four, or at most five feet in thickness.

It is almost all built with brick, bound with such strong mortar, that not only it has lasted these several ages, but is scarce the worse. It is above 1800 years since emperor Chihohamti raised it, to prevent the insurrections of the neighbouring Tartars. This was at once one of the greatest and maddest undertakings that I ever heard of; for though indeed it was a prudent caution of the Chinese thus to guard the easiest avenues, how ridiculous was it of them to carry their wall to the top of some precipices which the birds can scarce reach with their flight, and on which it is impossible the Tartarian horse

should ascend; and if they could fancy that an army could have clambered up thither, how could they believe that so thin and low a wall, as they have made it in such places, could be of any defence?

As for my part, I admire how the materials have been surveyed and made use of there; and indeed, it was not done without a vast charge, and the loss of more men than would have perished by the greatest fury of their enemies. It is said, that during the reigns of the Chinese emperors, this wall was guarded by a million of soldiers; but now that part of Tartary belongs to China, they are content with manning well the worst situated, but best fortified parts of it.

Among the other fortresses of the kingdom, there are above a thousand of the first rate; the rest are less remarkable, and indeed scarce deserve that name; but all are very well garrisoned, and by that one may judge what vast armies are constantly kept on foot. However, this is not the only part in which China excels other nations, for to consider her only in her military capacity will hardly raise our wonder; but who can enough admire the numbers, greatness, beauty, and government of their trading towns? They are generally divided into three classes; of the first there are above 160, of the second 270, and of the third near 1200, besides near 300 walled cities more, which they leave out as not worth observing, tho' they come but little short of either of them, either in the number of inhabitants or greatness of trade. The greater and lesser villages are numberless, especially those of the southern provinces. In the provinces of Xansi and Xensi they are for the most part surrounded with walls and good ditches, with iron gates, which the country people shut at night, and guard in the day time, to protect themselves from thieves, and from
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the insults of the soldiers, who are not always be kept in by their officers.

The largeness of these cities is not less amazing than their number. Peking, which I have already had the honour to mention to your highness, is not to be compared to Nankim; or, as it is now called, Kiamnim, a town formerly inclosed within three walls, the outermost of which was 16 long leagues round: some works of it are still to be seen, which one would rather think to be the bounds of a province than a city. When the emperors kept their court there, its inhabitants were, no doubt, numberless. Its situation, haven, plenty, the fertility of the neighbouring lands, and the canals made near it, for the improvement of trade, could not but make it a fine city: it has since lost much of its former splendor. However, if you include those who live in its suburbs, and on the canals, it is still more populous than Peking; and tho' the unarable hills, the ploughed lands, gardens, and vast empty places which are within its walls, render it really less than it seems, yet what is inhabited does still make a prodigious big city.

The streets are not very broad, but very well paved, the houses low, but cleanly, and the shops very rich, being filled with stuffs, silks, and other costly wares: in a word, it is as the center of the empire, where you may find all the curiosities which are any where found in the whole kingdom. There the most famous doctors and the Mandarines, who are out of business, usually settle themselves, having the conveniency of several libraries filled with choice of good books; their printing is fairer, their artificers are better workmen, the tongue more polite, and the accent smoother than any where else; and truly no other city were so proper for the emperor's seat, were it not for the states advantage that he should reside near the frontiers. It is also famous on other accounts,

First, for the river Kiam on which it is situated, which is the largest, deepest, and most navigable in the whole empire; being, in that part of it which bathes the city, near half a league broad.

Secondly, the royal observatory on the top of a mountain, where stood formerly a platform and proper instruments (which were since removed to Pekin) but now only some old buildings remain, and a large square hall, newly built as an acknowledgment of the emperor Camhy's kind visit to that city. This was a trick of the Mandarin, who, under pretence of raising a monument of that prince's favour, got considerable sums of money from the inhabitants, not half of which was laid out.

In the third place for a large tower, vulgarly called the China-Tower. There is without the city (and not within, as some have wrote) a house named by the Chinese, the Temple of Gratitude (*Pao gren-sse*) built 300 years ago by the emperor Yonlo. It is raised on a massive basis, built with brick and surrounded with a rail of unpolished marble; there are ten or twelve steps all round it, by which you ascend to the lowermost hall, the floor of which stands one foot higher than the basis, leaving a little walk two feet wide all round it.

The front of this hall or temple is adorned with a gallery and some pillars. The roofs (for in China there are usually two, one next to the top of the wall, and a narrower over that) are covered with green varnished shining tiles; and the ceiling within is painted and made up of several little pieces differently wrought one within the other, which with the Chinese is no small ornament. I confess that medley of beams, joists, rafters, and pinions is a singularity which surprises us, because we must needs judge that such a walk was not done without great expence; but to speak truth it proceeds only from the ignorance of their workmen, who never could find out that

that noble simplicity, in which consists both strength and beauty of our buildings.

This hall has no light but what comes in the doors, of which there are three very large ones that give admittance into the tower I speak of, which is part of this temple. It is of an octangular figure, about 40 feet broad, so that each side is 15 feet wide. A wall in the like form is built round it, at two fathoms and a half distance, and, being moderately high, supports the one side of the pent-house, which issues from the tower, and thus makes a pretty kind of a gallery. This tower is nine stories high, each story being adorned with a cornice three feet wide at the bottom of the windows, and distinguished by little pent-houses like the former, but narrower, and (like the tower itself) decreasing in breadth as they increase in height.

The wall is, at the bottom, at least 12 feet thick, and above eight and a half at the top, covered with China-ware laid flat-wise; for tho' the weather has something impaired its beauty, there is yet enough remaining to shew that it is real China, tho' of the coarser sort, since 'tis impossible that bricks could have retained that lustre above 300 years.

The stair-case within is narrow and troublesome, the steps being very high. Each story is made up of thick pieces of timber laid cross-wise, and on that a floor, the ceiling of each room being beautified with paintings, if such painting as theirs can be called a beauty. The walls of the upper rooms bear several small niches full of carved idols, which make a pretty kind of checquer. The whole work is gilt, and looks like carved stone or marble; but I believe it to be only brick, for the Chinese are very skilful in stamping all kinds of ornaments on it, which thro' the fineness of their sifted mould comes more easy to them than to us.

The first floor is the most lofty, but the rest are of equal height. I have told the steps, which are in number, being almost all 10 large inches high, having measured them very nicely, which amounts to 58 feet. If you add to this the height of the balcony that of the ninth story, which has no steps to ascend thence to the top, and the cupola, the sum will be at least 200 feet in height from the ground.

This cupola is none of the least ornaments of that building, being, as it were, an extraordinary shock mast, or may-pole, which, from the floor of the eighth story, rises above 30 feet higher than the top of the tower. Round it a great piece of iron runs in a spiral line, several feet distant from the pole, so that it looks like a hollow cave, on the top of which is placed a very large golden ball. This it is that the Chinese call the Porcelain Tower, and which some Europeans would name the Brick-one. Whatever it may be made of, it is undoubtedly the best contrived and noblest structure of all the East. From its top you have a prospect of the whole city, and especially of the mountain on which stands the observatory, which lies a good league north east and by east from it.

Namkin was also famous for the bigness of its bells, but their weight having worn down the steeple which they were hung in, the whole building fell down, and they still lie upon the ground. There is one in the way between our college and the observatory, whose height is 11 feet, and that of its handle or ear by which it hangs, 2, and its diameter is 7; the outward circumference is 22 feet, which indeed lessens towards the top, but not in the same proportion with our bells here, for the figure is almost a cylinder, if you take away a considerable swelling towards the middle, where the circumference is equal to that of the bottom. Its lower brim is six inches and a half thick, and grows thinner and thinner, to the bowing where the

the cone begins, so that under the ear it is not above 2 inches thick; which may be measured exactly enough, because they pierce their bells at the top to increase their sound as they fancy. The metal is brittle, and very ill cast, being full of little knobs.

These bells were cast during the ninth reign before this. Each have their particular name, the one being called Tchoui, the Hanger; another, Che, the Eater; a third, Choui, or So, the Sleeper; and a fourth, Si, the Flier; for tho' there are but 3 in the city, the Chinese geographers place a 4th beyond the river Kiam. Now, supposing that a cubical foot of brass weigh 648 *l.* the bell which I measured should weigh about 90,000, supposing it to be of an equal bigness and thickness. As for the bigness, there is no great difference, but the thickness lessens from the bottom to the top, where, as I have said, it is but two inches thick; so that allowing it to be one with another four inches thick and better throughout, the bell will weigh about 50,000 *l.* and be twice as heavy as that at Erfort, which father Kircher affirms to be the biggest in the world.

But this is nothing to what there is at Pekin, which can shew seven cast under the reign of the emperor Yonlo, near 300 years ago, weighing 120,000 *l.* each. They are 11 feet wide, 40 round, and 12 high, besides the ear, which is at least 3 foot in height. This, my lord, I own is surprising, and could scarce be believed, had we not father Verbieft's word for it, who himself has exactly measured them.

But as much as their bells exceed ours in bigness, so much do ours exceed them in sound, whether our metal or way of casting be better. Be pleased however to read what father Magalhaens writes of that which is in the palace at Pekin. *Its sound, says he, is so clear, so pleasant, and harmonious, that it seems to proceed from a musical instrument much rather than a bell.* All

this, must be understood comparatively; and perhaps, the author had never heard any thing of that kind like it. As for my part, all the bells, I have heard there, have seemed to me to make but a dull, obscure noise, as one may easily imagine, for their clappers are not made of iron but wood. However that be (for it deserves not a longer inquiry) it is certain, that the Chinese have in all their cities very big ones, with which they distinguish the five watches of the night; which they reckon from seven or eight of the clock in the evening: they begin the first with striking once, which they repeat a moment after, and so on till the second watch, then they strike two strokes, and at the third watch three, and so on: so that these bells are as so many repeating clocks, which every other moment inform you what time of night it is. They also use for the same purpose a very great drum, which they beat in the same manner.

These two imperial cities, which I have now been describing, might alone render China deservedly famous, but the metropolis's of most provinces are so big, that each were fit to be the chief of an empire. Sigan, the capital city of Xensi, is three leagues round. I have had the curiosity to measure it myself, which was not difficult; the walls which inclose it making an exact square. Its ditches, which are partly dry and partly filled with water, are very fine; its walls thick and tall, as well as the square towers that defend them; its bulwarks very broad, and its gates, at least some, most stately, and like those at Pekin. The city is divided into two parts by an earthen wall, which runs almost from one end to the other. The one half is inhabited by the Tartars, who keep the biggest garrison, tho' in the other, where the Chinese dwell, there are also a good body of troops. There may still be seen an old palace, the residence of the ancient kings of that country, who were
G powerful,

powerful, not only because of the vast extent of their dominions, but also thro' the bravery and courage of their subjects; for, among all the Chinese there are not any better proportioned, or more strong, stout, and laborious than these. As for houses, they are, as every where else in China, low, and not over-well built; their furniture is not so good as in the southern parts, their varnish not so smooth, their China not so plentiful, nor their workmen so ingenious.

Hamcheu, the chief city of the province of Kiam, is also one of the richest and greatest in the empire. The Chinese say it is four leagues round, and, I believe, they tell no lye. The streets are full of people as at Paris, and the suburbs being very large, and the canals crouded with an infinite number of boats, I believe it to be as populous as the greatest cities in Europe. The garrison consists in 10000 men, 3000 of which are Chinese. The water of their canals is not clear, nor their streets broad, but the shops are neat, and the merchants there are reputed to be very rich.

Eastwards from the city runs a river half a league broad, being near the sea, but indeed not very considerable, for a little higher it is but an useless torrent, which runs thro' abundance of rocks. A lake lies close to it to the westwards, which is about two leagues round. The water is clear, but very shallow; deep enough however for some large flat-bottom'd boats, which the Chinese keep there, like to many floating islands, where their young people take their pleasure. In the middle stands an island where they usually land, having built there a temple and some houses for their diversion. Of this lake some relations have made an enchanted place. I have heard that it was built round with stately houses and many palaces. This might be; but if true, a great care was certainly taken that not so much as the least

or memory of it should remain. But perhaps gave that name to some wooden thatched dwelling in which *China* does every where abound; then a short while might make great alterations, she needs not use its utmost efforts to pull them down.

However, if this city is not so eminent for its buildings, it is commendable for being one of the best situated in the empire, for the prodigious number of its inhabitants, the conveniency of its canals, and the great traffick which is made there in the finest manner in the world.

What is surprising in China is, that whereas, being thro' one of these cities, you would scarce expect to meet with the like, you are hardly out of sight of it before you are in view of such another. For example; going along the great canal from *Houbeu* you come to *Sucheu*, which is not far from *Peking*, and, if you believe the inhabitants, contains four leagues in circuit, being indeed of a vast extent. It is the usual residence of a viceroy, and has as much of a trade as any city in the empire. I do not think it to be proportionably as populous as those I have mentioned; but the suburbs and multitude of houses amaze new comers. Those who have the patience to spend a few minutes on the water-side, and see the throngs of people that come to cheapen commodities, would imagine it to be a fair, to which the whole empire were crouding; and the officers, tho' not over strict, are so busied in receiving customs, that they are obliged to put off to the next day a great many traders, who come to make payments. This continual hurry, among the most covetous nation in the world, should, one might imagine, occasion frequent quarrels; but their government is so good, and the Mandarines orders strictly observed, that besides abusive language, which the *Chinese* are very fluent, other injuries are seldom offered. Not far from *Sucheu*, you

meet with other cities at small distances from each other, some a league and a half and some two leagues round. As soon as you are come to the river Kiam, you meet with Chinkiam, a town built on its banks, one of whose very suburbs, which lie north-west, is a large German league in circuit; this place is so populous, that, when I passed thro' it, it was no small trouble to me to make my way thro' the crowd, which is usually as great in those streets as here at a solemn procession. Overagainst it, on the other side of the river, stands Qua-chéou another great trading town; a little beyond lies Yamcheu, one of the most remarkable cities in the whole empire, which, according to the Chinese, contains two millions of inhabitants.

