

expounded, in divers books; what is contained in the gospel: yea, and even whatsoever is most instructive in the rest of the holy scriptures.

The second method, to increase the fervent zeal of christians, was prayer: Besides the time appointed for mass, I assembled them twice a day to make publick prayers. They sung in two choirs with such marvellous devotion, that it made me wish that the European christians might have been witness of their piety; for their rude, and sometimes scandalous deportments before our altars, will certainly be condemned at the great tribunal, by the modesty of those later christians.

They do not understand either singing by notes or musick as we do, yet have they tunes of their own composition no ways unpleasent, which seems to me abundance more tolerable than what are used in several societies in Europe: They had likewise several sorts of instruments; concerts they seem to admire, and our villages in France would serve their turn well enough in that point.

The Chinese are of that temper, that they had need of something sensible to heighten their devotion; sumptuous and magnificent ornaments, singing, pompous processions, the noise of bells and instruments, and the ceremonies of the church, are very taking with them, and allure them to divine service. I took extraordinary care in that matter, to procure for them all that the church out of her most wise conduct hath permitted to the servants of God; yet, always distinguishing that which superstition, if one have not a care of it, is wont, in process of time, to put into the common people's head.

I apply'd myself more especially to inspire them with respect to our mysteries, they made their confession usually every fortnight, Their confession was not only attended with tears (for the Chinese

are more subject to weeping than we, but also with  
 let us pray in the evening in the vestry.

The lively faith, they had for the adorable sacrament, made them constant attenders on the altar; and, when I permitted them to receive it, they communicated with affections of veneration capable of inflaming not only such who are but lukewarm, but almost christians: you might see them prostrate at several times, with their face on the ground lamenting, and commonly shedding abundance of tears. Such like postures, more frequent and ordinary amongst Asiatics than Europeans, yet evermore edifying and submissive, do exceedingly contribute to excite devotion in the soul, and to impress upon the mind that profound veneration which the majesty of our mysteries deserves at our hands.

This respect extended itself also to the images, reliques, to the medals, holy water, and in general, to whatsoever bears the character of our religion.

They bore, more than that, a particular veneration for the Virgin Mary, which perhaps had gone too far, if care had not been used to regulate it. They call her the Holy Mother (Chin-Mou) and do invoke her in all their straits and exigencies. The experience, they have had of her protection, hath confirmed them in this warm devotion, and the benefits, they receive daily from her, persuade them she is acceptable to God.

The women are yet more animated with these sentiments than the men. All their churches are dedicated to her under the title of Chin-Mou tam, that is to say, the temple of the Blessed Mother. There they meet together, for they never enter into the church of the men, as the men dare not presume to set a foot into theirs. But the passionate love, that the christians have for Jesus Christ, makes them fully devout, and walk worthy of the profession they have embraced. They continually repeat these following

following words, *Jesus who died to save us*. Bring it is the mystery wherein we most carefully instruct them, so it is that they most steadfastly believe. Every one shall have their crucifixes in their chambers; and notwithstanding the nakedness of our images did at first give some offence, yet have they in process of time accustomed themselves to them. We distribute them to the people with some precaution, for fear they may chance to fall into the hands of idolaters, who might, either through ignorance or malice, be apt to prophane them.

And this was the reason why, after mass was said, I commonly removed from the altar a large graven crucifix, the pagans do oftentimes come out of curiosity to see our churches, now they might have stole it away, or spoken of it irreverently and blasphemously, which nevertheless was not brought to pass by the paints of Christ's passion which I left with them.

Now as for christians, we are far from concealing from them this sacred mystery of our redemption, or from dissembling in the least circumstance of the same. What certain hereticks have writ, concerning it, is a foul calumny, which all the Chinese books and cuts, therein engraven, have long ago disproved and confuted.