If I did not here recal myself, I should unawares describe all the cities of China; but designing only to give your highness a general account of their largeness and number, I shall, without a needless, tedious descending into particulars, assure your eminency that myself have seen seven or eight of them as big at least as Paris, besides several others where I have not been, which I am assured are not less. There are fourscore of the first rank, equal to Lyons or Bourdeaux. Among 260 of the second, above hundred are like Orleance; and among 1200 of the third, there are five or six hundred as considerable as Rochel or Angoulesme; besides an innumerable quantity of villages greater and more populous than Marennes and St. John de Luz. These, my lord, are no hyperboles, neither do I speak by hearsay; but having travelled in person over the greatest part of China, I hope your highness will favour me so far, as not to question the sincerity of my relation.

I shall conclude with the several ports and havens of China, which do not a little contribute to the increase of its wealth. The Chinese emperors have forbid the entrance of them to foreigners; but the

rs, more fond of money than of ancient
Roms, have of late years granted a free access to
ations.

The first beginning southwards is Macao, famous
for the great traffick which the Portugueze formerly
made there, before the Dutch had expelled them
out of the greatest part of the Indies. They still
have a fortress in it, but their garrison is small, as
indeed they are not able to keep a very great one.
Besides, their best way to maintain themselves in
this post is, to ingratiate themselves with the Chinese,
by a blind obsequiousness to all their commands,
which they do very wisely. The town, if I may
call a few houses not inclosed with any walls, is
built on a narrow uneven soil, on the point of a small
island which commands a good road, where ships,
by the means of several other little islands which lie
to the windwards, are secure from any storm. The
harbour is narrow, but safe and commodious. All
the customs belong to the emperor; and tho' the
Portugueze do still preserve a form of government
among themselves, yet they obey the Mandarines
in whatsoever bears the least relation to the Chinese.

The second haven of this coast is formed by a
pretty wide river, up the which great vessels can
go as far as Canton. This place is very convenient
for foreigners, because the city supplies them with
abundance of all kinds of merchandizes and refresh-
ments: but the Mandarines are not fond of letting
them approach too near their walls, lest they
should be surprized; or rather, they are unwilling
that their merchants should deal with ours, since
the Mandarines sell them the European effects under-
hand, by other persons whom they employ.

The province of Fokien, adjoining to that of
Canton, has another celebrated haven, which they
call Amoy, from the island which forms it, for it
is properly speaking, but a road lock'd in on the

one hand by the continent, and on the other by the said island. The biggest ships ride here safely, and the banks are so high, that they may come near the shore as they will. The late great improvement of trade in that city invites to a considerable number of people, and this population has been judged of such a consequence, that the emperor has for some years past kept there a garrison of six or seven thousand men under a Chinese commander.

The fourth, called Nimpo, lies in the most easterly part of China; there it was we landed. The entrance is very difficult, and wholly impracticable to great vessels, the bar at the highest tides not being above 15 foot under water. That place is nevertheless a very great trade; for thence they make a speedy voyage to Japan, being but ten days in their passage to Nangazaki. Thither they carry silks, sugar, drugs and wine, which they exchange for gold, silver and brasse.

Nimpo is a city of the first class, and was in former times very remarkable, but has been much damaged by the late wars; however, it daily regains something of its former splendor; the walls are in good condition, the city and suburbs well inhabited, and the garrison pretty numerous. The town is still full of a kind of monuments, called by the Chinese Paifam, or Pailou, and by us triumphal arches, which are very frequent in China.

They consist in three great arches abreast, built with long marble stones; that in the middle is much higher than the other two. The four columns which support them are sometimes round, but often square, made of one only stone placed on an irregular basis. In some no basis is to be seen, whether they never had any, or that thro' age it was sunk into the ground. They have no capitals, but the trunk is fastened into the architrave, if we will.

name to some figures over the pillars. The size is better distinguished, but too high in proportion to the rest; they adorn it with inscriptions, beautiful figures, and embossed sculptures; the stones wrought loose one within another, with figures curiously carved, and birds flying as if from the stone, which in my mind are masterpieces.

Not that all these arches are of this make; some so ordinary that they are not worth the seeing; but others there are which cannot enough be prized. Instead of a cornish, they have before and behind flat marble stones like pent-houses. There are so many of these monuments at Nimpo, that in some places they are more a trouble than an ornament, tho' at a distance they make an agreeable prospect.

I have omitted the haven of Nankim, which, in relation, because of the breadth and depth of the river Kiam, should have been first in order; but not put in there at present. I do not know whether the mouth of the said river is now choaked up with sand; but sure I am, that the whole fleet of famous pyrate, who besieged Nankim during late troubles, passed it without any difficulty; perhaps it is to prevent any such accident for future, that the Chinese will not make use of it, by degrees it may grow out of knowledge.

This, my lord, is in general what may be said of ports, fortresses and cities of China, the number which is so great, that scarce can a traveller distinguish them, they lie so thick together; therefore the Chinese have ever thought that no nation in the world was to be compared to them, much like people whom the prophet represents, saying, *this is that great and glorious city which has subsisted for so many years, and saith, I truly am a*

city, and there is none besides me. They indeed were something excusable in this point, they knew of nothing beyond the seas of Japan, and the forests of Tartary; but what we have told them that the west had also its cities and kingdoms, and that in several things exceeds theirs, has very much humbled them, being not a little vexed, that their title to universal monarchy should now be questioned after having enjoy'd it above 4000 years.

Our comfort, my lord, is, that these proud cities which stiled themselves Ladies of the Universe have been forced to open their gates to the gospel, and are partly subdued by our religion. * *They that dwelt in high places have bowed their heads, and the Lord has in a holy manner brought low the lofty.* This, my lord, has often supported me in the midst of my labours and travels. I have seen but few cities where christianity had made no progress; but among those crowds of worshippers of Bel, we have observed a chosen people which worship the Lord in spirit and truth. Our churches are the ornament of those very cities, which during many ages had been defiled with idols; and the cross, raised above their houses, confounds superstition and gains itself respect from the very Gentiles.

What then remains, my lord, but that we labour with the utmost diligence to the perfecting of a church worthy the zeal of the first apostles. Woe to those who are kept there by the care of the head of the church, and the liberality of christian prince thro' negligence, or an ill-grounded cowardice, fail of rendering the inhabitants of those vast cities a holy nation. Hitherto, thro' God's good grace, ministers of the gospel have not been ashamed of their profession, not before the pagan magistrates; when forced by a long exile to quit their beloved churches, they all might with St. Paul say,

* *Isaiah xxvi. 5.*

I have endeavoured to serve the Lord in all with many tears, and notwithstanding the have met with from the heathen; that I have from you that might be to your advantage, dronce being strong enough to prevent my ng it both in publick and private; but rather admonishing you all to be penitent towards God, and faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ.

I know that those, who have composed whole names to cry down our catholick missions, will not agree to what I have said. Men, who have professed themselves enemies to the orthodox doctrine, attack it every where, and make it their business to slander such as preach it: but it may be a comfort to us, that we have no other adversaries but those who are such to our church, and that we are only blamed by those whose praise would be a reproach to us.

However we stand in daily need of the assistance of our kind protectors; for in what part of the world can naked truth and distressed innocence stand alone the force of inveterate malice? In what, my lord, we hope to find one full of zeal and courage. The approbation of so great a prince, whose wit, judgment, and uprightness are well known to all Europe, is able alone to silence and confound our enemies. And when it is once known that you are in some concern for our affairs, that you are sensible of our labours, persuaded that our designs are good, and willing to contribute to carry them on; none sure will then be so daring and hardened a calumniator as to speak against our missions to China, or reflect on our conduct in that country. I am with profound respect,

My Lord,

*Your Eminence's most
humble and obedient Servant,*

L. J.

LETTER IV.

*To the Count de CRECY.**Of the Climate, Soil, Canals, Rivers, and Fruit.*
CHINA.*My Lord,*

THE French missionaries to China are so highly obliged to your whole family, that among the most important commands, they have honoured me with for Europe, that of returning you their hearty thanks was earnestly recommended to my care.

I know, my lord, that, how great soever your favours may have been, your several employments, and the unbounded application with which you serve majesty, have somewhat curbed your zeal.

But what is not owing from us to that other self of yours (pardon the expression) whom his blood, name, wit, and a thousand excellent qualifications do so confound with you, that we can scarce distinguish the one from the other? In all our travels, which some of us have already reckoned above 400 leagues, we have not made a step without his order and assistance. His zeal has excited us to noble enterprises, his prudence directed us how to carry them on, his courage strengthened us against all opposition, and I hope his unshaken constancy will at last give success to one of the most noble achievements that this age has produced, to our church's good, to the improvement of learning, and to his glory who sways the Gallick scepter.

Thus, my lord, while you make known his name in the several courts of Europe, he spreads yours broad thro' the new world, where he is equally revered by the preachers of the gospel, whose support he is, and dreaded by those of paganism and idolatry.

whole ruin he is the occasion of. I the more do justice to his merit, because I cannot a subject more agreeable to your lordship; had not already spoke of it in private conference, I were to blame to give over so soon.

After having indulged a father's tenderness, is it not time you should satisfy a statesman's curiosity? I have often described Europe to the Chinese, who have admired its politeness, beauty, and magnificence; it is but just that I make China known to the European, who is best able to judge of its grandeur. I have, my lord, pitched upon the following particulars, being such as will give you a true idea of that country, and will, perhaps, give some pleasure in the reading.

China being of a large extent, the nature of the soil is different, according to its particular situation, it lies more or less southwards. I can however assure your lordship, that the least of its fifteen provinces is so populous and fertile, that in Europe it would make alone a considerable state; and a prince who should enjoy it, might have wealth and subjects enough to content a moderate ambi-

This land, like all others, is divided into hills and valleys; but the latter are so even, that one would think the Chinese have ever since the foundation of their monarchy been employ'd in nothing else but levelling them, and making them into gardens; and their manner of meliorating the ground is to let water thro' it, they could not devise any other way to distribute it equally; else those hills which lie highest would have laboured under a continual drought, and the rest lain always under water.

In this course they take in tilling and manuring the hills, for they cut them out like a pair of shoes from the foot to the top, that the rain water may

may spread equally, and not wash down the soil with its feeds.

Thus they have, as it were, forced nature making artificial plains, where she had raised mountains; and a long series of such hills surrounding, as I may say, with a hundred vallies, losing in breadth as they gain in height, whose soil is as fruitful as that of the best cultivated vallies, must needs make a very entertaining landscape.

It is true that their mountains are not for the most part so stony as ours, their mould is rather light, porous, and easily cut; and, what is most surprizing, so deep, that in most provinces you may dig three or four hundred feet in the earth before you come to the rock. This does not alone contribute to its goodness, because the constant transpiration of salt spirits is ever renewing it; this endues the soil with a perpetual fertility.

Nature has not however been equal in her distribution, she was less lavish to the provinces of Xensi, Honan, Quamtum, and Fokien. Yet even their mountains are not wholly useless, bearing all kinds of trees, which grow tall and streight, and fit for all kinds of building, especially for shipbuilding. The emperor reserves some for his private use, sometimes sends 300 leagues for trees of a prodigious bigness, of which he makes pillars to his temples or other publick buildings.

The inhabitants also trade much in them, having lapt off all the branches, they tie 80 or 100 of them together, and fasten so many faggots one behind another as reach almost a mile, which they drag in that manner along the rivers and canals till they have sold all; for they build them little convenient houses on these kinds of floats, where the timber-merchant, his family, and servants lie during the whole voyage, which is sometimes three or four months long.

They have other mountains which are of a greater and more publick advantage. Those produce iron, tin, brass, mercury, gold and silver. It is true, the silver mines are not now made use of, whether they think the empire is sufficiently stock'd with it, or that they are unwilling to sacrifice the lives of poor people, by putting them upon so laborious and dangerous a task.

As for their gold, the torrents wash a great quantity away into the plains, which proves the occasion of a great many peoples livelihood, who have no other occupation than to look for it among the sand and mud, where they find it so pure, that it needs no refining as at Peru.

If you will believe the Chinese, who themselves are credulous to an excess, their mountains have wonderful properties. Some, they say, are ever covered with clouds, while others always continue calm and serene. Some produce none but useful, wholesome herbs, while not a rank poisonous weed can grow there. They affirm, that a hill in the province of Xensi is shaped like a cock, and crows sometimes so loud, as to be heard three leagues off; and that another, in that of Fokien, moves to and fro when a storm approaches, like a tree agitated with the wind. The hoary heads of others are covered with a continual frost; and there is one in the province of Kiamsi, called the Dragon-Tiger, because the Bonzes pretend that its upper-part is shaped like a dragon, and seems to assault the lower that is like a tiger.

That of Fokien especially is admired, the whole extent of which is nothing else but a representation of the idol Foé, so hugely big, that its eyes are several miles broad, and its nose many leagues in length. I cannot suppose it to be a piece of Chinese workmanship, for they would not certainly have made its nose so big, who love theirs should be little, which they look upon as a great beauty.

The mountain of Xensi is no less wonderful, for at the sound of a drum, or any other instrument, it breaths out fire and flames, raises wind, rains, storms, and what not: and, to conclude, one in the province of Huquam has this strange property, that it makes thieves so giddy, that, should they steal any thing on it, it would be impossible for them to go off with their booty; whereas an easy egress and regress is allowed to such as come thither with an hospitable mind.

China abounds in such like curiosities which some of our philosophers admire, and endeavour to reduce to natural principles; but I should rather advise them to leave that discussion to the Chinese, who, being the authors, should best know the causes of these fancied effects.

The idlest dream, and that to which they give most faith, is, That there is a dragon of an extraordinary strength and sovereign power. It is in heaven, in the air, on the waters, and usually among the mountains. They also believe, that in those mountains live a sort of men which they call the Immortal Race, believing really that they never die; and some are so infatuated with this ridiculous opinion, that they wander among those rocks, and there lose themselves in quest of immortality. There are several famous grotto's where some Bonzes lead a very austere life; but for a few that behave themselves well, abundance, thro' their execrable vices, are grown contemptible to persons of quality, and odious to the people, who only tolerate them thro' a mistaken zeal.

The most famous temples are also built on mountains. Pilgrims repair thither from 200 leagues off, and their number is sometimes so great, that the roads are crowded with them. The women especially are very exact in the performance of this piece of devotion, for having no other opportunity

tunity of going abroad, they are glad of that presence. But these holy travels being somewhat prejudicial to their virtue, their husbands are not overwell pleased at it; therefore only your ordinary sort of women undertake these pilgrimages; but as for persons of quality, they force their wives zeal into a narrower compass.

If after having viewed their mountains, we take a prospect of their plains, it must be confessed, that no art can equal their natural beauty. They are all cultivated, and have neither hedge nor ditch, nor scarce a tree, so much they are afraid of losing an inch of ground. In most provinces they make harvest twice a year, and between those two seasons they sow herbs and pulse.

All the northern and western provinces, as Pekin, Xansi, Xensi, Suchven, bear wheat, barley, several kinds of millet, and tobacco, with black and yellow pease, with which they feed horses as we do with oats. Those of the south, especially Huquam, Nankim, and Chekiam, are fruitful in rice, it being a low, watery country. The husbandmen at first sow it disorderly, like other corn, and when it is grown about two feet from the ground, they pull it up by the roots, and transplant it in a strait line, in small parcels like little sheaves, checquerwise, that the ears may support each other, and the easier resist the wind; so that these plains look more like spacious gardens than a plain field.

The soil is proper for all manner of fruits; it bears pears, apples, apricots, peaches, figs, grapes of all kinds, and especially excellent muscadines. There are also pomegranates, walnuts, chefnuts, and generally all that we have in Europe. Their olives are different from ours; they press no oil out of them, because, perhaps, they are not fit for that purpose, or that the Chinese have not yet thought of

of it. Their fruit, generally speaking, is not so good as ours, being wholly strangers to the art of grafting. But they have three kinds of melons, which are all excellent: The first small, yellow within, and of a sweet sugar taste, which they eat with the rind as we do an apple: I have not met with those any where but in the province of Xensu. The others are very large and long, the inside of some are white, and of others red; though they are full of a cooling juice which tastes like sugar; they never prove of any use in winter, and may be eaten during the greatest heat of summer, without fear of a surfeit; those are called water-melons. The third sort are like our ordinary melons.

Besides the fruits which they have in common with us, others grow there which are not known in Europe. The most delicate they call Lettuce, and is found in the province of Quamtum. It is as big as a nut, the stone is long and big, the meat on it soft and waterish, but of a most delicious taste. I know not any fruit in Europe that comes near it. All this is inclos'd in a round thin rind, and the whole is shaped like an egg. It is unwholesome to eat a quantity, and of a hot nature, as to cause a man's whole body to break out into pimples. The Chinese dry it with the rind, and then it grows black and wrinkled like our prunes, and so it is preserved and eat all the year round, being used especially in tea, to which it gives a little sharp taste, more agreeable than that of sugar.

In the same province, and in that of Fokien, grows another small fruit which they call Louye, or Dragon's Eye. The tree that bears it is large as those which produce our walnuts. This fruit is exactly round, the outer rind being smooth and grey, but as it ripens it grows yellowish. The

meat

white, of a sharp taste, and very full of juice. It is fitter for a dysert to those who have well than to satisfy the hungry stomach: it is very cool and inoffensive.

There is another kind of fruit peculiar to China, grow almost in all parts of it; of this, as of apples, there are several kinds. Those in the southern provinces taste much like sugar, and melt in one's mouth. In the provinces of Xansi and Xensi it is much bigger, and may easier be preserved. The colour of the former is clear, smooth, transparent, and shining red colour, especially when the fruit is ripe. Some are in shape like an egg, but usually the seeds are black and flat, and the meat very juicy and almost liquid, which they suck out from the ends. When they are dried like our apples become mealy; but in time there grows a sort of sugar'd crust upon them, from which they receive a most delicious flavour.

Those in Xansi are, as I have said, much more like our apples, their meat being like that of our apples, but of a different colour. Those they either gather early to ripen them on straw, or dip in scalding water, to prevent them of an ill soure taste which they have at first gathering. The Chinese are not over careful of this fruit, it being a natural product of the earth which grows in any soil. But did they endeavour to bring it to perfection by grafting, I question not but it might be made an excellent one.

I purposely omit their Anana's, Goyayes, Coco's and other fruits, for which they are indebted to the Indians, and which have been abundantly described in former relations; but I cannot pass by their oranges, commonly known with us by the name of China Oranges, because the first we saw of that kind came from thence. The first and only tree, out of whose fruit all ours are said to be produced, is still preserved at Lisbon, in the garden of the count

de St. Laurence, and we are indeed beholding to the Portugueze for that delicious fruit; but they brought only of one kind over, tho' there be several in China.

That which is most valued, and sent as a rarity to the Indies, is no bigger than a billiard ball; the rind is of a reddish yellow, fine, clear, and very smooth; yet the bigger sort seem to me the best; those of Quantum especially are very agreeable both to our palate and constitution: They are commonly given to sick people, being first softened with the fire, then filled with sugar, which, incorporating with their juice, makes a very sweet wholesome syrup, than which nothing can be better for the lungs. I know not how to distinguish them from those we have in Provence, and that are brought from Portugal, unless by their being more firm, that they are not easily parted from the rind, neither are they divided into segments like ours, tho' else they do not differ in shape.

When I was at Siam, most of my countrymen were transported with the goodness of certain oranges whose rind is rough, thick, almost all over green. They may perhaps be willing to know if China can shew any as good. As to matter of taste, a man does not always agree with himself, much less can he do so with others. All I can say to it is, that each is excellent in its kind, and that usually the last eaten seem best tasted.

Lemons, citrons, and what the Indians call Pampelimouses, are very common there, and therefore not so much regarded as in Europe; but they cultivate with a great deal of care a particular species of lemon-trees, whose fruit being no bigger than a walnut, perfectly round, green and sharp, are excellent in all kinds of ragousts, and these shrubs they often plant in boxes to adorn their courts and halls therewith.

But

But of all the trees that grow in China, that which produces tallow is in my opinion the most prodigious. This very proposition is no doubt surprising, and, there being no where else any thing like it, will seem a paradox; yet there is nothing more true, and perhaps, my lord, a particular account of the nature and properties of so extraordinary a tree will not be unwelcome.

It is about the height of our cherry-trees, the branches are crooked, the leaves shaped like a heart, of a lively brisk red, its bark smooth, the trunk short, and the head round and very thick. The fruit is inclosed within a rind divided into three segments, which open when it is ripe, and discover three white kernels of the bigness of a smallnut. All the branches are very thick of it, and this mixture of white and red makes at a distance the finest prospect in the world; the fields where these trees are planted, which they usually are in a direct line and checquerwise, shewing a far off like a vast parterre of flower-pots.

But the wonder is, that this kernel has all the qualities of tallow; its odour, colour, and consistency; and they also make candles of it, mixing only a little oil when they melt it to make the stuff more pliant. If they knew how to purify it as we do our tallow here, I doubt not but their candles might be as good as ours; but they make them very awkwardly, so that their smell is much stronger, their smoak thicker, and their light dimmer than ours.

It is true, the fault does not a little lie in the wick; for instead of cotton, tho' they are well stocked with that commodity, they use a small stick of a dry light wood, wrapp'd round with the inner part of a rush, which is very porous, and thereby is fitted for the filtration of the small particles of that gross matter by which the flame is preserved. This wick, besides that it does not burn so clear

as cotton, increases the smok, and causes an offensive smell.

Among the trees peculiar to the country I am speaking of, I must not omit those which bear pepper, not like that which we make use of in Europe, but another sort of seed endued with the same qualities. They grow on a tree like those which bear our walnuts, about as big as a pea, and of a grey colour, with little red streaks; when they are ripe they open of themselves, and discover a little stone as black as jet, casting a strong smell very offensive to the head, for which reason they gather them at intervals, not being able to remain on the tree a considerable time. Having exposed these grains to the sun, they cast away the stone, which is too hard and strong, and only use the rest, which, tho' it is quite so agreeable as our pepper, is however of good use in fauces.

That you may better judge of the fertility of that vast empire, be pleased, my lord, to take notice, that there is no place in the world like it for the abundance of roots and pulse; it is almost the only food of the inhabitants, who omit nothing to have them good. It would be too tedious to give you a list of all those different herbs; for besides those we have here, their ground brings forth several others unknown to us, on which they set a greater value. Their care and dexterity herein is beyond all our gardeners performances; and, if our walks exceed theirs, they exceed us in their kitchen garden.

Tho' this subject, common in itself, and not worthy your notice, yields no great rarity, I cannot forbear speaking of a kind of onions which I have seen they do not seed like ours, but towards the latter end of the season their leaves bear some small fruits, in the midst of which is a white onion like that in the ground. This does in time produce leaves, and those a like head, and so on, with

great

less and shorter as they are farther from the sun; the dimensions are so just, and the proportions so exact, that one would think them artificially done: and it seems as if nature were minded to show us that, even sporting, it can exceed the skill of the nicest artist.

What has been written of what they call *Petfi* here, it would be a great wonder. It is a kind of plant, that grows under water, whose root is joined to a white matter covered with a red skin, and divides itself into several heads, which, when fresh, are like a small nut. I have been assured that it has the property, that it softens brass, and as it renders it eatable, if a piece of the metal be put into the mouth with one of this plant.

I seemed the stranger to me, because the juice which issues from it is very mild and cooling, and is void of any of those corrosive qualities which seem necessary to work such an effect. As soon as we were arrived at Hamcheu, where *Petfi* is much eaten, we had the curiosity to inquire into the truth of it; and to that purpose took a piece of their money, which was made of a brittle sort of molten brass, and wrapp'd it up in a slice of this root; one of us, who had stronger teeth than the rest, broke it into several pieces, where the others, loath to strain their jaws, had not been able to do; but these broken pieces were as hard as ever, which made us think that the root had indeed no other virtue, than that by being chew'd round the brass it saved his teeth, which a piece of leather might have done as well. We then repeated the experiment at Kiahim, but with no better success; so true it is that these mighty wonders should be heard twice, before they are believed.

Who' China were not of itself so fruitful a country as I have represented it, the canals, which are

cut thro' it, were alone sufficient to make it so, but besides their great usefulness in watering the country, and farthering trade, they add also much beauty to it. They are generally of a clear deep, and running water, that glides so softly, that it can scarce be perceived. There is one usually in every province, which is to it instead of a road, and runs between two banks, built up with the coarse marble stones, bound together by others, which are let into them, in the same manner as we use to fasten our strong wooden boxes in the corners.

So little care was taken, during the wars, to preserve works of publick use, that this, tho' one of the noblest in the empire, was spoiled in several places, which is a great pity; for they are of great use, both to keep in the waters of these canals, and for those to walk on who drag the boats along. Besides these causeys they have the convenience of a great many bridges for the communication of the opposite shores; some are of three, some five, and some seven arches, the middlemost being always extraordinary high, that the boats may go through without putting down their masts. These bridges are built with large pieces of stone or marble, and very well framed, the supporters well fitted, and the piles so small that one would think they were at a distance to hang in the air. There are many of these bridges, so that where the canal runs in a straight line, as they usually do, it makes a prospect once stately and agreeable.

This great canal runs out into smaller ones on either side, which are again subdivided into small rivulets, that end at some great town or village; sometimes they discharge themselves into some lake or great pond, out of which all the adjacent country is watered; so that these clear and plentiful streams are embellished by so many fine bridges, bound

and convenient banks, equally distributed to vast vast plains, covered with a numberless multitude of boats and barges, and crowned (if I may use the expression) with a prodigious number of towers and cities, whose ditches it fills, and whose streets it forms, does at once make that country the most fruitful and the most beautiful in the world.

Surprised, and as it were astonished at so noble a sight, I have sometimes bore a secret envy to China in Europe's behalf, which must own that it has nothing in that kind to be compared to her. What would it be then, if that art which in the wildest and most unlikely places has raised magnificent palaces, gardens and groves, had been employed in that rich land, to which nature has been lavish of her most precious gifts?

The Chinese say their country was formerly totally overflowed, and that by main labour they drained the water by cutting it a way thro' these useful canals. If this be true, I cannot enough admire at once the boldness and industry of their workmen, who have thus made great artificial rivers, and of a kind of levees, as it were, created the most fertile plains in the world.

It will scarce be believed, that men so ignorant in the principles of physicks, and the art of levelling, could bring forth a work as that to perfection; yet it is certain that these canals were dug by men; for they are usually a strait, the distribution is equal and orderly: there are flood-gates made for the rivers to let in their water at, and others to let it out when they are too full; so that it cannot be doubted but that the Chinese are only beholding to their own industry for that great conveniency.

Among all those canals in the southern provinces, the most famous is called the Great Canal, because it passes thro' the whole country from Canton, which

lies southward to Peking, situated in the northerly parts of the empire. You may travel a short day's journey by land to Moilin, that does on one side bound the province of Kiamfi. From this mountain issue two rivers: one runs southwards to the sea, and the other as far as the river of Nankim, whence the Yellow river, and several canals, you may procure by water to the very mountains of Tartary.

But, by reason in this huge extent of ground, or above four hundred leagues in length, the ground is not level, or, hath not a descent proper for the emanation of the waters, it was necessary to set a great number of sluices a work. They tell them so in the relations, notwithstanding they be much different from ours. They are water-gates, and as it were certain torrents, that are precipitated from one canal into another, more or less rapid, according to the difference of their level: Now, to cause the barques to ascend, they make use of a great company of men, who are maintained for that purpose near the sluice. After they have drawn cable to the right and left to lay hold of the barque, in such a manner that it cannot escape from them, the men use capstans, by the help of which they raise it by little and little, by the main force of their arms. All such time as it be in the upper canal, in a condition to continue its voyage whither it is bound. This same labour is tedious, toilsome, and exceedingly dangerous. They would be wonderfully surpris'd should they behold with what easiness our mariners who opens and shuts the gates of our places, raises the longest and heaviest laden barques securely to ascend and descend.

I have observed in some places of China, where the waters of two canals or channels have no communication together, yet for all that, they make the boats to pass from the one to the other, notwithstanding

The level may be different above fifteen feet : and thus they go to work. At the end of the canal they have built a double Glacis, or sloping bank of earth, which, uniting at the point, extends up on both sides up to the surface of the water. When the barque is in the lower channel, they raise it by the help of several capstans to the top of the first Glacis, so far, till, being raised to the top, it falls back again by its own weight along the second Glacis, into the water of the upper channel, where it floats away during a pretty while, like an arrow out of a bow ; and they make it descend after the same manner proportionably. I cannot imagine how these barques, being commonly very long and heavy laden, escape being split in the middle, when they are poised in the air upon this acute angle, for considering that length, the lever must make a strange effect upon it ; yet do I not see of any accident happen thereupon. I have seen it many times that way, and all the labourers take when they have no mind to go above, & to tie themselves fast to some cable or fear of being tofs'd from prow to poop.

There are with us such sluices in the grand canal, because the upper barques, that are as large as our frigates, could not be raised by force of arm, nay, and would certainly be split in the fall ; all the difficulty consists in surmounting these torrents, of which I have seen ; yet this is what they perform successfully, who not without some trouble experience.

These water-sluices, as they call them, are necessary for the transportation of grain and stuffs, which they fetch from the southern provinces to Peking. Therefore, if we may give credit to the account of these barques, from eighty to an hundred, they make a voyage once a year, and are thought for the emperor, without counting

counting those of particular persons whose number is infinite. When these prodigious works are set out, one would think they carry the goods of the kingdoms of the East, and that the whole of those voyages alone was capable of supplying the whole of Tartary wherewithal to subsist for several years; and for all that, Pekin alone hath the benefit of it, and it would be as good as nothing, did not the province contribute besides to the maintenance of the inhabitants of that vast city.

The Chinese are not only contented with the channels for the convenience of travellers, but they do also dig many others to catch the rain-water, wherewith they water the fields; in time of drought, more especially in the northern provinces. During the whole summer, you may see your country people busied in raising this water into abundance of small ditches, which they dig across the field. In other places they dig great reservoirs of turf, whose bottom is levelled about the level of the ground about it, in case of necessity. Besides, they dig pits where in Xensi and Xansi, for want of rain, they dig pits from twenty to an hundred fathoms from which they draw water by an incredible toil. Now, if by chance they meet with a spring of water, it is worth observing how cunningly they husband it; they sustain it by banks in the highest places; they turn it here and there in hundred different ways, that all the country may reap the benefit of it; they draw it, by drawing it by degrees, according as every one hath occasion for it, insomuch that a small rivulet, well managed, does sometimes produce the fertility of a whole province.

The rivers of China are no less considerable than its canals; there are two especially, which the relations have made famous. The first is called the

which they commonly translate the Son of Heaven, but I am afraid they are mistaken; for the character with which the Chinese write Yam, is different from that which signifies the Sea, although the form and pronunciation may have some affinity. It has several significations that this letter may have, but which they gave it in former times makes for our purpose. Under the reign of the emperor Yon, it signified a province of China, limited by this river on the north; and it is somewhat probable, that they gave this same name to the river, because the prince drain'd all the water that overflow'd the whole country into it.

This flood takes its rise in the province of Yunnan, crosses the provinces of Suchven, Huquam, and Nankim; and after it hath watered four kingdoms, far and wide for 400 leagues together, it discharges into the east sea, overagainst the isle of Cunnan, which was made by the sand and mud which this river bears along with it; the Chinese have a proverb amongst them, that says, "The Sea hath no bounds, and the Kiam no bottom.†" And, in truth, in some places there is none to be found; in others, they pretend there is two or three hundred fathom water. I am nevertheless persuaded, that their pilots, that carry not above fifty or sixty fathom cord at longest, never had the curiosity to sound so deep as three hundred fathom; and the impossibility of finding the bottom, with their ordinary plummet, is sufficient, in my opinion, to incline them to such like hyperbole's.

I have many times sailed upon this river; I have moreover diligently observed its course and breadth from Nankim, to the mouth of another river, into which men enter to pursue their way to Canton. It is off of Nankim thirty leagues from the sea, a little

† *Hai you pim : Kiam you si.*

little half league broad ; the passage is dangerous, and becomes more and more so every day for its shipwrecks. In its course, which is exceeding rapid, it forms a great number of rapids, all of them very beneficial to the province, by reason of that multitude of bulrushes, which grow six foot high, that it produceth, serving for fuel to all the cities thereabouts ; for they have scarce wood enough for buildings and ships. They pay a great revenue, and the emperor draws considerable duties from them.

The rivers, which the torrents of the mountains do sometimes swell extraordinarily, grow so rapid, that many times they bear away the islands with them, or lessen them by the half, and form other new ones in some other place ; and one cannot but admire to see them change place in such a short time, just as if by diving they had paid riddles which from one place to another. These great alterations do not always happen ; but there is observed such considerable change every year, that the mandarines, lest they should be mistaken, get them to be measured every three years, to augment or diminish the imposts or duties, according to the condition they are found to be in.

The second river of China is called Hoangho, as much as to say, the Yellow River, because the earth it sweeps away with it, especially in times of great rains, gives it that colour. I have seen a great many others, whose waters, at certain seasons of the year, are so over charged with mud, and so gross and thick, that they rather resemble torrents of mud than real rivers. The Hoangho takes its source at the extremity of the mountains that bound the province of Suchyen in the west, from whence it throws itself into Tartary, where it flows for some time all along the great wall, at which it enters China, between the provinces of Nanchi and Szechuen.

ers the province of Honan, and when one part of the province of Nankim, are 600 leagues into the land, it dis- tance into the east sea, not far from Amoy. I have cross'd it, and coasted it ; it is every where very broad and deep, yet neither deep nor navigable to speak of.

The river hath in former times caused great de- struction in China, and they are still forced, to this day, to keep up the waters in certain places by raising the banks, which notwithstanding does not keep the cities thereabouts from apprehensions of inundation. So likewise have they been careful in the province of Honan, the ground lying ve- ry low thereabouts, to surround the greatest part of the cities about a mile from the walls, with a rampart, called with turf, to prevent being surpris'd by accidents and casualties in case the bank be broken, as happened about fifty-two years ago. When the emperor, endeavouring to force a rebel (who for a long time laid close siege to the city of Hienan) to draw off, caused one part of the banks to be broken down, thereby to drown the rebels. But the relief, he afforded the city, proved more fatal than the fury of the besiegers would have been ; the whole province almost was laid under water, together with many cities and abundance of villages, above three hundred thou- sand persons drowned in the metropolis, amongst whom were some of our missionaries, who at that time had a numerous flock of christians, and there- by lost their church and their lives.

The low country ever since is become a kind of a marsh or lake ; not but that they have some design to repair the loss, but the undertaking is difficult and expensive. The sovereign court, that takes care of public works, importuned the emperor more than once to send father Verbiest thither, and perad- venture

venture, that prince would have been content to have done at last, but he discovered that the emperor's intention was the use of this pretence, to remove him from court, and that they might engage him in a difficult enterprize to destroy him; or out of which he might have disintangled himself with any ease.

There is to be seen in China abundance of other rivers less famous, but yet more useful for commerce and trade.

Since they afford nothing uncommon, I will be to abuse your patience, sir, to descend to the particulars. As to what concerns fountains, I know to be wish'd there were more of them, and better. 'Tis certain that their usual waters are not good, which, perhaps, hath obliged the inhabitants, especially in the southern provinces, to drink it always warm; but because warm water is unpalatable and nauseous, they bethought themselves of putting three leaves of a tree to it, to give it a gusto. Those of tea learned to be the best, and so they frequently make use of it.

It may be also, that God Almighty, whose providence hath so universally provided for the wants of his people, and, if I may be bold to say, for their delight and pleasure, would not deprive China of that which is necessary to life; so that for to supply the defect of wells and fountains, which the nature of the ground hath made every where salt and brackish, he hath been pleased to produce that species of a particular tree in abundance, whose leaves serve not only to purge the waters from the noxious qualities, but also to make them wholesome and pleasant.

We are assured that there are to be found in China, amongst fountains, several that flow and ebb as regularly as the sea doth; whether it be that they have some communication with the sea, or by certain subterraneous conveyances and passages, or

When it is in passing through certain canals, they are impregnated with salts and spirits, and to cause this fermentation, I leave others to determine.

Since I have begun to speak of the different waters of China, I cannot pass over in silence the lakes and ponds that are every where almost to be seen in all the provinces. Those, that are produced in the torrents from the mountains, lay waste the lands, and render the whole country during summer barren, sandy, and full of flints. Those, that arise from springs, abound in fish, and yield a considerable revenue to the emperor by the salt they afford. There is one of them amongst the rest, if I be not mistaken it is in Kansu, in the middle whereof appears a small island, where people divert themselves, during the excessive heat, cooling themselves, by throwing water into the air and making artificial rain. They find here a crust of a certain salt very white, and of a pleasant scent, which they continue all the summer long, with that success, that the salt would be sufficient for the whole province, if it were as salt as that of the sea; they commonly make use of it to season meat withal.

Altho' I have not seen all those famous lakes in China, wherunto historians ascribe so many miracles, yet shall I relate something which I do not care to warrant for gospel; which nevertheless, will let you understand the genius of the country, where people so easily give credit to what seems most incredible.

In the province of Fokien there is one whose water is green, and changes into copper. They have built a palace upon the banks of another not far distant from the former, in an apartment of which one hears the ringing of bells every time Heaven threatens a storm. There are waters in the province of Quenture that change colour every year. In summer and in winter they are very clear: in autumn they

they are a blue, but of such a fine blue, that they make use of it to dye stuffs.

In that place is to be seen a mountain full of caverns, whose very aspect is very terrible, in which is found a lake of that nature, that if one throw stone into it, one may hear a noise like a crash, sometime after there ariseth a great mist, which immediately dissolves into water.

But the most famous of them all is, that of the province of Yunnan. The Chinese would not you believe that this lake came all on the sudden during an earthquake that swallowed up all the country with its inhabitants. This was a just judgement upon them for their wickedness, for they were very dissolute livers. Of all that were there at that time, there was but one child that was saved, which they found in the middle of the lake borne up upon a piece of wood.

In the isle of Hayuan, belonging to China, there is a sort of water, whether it be lake or fountain, I know not, that petrifies fish. I myself have brought over crawfish, that, preserving their inward natural figure, are so far changed into stone, that the claws and body of them are very hard, very solid, and little differing from stone. These wonders of nature are not so far particular to China, but the like may be met with elsewhere, and if one does not credit all the Chinese relate, it is not because there is sometimes no foundation for their stories, but because they have somewhat of the air of fable and hyperbolical in them, that would make a man even suspect the truth itself.

I wish, with all my heart, sir, I were able to explain all the kinds of fish that the rivers and lakes furnish them with, as well as those that are caught upon their coasts (so that I might fully satisfy the subject, I have undertaken) but to tell you the truth, I am not well enough informed to engage

shall suppose a particular relation of them; I have seen, as far as I can guess, all the fish in China, that we have in Europe: I have taken notice of a great many others that I did not know, not so much as their names, there is all I can say of it: besides that I shall mention to you, what possibly you may have read in the relations, touching the fish they call the golden river fish; that are found in divers provinces, and are a great beauty and ornament to the courts and gardens of great persons.

They are commonly of a finger's length, and of a proportionable thickness; the male is of a most delicate red, from the head to the middle of the body, and further; the rest, together with the tail, is gilded; but with such a glittering and burnish'd gold, that all red gildings cannot come near it. The female is white, its tail, nay and one part of its body, perfectly wash'd over with silver; the tail of both of them is not even and flat as that of other fish, but fashioned like a nosegay, thick and long, which gives a particular grace to this pretty animal, and sets it off, being besides perfectly well proportioned.

Those who would breed them, ought to have great care, for they are extraordinary tender, and sensible of the least injuries of the air. They put them into a great bason, such as are in gardens, very deep and large, at the bottom of which they are wont to place an earthen pot turned upside down, full of holes on the sides, that they may retire into it when it is very hot weather, and by that means shelter themselves from the sun. They likewise throw upon the surface of the water some particular herbs that keep always green, and maintain the coolness. This water is to be changed two or three times a week, or so that fresh water may be put in, according as the bason is emptied, which must never be left dry. If one be obliged to remove the

fish from one vase to another, great care must be taken not to touch them with the hands; all those that are touched die quickly after, and to move up you must for that purpose make use of a little thread purse, fastened at the upper end of a hoop, into which they are insensibly engaged; when they are once got into it of themselves, one must take heed of hurting them, and be sure to hold them still for the first, which empties but slowly, and gives time to transport them to the other vase. Any great noise, as of a cannon, or of thunder, too strong a smell, too violent a motion, are all very harmful to them; yea, and sometimes occasion their dying; as I have observed at sea every time they discharged the cannon, or melted pitch and tar, killed them. They live almost upon nothing; those insensible worms that are bred in the water, or those small earthy particles that are mix'd with it, suffice in a manner to keep them alive. They do, notwithstanding, throw in little balls of paste now and then, but there is nothing better than a wafer, which is made of a kind of pap, of which they are extremely fond, which indeed is very suitable to their natural delicacy and tenderness. In hot countries they multiply very much, provided care be taken to refresh their eggs, which swim upon the water, which the fish most commonly eat: They place them in a particular vase exposed to the sun, and there they preserve them till the heat hatcheth them; the fish come out of a black colour, which some of them keep ever after, but it is changed by little and little into other colours, into red, white, gold, and silver, according to their different kind: the gold and silver shine at the extremity of the tail, and expand themselves somewhat more or less, according to their particular disposition.

All this, sir, and other marvels of this universe, makes us acknowledge the finger of God every where.

He, who for our sakes hath embellished the world many thousand ways. He is not only content to enlighten the heavens, and enrich the earth, but descends into the abysses, into the very waters, where he hath left some footsteps of his profound wisdom; and not to mention those prodigious monsters, that seem to be made to astonish nature, he hath likewise created those wonderful fish I but now described, which, as little as they are, yet by their singular beauty are the subject of our admiration, and furnish us with some faint ideas of the greatness of the wise Creator.

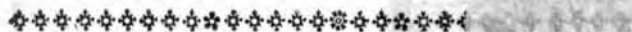
Thus I have presented you, sir, in a compendium, the draught, and as it were the map of that country, which I designed to give you some knowledge of: this is but the outside, and, if I may so say, but the body of that empire, whose soul and spirit is dispersed thro' its inhabitants. Peradventure, when you shall have read what I have writ to you about it, you will be apt to inquire what people they be who are so happy as to receive the greatest, fairest, and most fertile portion of the earth for their inheritance; such a land, in a word, that it wants nothing to make it a real Land of Promise, but to be cultivated by God's people, and inhabited by true Israelites indeed. If we had nothing, as the Hebrews had, but the red sea and wilderness to go through, probably forty years might suffice to bring it under subjection to the gospel: but that vast extent of land, those infinite and unpracticable land journies, which were capable of putting a stop to Moses and the prophets, are a great stop to the zeal of the ministers of Jesus Christ, and lessen the number of his true apostles.

That, as the Hebrews did, whom Moses led to discover the Promised Land, represent the immense richness, and most precious harvest that China promises to the labourers in the vineyards, we

have hopes that probably the prospect of an abundant crop might in time prevail with all the Sons to come and reap it; at least, I hope that my testimony will not be insignificant, and that the more than ordinary zeal of the small company of missionaries, that shall succeed me, will make amends for the vast number of those which such a vast empire might demand. I am, with all the respect imaginable,

S I R,

*Your most humble,
and most affectionate servant,*



LETTER V.

To the Marquis de Torfi, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Of the peculiar Character of the Chinese Nation, its Antiquity, Nobility, Manners, and its good and bad Qualities.

My Lord,

SEeing in the employment where with the King hath honoured you, and which you do already discharge with so much wisdom, nothing can contribute more to promote you to that high pitch of perfection, that all Europe expects from you, than the exact knowledge of the manners and genius of foreigners, I could imagine no less than that, by ordering me to write to you concerning the empire of China, you did particularly desire to learn what was the character of its inhabitants.

if we judge of the future by preceding
regime, such informations would perhaps stand you
in no stead. Hitherto France hath had nothing to
do with that people, and nature seems to have placed
them at such a distance from us, on purpose that
we ought have no concern with them. But under
the reign of Lewis the Great, for whom nature her-
self hath so often changed her laws, is any thing
impossible? Nay, will not Heaven, which seems to
employ all nations to make him renowned,
order China as proud and haughty as it is, to con-
tribute something to his glory?

It is all human probability, under your mini-
stry, my lord, that we shall behold the most flourish-
ing and mighty empire of the West, unite itself with
the most puissant realm in all Europe. And perhaps,
if it had not been for this fatal war, the dire conse-
quences of which have expanded themselves as far as
the extremities of the universe, you would ere this
have given audience to the envoys of a prince, who
never acknowledged any other sovereign besides
himself in the world. This negotiation, so glo-
rious for you, and so much conducing to the esta-
blishment of religion, which the iniquity of the times
hitherto interrupted, may be hereafter set afoot
again, and it is on purpose to dispose and incline you
to the same, that I presume to take the liberty, my
lord, to let you understand the character of those
who are to be employed therein.

The Chinese are so ancient in the world, that it
is as difficult with them as to their original, as with great
rivers whose source can scarce be discovered. It is
necessary for that purpose, to look back farther than
our profane histories, for their chronology sur-
passes even the common account of the creation of
the world.

It is very true, the vulgar history of that grand
monarchy is not only dubious, but manifestly false,

for it computes forty thousand years since the foundation of the empire; but the account given by the learned and judicious among them, comes so well confirmed, so evidently proved, and established by so constant a tradition, that one cannot call it in question among them, without passing for a ridiculous and as they themselves express it, for a heretical.

According to this history, which none of their learned men ever questioned, China hath had its kings for above four thousand years, that have continued to this present time without any interruption. The same family hath not been always seated upon the throne; there have been twenty-two different families, that have produced two hundred and thirty five emperors. Several doctors carry this number back six hundred years higher; their opinion depends on probable grounds, but we may rely upon the history which makes very much for the grand antiquity of China, since five or six hundred years, more or less, does not produce any notable difference in its antiquity.

Certainly, after all the inquiries and examinations that have been made into this chronology, it is no longer left to our liberty to doubt of it. The histories that are the most authentickly received amongst us: and it ought so much the rather to be believed, forasmuch as it was incapable of admitting any alteration from foreigners; forasmuch as it is always current amongst the knowing men of that country, for true, sure, and uncontested. Besides, it is written in a natural, plain, unaffected style, that carries with it that air of verity that ever possesses and besides, Confucius, esteemed for his gravity, simplicity, sincerity and uprightness, never doubted of it; nay, and did even establish his whole doctrine thereupon, five hundred and fifty years before the birth of our Saviour, because his books are very conformable to the holy scripture, in relation to the

ages of the first men; for they assure us that
 1. Chinnum, an hundred and fifty years; Chinnum,
 2. hundred and forty; Hoamti, an hundred and
 3. Yao, an hundred and eighteen; and so for
 the rest, always decreasing, conformable to what
 Holy writ teaches us. In a word, the eclipses, ob-
 served at that time must needs happen in effect,
 which they could not know, but by observation,
 and not by any calculations, since they never had
 any ones. All this persuades us that there is
 much certainty in the prophane history of the
 world, if we can reasonably doubt of that of
 China.

In a word, the empire was involved in the com-
 mon fate of all others, whose origin is very incon-
 siderable. It seems probable that the children, or
 grand-children, of Noah dispers'd themselves into
 Asia, and at length penetrated as far as this part
 of China, that is most westerly, which is called at
 this day Xan and Xenfi. They lived at the be-
 ginning in families, and the kings were fathers, to
 whom a long continuance of years, abundance of
 riches, and other country pastoral riches added some
 authority.

Yohi was the first that laid the foundation of the
 monarchy: his wisdom, discretion, his good morals,
 power, and reputation, which his great age had ac-
 quired him, made them give ear to him, as to an
 elder. He regulated all private, as well as politick
 and religious matters, insomuch that the state was in
 a very flourishing condition in a short time; his sub-
 jects possessed the province of Honan at first, and
 some years after all the lands and territories that
 extended as far as the south sea.

It is probable that the Chinese, from their very
 original, did look upon themselves as something
 more than other men, like to those princes, who, as
 soon as they are born, discover a certain natural

loftiness that ever distinguishes them from the vulgar. Whether it was that the neighbouring kingdoms were barbarous, or inferior to them in point of wisdom, I don't know; but at that very time they laid down a maxim of state amongst themselves, *To have no commerce with foreigners and strangers, but just as much as should be necessary to receive their homage.* Neither did they court and seek after these badges of sovereignty out of a spirit of ambition, but that they might have the better opportunity to prescribe to other people of the world laws and constitutions of perfect government.

So that when any one amongst their tributaries failed to appear at the time appointed, they did not oblige him by open force to submit; but on the contrary had compassion on him. *What do we care by it, say they, if he still remain barbarous? Since he is soaverse as wisdom, he needs to blame no body but himself; and if he shall fail in his duty thro' particular weaknesses,*

This grave policy acquired the Chinese so great a reputation, that throughout all the Indies, all Tartary and Persia, look'd upon them as the wonders of the world; yea, and the people of Japan had such an high conceit of them, that when St. Xavier brought the faith amongst them, Calixtus Pope at that time came short of her pristine pride; one of the great reasons, they objected against the good man, was, that a nation so wise, so intelligent, had not yet embraced it.

But this piece of policy that induced them to distinguish themselves from others, which at first might probably be a profitable maxim, degenerated afterwards into pride. They look'd upon themselves as a chosen elect people, that Heaven had produced in the center of the universe to give them a law; a people only capable to instruct, civilize, and govern nations. They fancied other men but as dwarfs and pitiful monsters, thrown by the extremities of

as the throfs and off-scouring of nature; whereas the Chinese, placed in the middle of the world, had about received from God Almighty a rational form and shape, and a true size. Their ancient mans are filled with such like figures, and with a great many emblems apt to inspire that disdain they shew'd of all mankind.

But perceiving the Europeans instructed in all sorts of sciences, they were struck with astonishment. *How can it possibly be,* said they, *that a people so far remote from us should have any wit or capacity? They have never perused our books; they were never modell'd by our laws, and yet they speak, discourse, and argue aright as we do.*

Our workmanship, as stuffs, clocks, watches, mathematical instruments, and such like curiosities, surpris'd them still more; for they imagin'd, that dextrous and expert artificers were no where to be met with but in China. Then they began to understand, that we were not so barbarous as they imagin'd; and said in a joking way, *We supposed all other people blind, and that nature had bestowed eyes upon none but the Chinese; but we find now, that this is not universally true, if the Europeans do not see so clearly as we, they have at least an eye open.*

I have taken notice of some Frenchmen so moved at this ridiculous vanity, that they were not masters of their passions; they would possibly have done better to have laugh'd at this vanity, or at least have excus'd it, since the Chinese, till that time, had seen none but Indians and Tartars, and they beheld the West at a distance, as we at present behold the Terra Australis Incognita, and forests of Canada: Now, if at 300 leagues distance from Quebec we found Iroquian mathematicians, or learned Alchemists, that could discover to us a new philosophy, more clear, comprehensive, and more perfect

fect than ours, we should be no less than the Chinese, for preferring ourselves to that people, and for having hitherto termed them Barbarians.

Abating this pride, you must confess that the Chinese nation hath been endued with rare qualities with a great deal of politeness in managing the affairs of the world, with great sense and regularity in their business, with much zeal for the public good, true and just ideas of government, with genius, mean indeed as to speculative sciences, but yet right and sure in morality, which they have always preserved very conformable to reason.

The people principally applied themselves to the education of children in their families; they esteemed agriculture above all other things; they were laborious to excess, loving and understanding commerce and trading perfectly well. Judges and governors of cities affected an outside gravity, sobriety at their tables, moderation in house-keeping, and equity in all their judgments, which gained love and respect from all the people in general. The emperor placed his happiness in nothing more than to procure for his subjects; and looked upon himself not so much a king of a mighty state, as a father of a numerous family.

This character of China, my lord, that I have given you, is not flattering, but faithfully deduced from its own history, that furnishes us with an infinite number of examples of the conspicuous wisdom that hath been so long the soul that directs its government. 'Tis true indeed, the civil wars, the weak, or wicked kings, and the power of foreigners, have from time to time disturbed this happy order: whether the fundamental laws of the state were excellent, or the people from their crimes endued with happy dispositions, is not material; but it is most certain, these fatal and troublesome intervals

val, did not long continue; if so be they were never so little left to their own disposal, they flower again in their former course; and we at this very day, in the midst of that corruption, which the domestick troubles and commerce with the Tartars have introduced, some footsteps of their ancient probity remaining.

I do not pretend, my lord, to enlarge any further upon this subject. I know very well that it is not that I have the honour to write to you, and that a history; besides, they are about translating into French that history which the Chinese themselves have given us; and I am confident it will please, equally by its novelty, but by the extraordinary matters it contains.

I thought it enough in this place to draw you out the portraiture of the present state of China, in relation to the manners and customs of its people; could decypher it in a few words, by telling you that they live there as we do in Europe. Avarice, ambition, and pleasure go a great way in all their transactions. They cozen and cheat in traffick; injustice reigns in sovereign courts; intrigue busy both princes and courtiers. In the mean time, persons of quality take so many measures for concealment, and the out-works are so well guarded, that if a stranger be not careful to be instructed concerning affairs, to the bottom, he must think that every thing is perfectly well regulated. Herein all the Chinese resemble the Europeans, in other respects they are wholly unlike. Their countenance, air, language, disposition, civilities, manners, and behaviour are not only different from ours, but also from all that we can find in all other nations of the world.

Without doubt, my lord, you have taken notice of the figures that are painted upon the porcelaine dishes and cabinets that come from China; our

our pictures in Europe do always represent us, and those of China make them mained and ridged. They are not so ill-favoured as they make themselves: they do not indeed entertain the same idea of beauty which we do. They would have a man big, tall, and gross; they would have a woman a broad forehead, eyes little and flat, a short nose, great ears, a mouth of a middle size, a long beard, and black hair. That curious feature that lively aspect, that stately and noble carriage, that deportment the French so much esteem, does not at all please them. He is a handsome man that fills an elbow chair, that by his size and bulk can look big. As for their colour, they are naturally as fair as we, especially towards the North: but being the men take no care of themselves, travel much, wear upon their head nothing but a little bonnet, very improper to defend their face from the sun-beams, they are commonly so tawny as the Portuguese in the Indies: the people also of the provinces of Quam-tun and Fo-nan, by reason of the excessive heat, and working half naked, are of a dun complexion.

As much as the men neglect themselves in this particular, so much do the women take all the care imaginable to preserve themselves. I am not sure if painting be usual with them; but I have been told that they rub their faces every morning with a sort of white meal, which rather softens than mends their complexion. They have all of them little eyes, and short noses; in other things they come nothing short of the European ladies, but their modesty, so natural to them, does infinitely set off their handsomeness; a little collar of white sattin, fastened to a veil, keeps their light, and covers their neck all over. Their hands are always hid in long sleeves; they tread softly and gingerly, with their eyes upon the ground, their

the Chinese are not like ; and a man would imagine, to look on them, that they were a company of monks or devotees by profession, set apart and separated from the world, only taken up in the service of God. So that it is observable, that customs have many times more power to perplex and trouble the human sex, than the most austere and rigid virtues. And it were a thing to be desired, that mankind were able to obtain from Christian studies here, what the practice of the world hath for so many ages inspired into the idolatrous Chinese.

This modesty, nevertheless, does not hinder them from their vanity incident to their sex ; the more they are confined, the less they love solitude ; they dress themselves gorgeously, and spend all the morning in making themselves fine, thinking they may be seen in the day-time, altho', perhaps, they are not by any one, but their own domesticks. Their head-dress, which usually consists of several locks buckled up, interlaced with flowers of gold and silver, makes but an odd kind of a figure. But I neither can, nor will, my lord, give you a particular description of it, because, I know you do not expect it from me. However, I am persuaded, if people should see the model of this in France, they would go near to be terrified to quit that extravagant burden of adorning what they wear, and dress themselves after the modesty and simplicity of the Chinese.

The ladies wear, as men do, a long sattin or cloth of gold, red, blue, or green, according to their particular fancy ; the elder sort habit themselves in black or purple ; they wear, besides that, a sort of furrow, the sleeves whereof are extremely wide, and trail upon the ground, when they have no occasion to hold them up. But that which distinguisheth them from all the women in the world,

world, and does in a manner make a particular species of them, is, the littleness of their feet, and hence lies the more essential point of their beauty. This is one of the most wonderful and strange things in the world: They affect this to that degree, that they would justly be accused of folly, did not an extravagant and ancient custom (which, as the business of the mode, evermore prevails over the greatest convenience) oblige them to follow the stream, and comply with the custom of the country.

So soon as ever the girls are born, the mothers take care to tie their feet extremely hard, that they may not grow: Nature, that seems to be disposed for this torment, does more easily comply with it than one could imagine; nay, one does not perceive that their health is impaired thereon. Their shoes of sattin, embroidered with gold, silver, and silk, are extraordinary neat; and though they are very little, yet they strive to shew them. When they go for walk they do (which one would not at first believe) and would walk all day long, by their good will, if they had liberty to go abroad. Some have been persuaded that it was an invention of the ancient Chinese, who, to bring women under a necessity of keeping within doors, brought it into fashion. I have more than once inquired about it of the Chinese themselves, but they never heard of any such reason. *These are idle tales.* Says one of them, smiling, *our fore-fathers knew as well as we do, to believe, that, in retrenching half of their feet, they could be deprived of the pleasure of walking, and of longing to see the world.*

If people would have given themselves the trouble to have consulted the relations concerning the aspect and mien of the Chinese women, it would not have been so easy a matter to impose upon the easiness of the ladies of Paris, who entertained a poor Frenchwoman the last year, giving her all manner

moment of relief, because she said she was an out-
cast woman, and of one of the best families in
China. This accident surpris'd all curious persons,
and the marquis de Croisi told me, he would take
it as a favour if I would examine the truth of the
story.

Charity, added he, is no less acceptable to God,
when it is misplaced upon objects that deserve it
not. If the nature of giving the money were
the only thing in question, it would be scarce
worth the while to detect the fraud where a
person pretends necessity: but in the case before
us, the maid said she was a heathen, that she
was exhorted long since to be converted; that
she understood rightly, or at least pretended to
understand our mysteries; in fine, she desired to
embrace our religion; and they were just upon
the point to baptize her. If she be a Chinese,
well and good: we have cause to admire di-
vine providence for bringing this soul from so
remote a place, to be admitted into the bosom
of the church: but if she be a Frenchwoman,
who, probably, had been baptiz'd from her in-
fancy, this abuse of the sacrament that she is go-
ing to receive a second time, is a sacrilege de-
serving the severest punishment; of which sacri-
lages alone that willist her become guilty them-
selves.

I was already much prepossessed with an ill o-
pinion of this pretended Chinese; but, besides the
report of the marquis de Croisi, I thought it would
be good to sit out the business to the bottom,
to perceive those that were any ways concerned
therein. When I understood that I would come
to see her, she was very much disturbed. He
never a Chinese father, says she, but one of the
missionaries, whom the revolution of Siam
had brought here. Nay, they had much ado to
find

find her, when I appeared ; they sought for her up and down a good while, and at length unknownell'd her, and perswaded her to make her appearance.

So soon as I saw her, I had no need of communication ; the features of her face, her gait, her looks, her whole behaviour betray'd her. She sigh'd in speaking French, that she did not well understand the language ; but, besides that the placing of the words, which she endeavoured to pronounce confusedly, was altogether natural, when it source ever got by strangers, she did also pronounce with a great deal of firmness, several letters not to be use with the Chinese, which it is impossible for them to express.

After the first discourses, I demanded of what province, and what family of China she was, and by what strange adventure she was at such a great distance from her country ? *I am of Peking itself,* says she, *the metropolis of the empire, born in the emperor's palace, brought up at court, and daughter to prince Coronné : A prince who does dispose so verieignly every thing ; more master, and more powerful than the emperor himself, whose pleasures are never interrupted by the cares of publick affairs ; who, being little concerned at the good or bad condition of the empire, confines all his ambition in the rendering himself happy, and to lead an easy and pleasant life.*

I embarked with my mother, who had a design to pass into Japan, there to treat of a marriage for me. In the passage, our vessel was attacked by a Holland pirate, that took it, and blew it up, and brought me away prisoner. However, the barbarous pirate took such care of me, as did something sweeten my captivity, if the loss of my mother had not reduced me to a disconsolate condition, for she died before my eyes ; and the representation of so fatal an accident, that lay night and day heavy upon my spirit, would scarce permit me to reflect upon the many kind offices he did me.

My condition was not so deplorable as I imagined; the glorious Hollander was at length overtaken by a French privateer: I was a second time a captive, and treated by the new captain with so much civility, that I was at that very moment apprehensive that my grief might increase, and that the excess of sufferings, that endures in this world, is never so great but may become still more miserable. This voyage was to me the most, most dangerous, and accompanied with much sorrow and bitterness. At length we came to a place which I knew not; they brought me out of the ship, and, after they had dragged me through several provinces, they barbarously forsook me, and I found myself left alone, comfortless, and without any support in the middle of this great city, which I hear called Peking.

But Heav'n hath not quite forsaken me; the word Peking, the only word by which I could make known my country, brought me out of misery. Some ladies, at the hearing of this word, were moved with compassion, and brought me into their house, and have ever since treated me with so much charity, that I do not know if I ought to complain of fate that hath conducted me into good hands.

She had indeed, some cause to be well pleased with me for, much better in effect, than she could reasonably expect. They treated her as a maid of some noble family; nay, it was an hundred pound to a penny but they had given her the quality of princess Corauid, a name much better known in France than China, where this is yet unknown. They told me moreover that divers persons were impatient to do her a kindness, and that Monsieur N. one of our most famous writers, had already composed three extraordinary eloquent letters in her name; one for the Emperor, another for prince Coronné, and the third for some other prince of her family. He hath, without doubt, what he deserved from the persons

that engaged him in it; yet I do not believe that China will ever thank him for it.

For my part, my lord, I do not think that the true recital of this adventure appeared to me somewhat fabulous, and carries with it an air romantick enough to undeceive those, whom an excess of charity had not quite blinded. Prince Coronado is a monarch, that hath not the least appearance of truth in it. The birth of a maid in a palace, where there is none but eunuchs, is still more hard to be believed. The Hollanders are not at war with the Chinese, and it is not their best way to fall out with them, by assaulting their ships.

The Chinese dames, that fear ever to go out of their houses, do not care for undertaking long voyages at sea: and the match they were going to manage is no more likely than that a princess of France should embark at Brest, to sail into the Indies to espouse some Mandarin of Siam.

Besides, we know all the vessels that we have taken from the Hollanders, as well as those that are arrived in France from the Indies: we know the captains of them, we know their prizes, their engagements, their adventures, and yet we hear not one word of what our Chinese relates. Now, if she be so unfortunate as to be found in the streets of Paris miserable, forlorn, and unknown, she ought not so much to lay the fault upon our French people, as upon her ill fortune that took no care to place her home in this world.

But to convince all those who were present at my interview, I put divers questions to her about the principal cities in China; I examined her concerning the money, their writing, the characters and language of the country. She told me she had often travelled from Pekin to Nankim in less than three days, notwithstanding it is above three hundred leagues from one to another; that they used gold

money.

money, silver, gold is no where current through all the empire; but as precious stones are in Europe; that the silver coin was stamp'd as ours is, round, flat, bearing the emperor's arms, with divers figures according to the custom of eastern nations, notwithstanding the silver hath no regular figure, they cast it into ingots, they reduce it to what form they please without any order, or ornament, they clip it into great pieces, as occasion serves; and it is only by weight, not by the emperor's mark, that they know its value.

I writ down some Chinese characters; for she had boasted that she could read, a person of her quality durst not say the contrary; but the misfortune was, she mistook herself, and took the paper at the wrong end, boldly reading the letters, turned upside down, as if they had been right: upon the whole, that which she pronounced had no manner of relation to the genuine sense of the writing. At last I spoke Chinese to her, and, for fear lest she might avoid the difficulty, I acquainted her that I spake the Mandarin language so current throughout the empire, which they constantly use at the court. She was so proud as to frame *ex tempore* a wild ridiculous gibberish, but so little understood, that it was evident she had not time enough to make it hang well together; so that, not being able to understand what I said to her, I should have been fore put to it to explain what she meant, if indeed she did mean any thing.

After this trial and examination, she might blush for shame, and generously confess the imposture; but she still kept up her conversation without being concerned, and with such an air of confidence, that would make any one judge that this China romance was not the first story she had made.

I thought, my lord, that you would be very glad to be acquainted with this; besides that it may af-

ford you some pleasure, it will also serve to let you understand that the mind, countenance and behaviour of the Chinese women have an affinity with those of the Europeans; and that a Chinese woman must needs be brazen-fac'd, when under the borrowed name of a Chinese she pretends to impose upon persons who have, as long as I have done, seen both nations.

After this little digression you may be willing I should take up my former discourse again. The mens habits, as every where else, are there much different from the womens; they have their heads all over, except behind, where they let as much hair grow as is needful to make a top knot. They do not use a hat as we do, but wear continually a bonnet or a cap, which civility forbids putting off.

This bonnet differs according to the different seasons of the year: that which they use in summer is in form of a cone, that is to say, round and wide below, but short and strait above, where it terminates in a mere point. It is lined within with a pretty fatten, and the top covered with a very fine mat, very much esteemed in the country. Besides that, they add thereto a great flake of red silk, that falls round about, and reaches to the edges; so that, when they walk, this silk flows irregularly on all sides, and the continual motion of the head gives it a particular pleasing grace.

Sometimes in lieu of silk they wear a sort of long hair, of a vivid shining red, which rain does not deface, and is more especially in use amongst men when they ride. This hair comes from the province of Suchven, and grows upon the legs of certain cows; its natural colour is white, but they give it a tincture, that makes it dearer than the finest silk. In winter they wear a plush cap, bordered with a sable fox-skin; the rest is of a curious fatten, black or purple, covered with a great flake of red silk.

like the summer cap. There is nothing more common than these caps, which are sold sometimes for eight or ten crowns; but they are so floppy, that they always discover the ears, which is mighty inconvenient in the sun, or upon a journey. When the Mandarin is in their formalities, the upper part of the bonnet hath a diamond in the middle, or some other precious stone ill cut, yet inclosed in a button of very curious wrought gold: the others have a huge tuft, or button of stuff, agate, crystal, or some other matter.

Their habit is long and convenient enough for students, but cumbersome for men on horseback: it consists of a vest that reaches to the ground, the sides of which are folded before, one over the other, in such a manner that the uppermost is extended to the left side, where they fasten it all along, with four or five gold or silver buttons. The sleeves, that are wide towards the shoulder, grow narrower and nearer to the wrist, like the sleeves of a bell's albe, but they do in a manner cover the whole hand, and leave nothing to be seen but the fingers ends: they keep the vest close with a broad soken sash, whose two ends hang down to the knees. The Tartars stick an handkerchief to it on both sides, with a sheath for a knife and fork, and toothpick, a purse, and other pretty implements. In summer their neck is all bare, which looks very ill; in winter they cover it with a collar of fatten fastened to the vest, or with a tippet of sable or fox-skin, about three or four fingers broad, which is fastened before with a button, which is very decent, and becomes horsemen wonderfully.

Besides the vest they put on a kind of surtout with short wide sleeves like those of your barresters; the students wear them very long; the gentlemen, and especially the Tartars, will have them short; and those they use reach no farther

than their pocket-holes ; as for their under use in summer only a single pair of drawers of taffaty, under a very broad and short shirt of the same stuff ; but in winter the shirt is of flannel, and under it they have breeches of coarse quilted with cotton, or raw silk, which is warmer.

All this is natural enough ; but perhaps, my lord, you will be surpris'd to hear that the Chinese are always booted ; and when any one renders them a visit, if they chance not to have their boots on, they make them wait till they go fetch them.

We stand in need of this example to authorize our ancient custom, but we carried on the mode farther than they ; for in our memory the French were not satisfied with walking booted along the streets, but armed them with huge jingling spurs, that nothing might be wanting to the ornaments of a gentleman on horseback ; but we are recovered as to this point, and several others ; but the Chinese in all probability, that dote upon antiquity, will be incured of it in haste ; it is indeed, in respect of them, an extravagant piece of foppery, not to dare to go to the city without their boots, because they are always carried in a sedan.

This mode would be still the more pardonable in winter ; for their boots being of silk, and their boot-hose of a pinked stuff, lined with cotton, a good inch thick, the leg is thereby well defended against the cold ; but in summer, where the heat is excessive, no body living besides the Chinese, to keep up an air of gravity, would endure to be at that rate in a kind of a stove from morning to evening : and what is more strange, your people that work scarce ever use them, either by reason of the inconvenience, or to save charges.

The form of these boots is somewhat different from ours, for they have neither heel nor toes when they ride any long journey, they are made of firm

from old leathers of thick, black, pinked cotton; but in the city they usually wear them of sattin, with a coarse border of plush or velvet upon the knee. The people in publick, and persons of quality, within doors, are, instead of shoes, shod with pieces of black linnen, or some very pretty silk, very convenient; they stick close to the foot of themselves by a border that covers the heel, without needing to be changed before.

They have not introduced the use of the muff and gloves into China; but, the sleeves of the vest being very long, they draw up their hands into them when it is cold to keep them warm. I know not if I may be bold, my lord, to add another custom, which is very ancient among the Chinese, and by no means disagreeable to the French politeness; their doctors, and other learned men, let their nails grow excessively, insomuch that in some they are longer than their fingers; it obtains amongst them not only for an ornament, but a distinction, by which it may be known, that by their condition they are separated from mechanick arts, and are wholly addicted to sciences. In short, since they affect a starched gravity in all their ways, which conciliates respect, they imagine with themselves that a long beard might contribute thereto, so they suffer it to grow; now if they have not much, it is not for want of cultivating: but nature in this point has been very niggardly, there is not a man of them that does not envy the Europeans, whom they look upon in this respect as the greatest men in the world.

Here you have, my lord, a particular description, that may in some measure acquaint you with the deportment and aspect of the Chinese; *I do not think, says a Frenchman, one day, that they ought to be despised at France; in all likelihood those modes of dress are raised amongst you; for tell me, is there any one of them, that hath escaped the fertile invention of*

the French; in fourteen hundred years, as long as the monarchy hath continued, there have been above fourteen hundred modes. So that perhaps there is not that habit in the world, that should seem strange to you; and all that we can say, when any mode that is presented to you displeases you, is, that it is out of fashion.

'Tis true, the Chinese are not so nice as we; but they have carried on things to another extremity; for, rather than forsake their ancient habit, they renewed a cruel war against the Tartars: i. e. and the greatest part of them chose rather to lose their heads than their hair: but of all the excesses in point of mode, none is more phantastical than this; for how ridiculous soever the Chinese may be to look at, as they have parted with an head of hair, yet they might be convinced that a man, whose head is lopp'd off, is worse disfigured. However, we must grant that the constancy of this people is admirable; for when the Tartars attacked them, they still kept their habit for above two thousand years, which can be ascribed to nothing but the good order observed in the empire, the government of which hath always been uniform, where the laws have been exactly observed in the least punctilio's.

But as I am persuaded these ways would not please all our French people; for the modes of which we are so fond, do not appear so handsome to the Chinese as we imagine; but above all, the periwig does strangely run in their mind; and they look upon us as a sort of people, who for want of a beard, would get an artificial one clapp'd to the chin, that should reach to the knees. This phantastical head-dress, say they, and that prodigious heap of curled hair, are proper upon the stage for a man that would represent the devil; but has on the shape of a man when he is thus disguised? Thus the Chinese po-

liteness

upon this article alone to argue us of civility.

They have more ado to be persuaded, that long shanks discovered, with a stockin drawn strait, and narrow breeches, look handsome, because they are accustomed to an air of gravity that gives them other conceptions. They would sooner be reconciled with the figure of a magistrate shaven, without a peruke, who should in his lawyers gown go hooded, than with all that gaiety of attire that makes our cavaliers have a fine shape, an easy and fine gait, a quick and disengaged carriage; which will by no means go down with them. This ridiculousness pleases, and one is oftentimes offended at real pretences, according as prejudice or custom have differently changed the imagination; there is notwithstanding in all these modes some other intrinsic real beauty, which naked simplicity, which nature in her innocence and exempt from passion, have inspired into man for the necessity and conveniency of life. When persons of quality observe exactly all the formalities and decencies suitable to their state, and never spontaneously covered in publick, how great soever the heat be, yet in private, and among their friends, they assume a freedom even to a fault; they ever and anon quit their bonnet, furtout, vest and shirt, leaving nothing but a single pair of drawers of white tuffty, or transparent linnen; which is the more surprizing, because they condemn all nakedness in pictures, and are even offended that our engravers represent men with their arms, thighs, and shoulders uncovered; they seem to be in the right, for being surprised at the unchristian license of our westerners, but yet they are ridiculous to blame that upon a piece of linnen or paper, which they practise themselves with so much liberty and undecency in their own proper persons.

As for the vulgar, they transgress in that respect all

all the bounds of modesty, especially in the southern provinces, where watermen, and certain other handicrafts-men, are impudent to the highest degree; and in truth the most barbarous Indians, notwithstanding the climate seems to excuse them, appeared to me in this respect less barbarous than the Chinese; almost all the artificers and inferior tradesmen go along the streets with single drawers, without cap, stockings, or shirt, which makes them much cronical and swarthy. In the northern provinces they are a little more reserved; and the cold, in spite of their teeth, makes them modest, and keep within bounds.

After having described to you the nature of China, perhaps you may be desirous, my lord, that I should speak of their stuffs. What I have observed of them in general is this, their silk, without question, is the finest in the world; they make of it in many provinces, but the best and fairest is to be seen in that of Chekiam, because the soil is very proper for mulberry trees, and because the air is exactly in that degree of heat and moisture, more conformable to the worms that make it. Every body knows the value and the traffick of it is so very great, that one province alone is able to supply all China, and the greatest part of Europe.

Yet the finest and fairest silks are wrought in the province of Nankim, the rendezvous of all the good workmen. It is there that the emperor furnisheth himself with the silks spent by him, and with those he presents the lords of the empire. The silks of Quantum, notwithstanding, are valued above all among strangers; and the silks of this province are also more saleable, and more better than those of all the other provinces of China.

Altho' all these silks have some resemblance to one, yet the workmanship hath something in it that makes a difference. I have there seen plush, velvet, silk of gold,

fattin, crapes, and several others, of which I do not so much as know the name in France; that which is the most current amongst them is called *Levanze*: it is a sort of fattin, stronger, but not so glossy as ours, sometimes smooth, and sometimes embellished by flowers, birds, trees, houses, and shady groves.

These figures are not raised upon the ground by a mixture of raw silk, as our workmen are used to do in Europe, which makes our work not so durable: all the silk in these is twisted, and the flowers are distinguished only by the difference of colours, and shadowing: when they mix gold or silver with it, it does much resemble our brocado, or flower'd silk: but their gold and silver is wrought after a manner particular to them alone; for whereas in Europe we draw the gold as fine as possibly it can be twisted with the thread, the Chinese, to save the cost, because they did not bethink themselves of this trick, gild only themselves to gild or silver over a long kind of paper, which they afterwards cut into small squares, wherein they wrap the silk.

There is a great deal of cunning therein, but this gilding will not last long, water, or even moistness will destroy the splendor of it quickly; yet for a short time, when the pieces come out of the workman's hands, they are very fine, and one would take them for valuable pieces. Sometimes they are contented only to put into the pieces these little scrowls of gilded paper, without rolling them upon the thread, and then the figures, altho' pretty and finely turned, do not last so long by far: and the silk thus flower'd is not so durable.

Although the different figures they represent, the dragon is most ordinary; there be two sorts of them; one, to which they make five claws, called *Loon*, is only used upon the stuffs designed for the emperors; the other, his arms, which *Tohi*, founder of the

the empire, first took for himself above four thousand years ago. The dragons hath but four claws, and The emperor Vouvam, who reigned eight hundred thirty two years ago every body might bear the same; time, the use of it is grown common.

They make use of another kind of mer, which the Chinese call Cha; it nor hath so good a gloss as our taffey, but much more substantial; altho' several people it smooth and even, yet most with great flowers pierced through, and cut like your English lace; and many times are so numerous, that one can scarce of the silk. The summer garments are convenient, and wonderful neat, so of quality use them; besides the taffey a whole piece, enough to make a furtout, will not amount to above

The third is a particular sort of Tcheouze; it is close, and withal fold, double it, and squeeze it with long as you please, you can scarce It is sold by weight, and is so serviceable, wash it as they do linnen, without losing its former lustre.

Besides the ordinary silk of which spoke, which we know in Europe, China hath another sort, which you meet with in the province of Quantum. The worms from which are wild, they go to seek for them in the woods; and I am not sure, whether or no they breed in houses. This silk is of a grey colour, of any gloss, so that those, who are not well with it, take the stuffs that are made of linnen, or for one of the coarsest druggs

all that they infinitely value it, and it costs more than silver. They call them Kien Tcheou; they will endure a long time; tho' strong and close, yet they do not fret; they wash them as they do soap-stone, and the Chinese assure us, that spots cannot penetrate, and that they do not so much as take to itself.

Wool is very common, and withal very cheap, especially in the provinces of Xenfi and Xanfi, and Suchuan, where they feed abundance of flocks, yet do not the Chinese make cloth. That of Europe, which with the English furnish them, is highly esteemed; but, by reason they sell it much dearer than the English, they buy but little of it. The Mandarins make themselves studying gowns for the winter of a kind of coarse russet, for want of better cloth. As for druggets, serges and tammies, we scarce meet with better than theirs; the Bonzes wives do commonly work them, because the Bonzes make use of them themselves; and there is a great trade driven of them every where in the empire.

Besides cotton linnen, that is very common, they use also for the summer nettle linnen for long vests; but the linnen which is the most valued, and is to be found no where else, is called Copou; because it is made of a plant that the people of the country call *Cou Fung* in the province of Fokien.

It is a kind of creeping shrub, whose leaves are much bigger than ivy-leaves; they are round, smooth, green within, whitish, and cottony, or downy, on the outside; they let them grow and spread along the fields. There be some of them as thick as your finger, which is pliable, and cottony as its leaves are. When it begins to dry they make the shavings of it to rot in water, as they do flax and hemp; they always peel off the first skin, which they throw away; but of the second, which is much more

fine

fine and delicate, they divide it by the hands into very slender and very small filaments, without twisting or spinning it, and make that bunch of which I spake; it is transparent, pretty fine, but so cool and light, that one would think he had nothing on his back.

All persons of quality make long vests of it during the excessive heat, with a furrow of Chin. In the spring and autumn they put on Kien-tchen, and Touanze in winter, that is to say, coarse stuff, or flowered silk. Grave persons desire to have it plain, others wear it flowered; but nobody, except the Mandarines in the assemblies, or upon certain solemn visits, uses silk flower'd with gold. The vulgar, that usually habit themselves in coarse woollen dyed blue, or black, quilt it with cotton, or line it with sheepskin during the cold weather; but great persons line their vests and furtou with the noble skins of sable or ermine, fox or cat. They use also for the same purpose plush and petit-grain.

Because ermine is very rare in China, they content themselves only to border their vests and extremity of their sleeves with it; that, which I have seen, did not appear to me to be of a fair white.

Sable is pretty well known in France, but much less common there than in China, where all the considerable Mandarines wear it. One does only of a foot long, and between 4 and 6 inches broad (for the animal is but small) and sometimes costs 10 crowns; but when one chooses some of the finest for a compleat habit, the whole lining of a vest will cost between 5 and 1000 livres; yet one may have a pretty hand some one for 200 pistoles.

Fox-skins are likewise much used, those who would be magnificent take not only the belly of this animal, where the hair is long, fine, and softest,

They call it *In Chu*.

† The word is *Tschu*.

best, and of a great number of small pieces patched together, they compose an entire lining, which for the vest and surtout comes to a matter of 5 or 600 livres.

There are also several other sorts of furs that Tartary perhaps supplies them withal, which the Mandarines make use of to sit upon the ground, especially at the palace when they wait, and expect the time of their audience. They put some of them also under the quilt, not only to heat the bed, but also to take away its dampness. Besides, there is another * fur of a particular species, that is perfectly handsome and fine, the hair of it is long, ~~black~~ and very thick set; it is of a pretty whitish grey mixed with black, striped with black and yellow lists, as those of tigers; they make great use of gowns of them to wear in the city, putting the fur on the outside, so that when the Mandarines are thick and short (which is very common with them) besides two furs underneath for the vest and surtout; when, I say, they have put on their back one of these furred gowns with long hair, they differ but a little from bears, or from the animal of whom they borrowed the skin; and in this condition they think themselves to be very genteel, and to make a graceful figure.

Of all the furrings, the most common are lamb-skins. They are white, downy, and very warm, but burlesome, and, at first, of a strong smell, as a garment like those greasy gloves that smell of oil. I wonder they bring not up the mode in France; those who delight in slender fine shapes, would not submit to it, yet otherwise there is nothing more genteel, nor more convenient for winter.

Upon the whole, if great caution be not used, all these furs are easily spoiled, especially in hot and moist countries; worms breed in them, and the hair falls

of: to prevent them, the Chinese, as soon as the summer approaches, expose them to the air for some days, when it is fair and dry weather; then they beat them with sticks, or shake them often, to get out the dust; and when they have inclosed them in huge earthen pots, into which they throw corns of pepper, and other bitter drugs, they stop it up very close, and there let them lie till the beginning of winter.

Besides their usual garments, they are yet two sorts that deserve to be known: They put on one to defend them from the rain; for the Chinese, who delight in travelling, spare for no cost to travel commodiously; they are made of a white stuff, crufted over with a condensed oil, which is like wax, which, being once well dried, makes the stuff green, transparent, and extraordinary gentle: They make bonnets of it, vests, and furtouts, that resist the rain for some time; but it spoils them all at last, unless the garment be a robe of honour, and carefully prepared. The boots are of leather, but so little that the stockings are spoiled at the knee, except one be a horseback, like the Tartars, with their legs doubled up, and their stirrups extremely low.

The mourning habit hath also something odd in it. The bonnet, vests, furtout, stockings and boots are made of white linen, and from the prince to the most inferior handicrafts-men, none else wear any of another colour. In close mourning the bonnet seems phantastick, and very difficult to be repaired; it is of a red and very clear colour, not much unlike the canvas we use for packing up goods. The vest is kept close with a girdle of canvas; the Chinese, in this posture, do at the beginning affect a careless behaviour, and grief and sorrow seems painted all over the outward man; but, all being nothing but ceremony and affectation with them, they easily put on their own face again; they can laugh

my brethren a breath; for I have seen some immediately after they had shed abundance of tears over the tomb of their fathers.

Perhaps, my Lord, you may have the curiosity to know, in what manner the missionaries, who were sent for the conversion of the infidels, are habited: the laws that suffer no foreign mode to be placed, determined the first jesuits to take the habit of the Bonzes at the beginning: but this habit, tho' grave and modest enough, was so cried down by the ignorance and irregular life of those wicked priests, that that alone was sufficient to deprive us of the company and correspondence of honest men.

In respect to this, nothing was so diametrically opposite to religion: so that, after a long deliberation, they thought it more advisable to take the student's habit, which, together with the quality of European doctor, did capacitate us to speak to the people with some authority, and to be heard by the Mandarines with some respect. From that very time, we had free access every where, and God did so far vouchsafe a blessing to the labours of our missionaries, that the gospel in a short time was propagated with considerable success.

But in the late revolution of the empire, these missionaries, as well as the Chinese, were forced to go habited in the Tartarian fashion, as I told you. When we visit the Mandarines upon account of business, we were forced to wear a vest and surcoat of common silk; but at home, we were clothed in serge or painted linnen.

So that, my Lord, preserving as much as lies in us the fruits of poverty suitable to our condition, we endeavour to *do all things to all men*, after the apostles example, *that we may the more easily win souls to Jesus Christ*; being persuaded, that, as to a missionary, the garment, diet, manner of living,

and exterior customs ought all to be referred to the great design he proposes to himself, to convert the whole earth. A man must be a Barbarian with Barbarians, polite with men of parts, austere and rigid to excess among the Indian penitents, headstrongly dress'd in China, and half naked in the wilderness of Maduré, to the end that the gospel always uniform, always unalterable in itself, may the more easily insinuate itself into the minds of men whom an holy compliance and conformity of customs, regulated by christian prudence, has already prepossess'd in favour to us. I am with the most profound respect,

My Lord,

Your most humble

and most obedient servant,

LETTER VI.

To the Dutcheß of Bouillon.

Of the Oeconomy and Magnificence of the Church.

Madam,

THE earnest desire I have observed in your grace, to be fully informed of the present state of the missions in China, hath born an infinite satisfaction to me: but I confess, I was a little surpris'd, that, when this new world is so full of many curiosities, you should chiefly count of the Chinese gallantry and know very well that this is the discourse among the ladies, and I most expected no more from any sex.

But

But for you, madam, when I had the honour to see you, I had prepared materials of a quite different nature. I made account you would discourse with me concerning the ingenuity, sciences, and politeness of this people: and whereas travellers do usually affect to prefer what they have seen amongst foreigners to that which is found in their native soil, I pleased myself, that I could sincerely and safely tell you, that the French ladies (I mean those who like you have raised themselves above those vulgar cares, that do in a manner totally pervert the fair sex) have more wit, capacity, and more raised genius, even in the solid and substantial sciences, than all the great doctors of that empire: for, as for politeness, I can scarce believe, madam, that you can doubt of it, since one need not be accomplished with half the politeness you are mistress of, to deface and eclipse the most polite parts of the East.

But since, either by chance, or by your own choice, you have been pleased to confine yourself to another subject, and that you desire a methodical account of what I have had the honour to relate to you of it, I shall obey you, madam, not only with that profound respect I owe to your quality and merit, but also with all the sentiments of grateful acknowledgments, which the many honours and favours, I have received from your grace, can inspire me with.

The Chinese are far short of us in the magnificence of their houses, besides that, the architecture is not so beautiful, nor the apartments spacious, they do not seem to adorn them, and that chiefly for two reasons. The first is, Because all the palaces of the Mandarin belong to the emperor, he lodges there himself, and in some places (I cannot say in all) the people furnish them. The people, to be sure, are always at a little expence as they can, and the Mandarins do not care to ruin themselves by fur-

nishing palaces, that they are every day in danger of forsaking, because their places are properly nothing but commissions, which are many times taken away upon the least fault.

The second reason is fetch'd from the custom of the country, which does not allow to receive visits in the inner part of the house, but only at the entrance in a Divan they have contriv'd for the ceremonies. It is a banqueting-house all open, that hath no other ornament besides one single order of columns of wood painted or varnish'd, which they use only to uphold the beams and rafters, that often appears under the tiles, nobody taking care to cover it with a cieling. So that it is no wonder they renounce all the superfluous ornaments of their apartments, seeing foreigners and strangers scarce ever let foot in them; they have neither looking-glasses, tapestry hangings, nor wrought chairs: carpets are not in fashion, saving only in some of the emperor's or prince of the blood's apartments. Their beds, which amongst them are one of the principal ornaments, never come in sight; and it would be a piece of gross incivility to carry a stranger into a bed-chamber, even when you pretend to shew him your house.

Infomuch that all their magnificence may be reduced to cabinets, tables, varnish'd chairs, some pictures, divers pieces of white sattin, upon which there is writ in a large character some sentence of morality, which is hung here and there in the chambers, together with some vessels of porcelain, which they have occasion to use even there, as we do, because there is no chimney to be seen in the chamber.

Nevertheless, these ornaments, if skilfully managed, are very fine and beautiful. Varnish, which is so common in China, is dispersed all over it takes all colours, they mix flowers of gold and silver with it, they paint men, mountains, palaces, huntings, birds, combats, and several figures, that make a

half relief in the work, and renders it extremely pleasing and delightful, so that in this point the Chinese work is a great show with a little charge.

Besides the brightness and lustre which is the property of varnish, it hath moreover a certain quality of preserving the wood upon which it is applied, especially if they do not mix any other matter with it. Worms do not easily breed in it, nay, and moisture can never penetrate it, not so much as any scent can fasten to it; if during meals there be any grease or hot汤 spilt, if it be presently wiped with a wet cloth, one not only finds no remainders or signs of it, but does not so much as perceive the least smell.

People were mistaken when they fancied that varnish was a composition, and a peculiar secret; it is a gum that flows from a tree, much what after the same manner as rosin doth. In the tuns wherein it is transfused, it resembles melted pitch or tar, excepting only that it hath no smell when it is used. There must be oil mix'd with it, to temper it more or less, according to the quality of the work.

For tables and ordinary chairs, it is sufficient to lay on two or three layers of varnish, which makes it so transparent, that one may discern every vein of the wood thro' it. Now, if you would hide all the matter on which you are at work, you must do it over and over again, till at length it be nothing but ice, but so fine at first, that it may serve for a mirror. When the work is dry, they paint upon it several figures in gold, silver, or any other colour; they go over that again, if they please, with a slight touch of varnish, to give them a lustre, and the better to preserve them.

But to those who would perform a finishing stroke, they glue upon the wood a kind of pasteboard, composed of paper, packthread, lime, and some other substance well beaten, with which the varnish incorporateth.

They compose a ground of it perfectly even and solid, upon which is applied the varnish by little and little, in little stratum, which they dry one after another. Every workman hath a peculiar secret to perfect his work, as in all other occupations. But in my opinion, besides the dexterity and slight of hand, and the due tempering the varnish, that it may be neither too thick nor too thin, is what contributes the most to the well succeeding in this operation. There are very curious cabinets at Tumkim; but what are brought to us from Japan, are herein no way inferior to the China work.

As for porcelain, it is such an ordinary moveable, that it is the ornament of every house; the tables, the side-boards, nay, the kitchen is furnished with it, for they eat and drink out of it, it is their ordinary vessel: there are likewise made huge flower-pots of it. The very architects cover roofs, and make use of it sometimes to incrustate marble buildings.

Amongst those that are most in request, there are of three different colours; some are yellow, yet tho' the earth be very fine, they appear more coarse than the others; and the reason is, because that colour does not admit of so fine polishing; it is used in the emperor's palace. Yellow is his own proper colour, which is not allowed to any person to bear: so that one may safely say, that, as for the best of porcelain, the emperor is the worst served.

The second sort is of a grey colour, with abundance of small irregular lines in it, that cross one another, as if the vessel was all over striped, or variegated with inlaid or Mosaick work. I cannot imagine how they form these figures; for I have much ado to believe that they are able to draw them with a pencil. Perhaps, when the porcelain is baked, and yet hot, it is exposed to the cold air, or they infuse it in warm water that opens it in that manner, on all sides,

as it often happens to crystals during winter; after that, they add a stratum of varnish to it, which covers these inequalities, and, by means of a gentle fire into which they put it again, it is made as even and polished as before. However it is, these sort of vases partake of a particular beauty; and sure I am, the curious amongst us would much value them.

Last of all, the third sort of porcelain is white, with divers figures of flowers, trees, and birds, which the paint in blue, such as come hither into Europe: this is the commonest of all, and every body uses it. But in respect of glasses and crystals, as all work is not equally beautiful, so amongst porcelains some of them are indifferent, and not worth much more than our earthen ware.

Those that have skill do not always agree in the judgment they pass upon them; and I perceive, that in China, as well as in Europe, fancy bears a main stroke in the matter; yet it is granted by all hands, that four or five different things concur to make them complete and perfect; the fineness of the matter, the whiteness, the polineness, the painting, the designing of the figures, and the fashion of the work.

The fineness is discovered by its transparency, in which, respect is to be had to its thickness, the brims are commonly thinner, and it is in that place where they ought to be considered: When the vessel is big, it is a difficult matter to determine any thing thereupon, unless one have a mind to break off some pieces below; for there the colour of the inner part alone, or, as they term it, the Grain, affords a shrewd guess, which appears likewise, when the two pieces can be joined together again so perfectly, that no rupture appears therein, for that is a sure token of the handiess, and consequently of the fineness of the matter.

The whiteness is not to be confounded with the brightness of the varnish which is laid over the porcelain.

celain, which shews like a mirror; so that beholding it near to some other object, their colour is seen in it; and this reflection alone is capable of making one pass a wrong judgment upon its native whiteness; it must be carried into the open air, if you would understand its beauty of faults perfectly. Altho' this varnish be perfectly incorporated with the matter, and tho' it is mighty lasting, yet it tarnishes at long run, and loses that brisk splendor it had at the beginning, from whence it comes to pass, that the whiteness appears more taking and pretty in old porcelains; not but the new ones for all that are as good, and will in some time assume the same colour.

The smoothness and fineness of them consist in two things, in the brightness of the varnish, and evenness of the matter. The varnish should not be thick, otherwise there will be a crust introduced, which will not be incorporated enough with the porcelain; besides, its lustre will be too great and sprightly. The matter is perfectly equal and even, when it has not the least bump; when there is to be observed in it neither grain, rising, nor depression: There are few vessels but have some one of these defects; there must not only be found no spots nor flaws, but notice must be taken whether there be some places brighter than others, which happens when the pencil is unequally poised; which sometimes also happens when the varnish is laid on; if every part be not equally dry; for the least moisture causeth a sensible difference therein.

The painting is not one of the least branches of the porcelain; for that purpose one may make use of all colours, but commonly they use red and much more blue. I never saw any vessel whose red was lively enough; it is not because the Chinese have not very lovely red, but perhaps, because the most lively and subtil parts of this colour are imbibed by the rough-

ness of the matter on which it is laid : for the different grounds contribute much to the heightening or lessening the lustre of the colours. As for blue, they have it most excellent ; however, it is very difficult to hit upon that exact temperature, where it is neither too pale, deep, intense, nor too bright. But that which workmen most diligently seek after is, to perfect the extremities of the figures, so that the colour do not extend beyond the pencil, to the end that the whiteness of the porcelain may not be sullied by a bluish water, which flows, if special care be not taken from the colour itself, when it is not well powdered, or when the matter on which it is laid, has not attained a good degree of dryness ; much after the same manner as happens to paper that blots when it is moist, or when you write with naughty ink.

It were well if the Chinese designs in their painting were a little better. Their flowers are pretty well, but their human figures are monstrous, which disgraces them among strangers, who imagine, that they are in effect as monstrous in their shape, as they appear in the pictures ; yet those are their usual ornaments. The more regular designs and skilful draughts would be less pleasing to them than these antics.

To make amends, they are very ingenious and expert in turning their vases well, of what size soever they be. The figure of them is bold, well proportioned, perfectly round ; nay, and I do not believe that our skilfullest workmen are able to fashion the great pieces better ; they, as well as we, put a great value upon ancient vases, but for a reason quite different from ours ; we value them because they are *foreign*, they for their antiquity ; not but that the artificers are as expert, and the matter as good now as heretofore : there are very fine ones made at this day ; and I have seen at some Mandarines houses
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