The cross is carried publickly in the streets in procession, planted on the tops of churches, and painted over the doors of the christians houses. I have nowhere observed the ceremony of the adoring of the cross, performed every Good Friday publickly, practised with more adoration than in China: nay, I sincerely protest, that I never assisted thereat without being forced to mingle my tears with those of the believers, who outdo themselves in devotion and publick penance on that day especially. Those who have accused their faith in this point, would themselves

... at the infibleness of Europeans, but they ... at our ceremonies; for our part, we are overjoyed to see the Opprobrium of the cross to triumph as far as the utmost limits of the universe, over the most proud and haughty nation of the world.

The particular instruction of the Chinese women is much more troublesome than that of men; they are never visited but in the time of their sickness, neither do they ever come to visit the missionaries; but they may be spoken with in their churches, or else one may cause them to meet every fortnight to say mass, and administer the sacrament to them; they dare not come oftener for fear of scandal, the laws of the country do not so much as allow them that, because the disorders, that happen every time the Pagan women visit the temples of the Bonzès, cause our assemblies to be suspected, and afford a specious pretence to the Gentiles to cry down religion.

Notwithstanding a man cannot imagine what fruit may be reap'd by it, I came to this church upon Friday evening to hear confessions. 'Tis always in a place expos'd to every one's view; for in this case one cannot act with too much caution. On Saturday morning I finish'd the confessions of those that were not able to get a place the day foregoing. Almost every one of them confess, and would be glad to do every day if they had liberty granted. Whether it be tenderness of conscience, or esteem for the sacrament, or some other reason best known to themselves, I know not; but they think they can never set time enough apart to discover their faults. There is required abundance of patience to hear them; and, being naturally of a mild disposition, they would take it very ill to be handled roughly; yet have they one good quality, that they are seldom testy and froward. They receive the instructions from

from their director in accountability; they readily put their faith upon his sleeve; we never inflict great penance on them, nay tho' it be a difficult matter to reduce them from their ordinary peccadilloes, yet do not they find it so hard to bewail and lament for them.

As for notorious sins they very rarely commit them, because their condition exempts them from the most dangerous opportunities; and, if they could be brought to keep peace in their domestick affairs, their life would be otherwise wonderful innocent. I have observed in many of them a certain devotion that wanted but little of holiness. They always apply themselves to business or to prayer, seeking all opportunities for the education of their children or for their own improvement: very scrupulous and nice in the observation of the practice of every Christian duty; charitable, frequent in mortification; in a particular manner zealous for the conversion of idolaters; attentive to all occasions that present themselves to do acts of charity: infomuch that I have heard the ancientest missionaries say, that, if China once turn'd christian, almost all the women would be saved. This is not an affected encomium of the Chinese women; I do faithfully and honestly relate what I have seen, and I judge of other churches by this whereof I have the care and conduct.

The instruction of the youth of riper years gave me as much trouble. I was persuaded that this age, above all other, requir'd cultivating, especially in China, where many things concur to make them have an aversion for the service of God; their easy soft temper, the complaisance of all about them; their relations that doat upon them, and seldom carry a strict hand over them, but let them follow their wills; the company of heathen children always corrupted and vicious very soon; their dependence, their complaisance with school-masters, and

many times have such influence on them, as to inspire them with an aversion for religion. All these are obstacles to their instruction, very hard to surmount what care soever we take.

. Yet was I willing to discharge my duty by several ways and means: that, which appeared to me the most effectual, was to take a christian school-master into my house, who was an able zealous man; the children came thither to learn, and I took the opportunity to instill devotion into them, to expound to them the principal articles of religion, to train them up, and discipline them against the assaults of the Gentiles, to accustom them to the ceremonies of the church, where they assisted at mass every day. This practice did also produce another good effect: the children of idolaters who came to study under the tuition of the same master, whither by reason of cheapness, or because of the nearness of the place, heard whether they would or no, what was taught to their school-fellows; these instructions form'd and season'd them by little and little to christianity, and replenish'd their mind with abundance of good notions and ideas, which, as so many seeds, in process of time, did produce evangelical fruit, that is to say, real conversions.

It were to be wish'd there were a good number of christian school-masters that might teach gratis in cities, that would be the best means to propagate religion, and to preserve good manners, and keep up decorum in families; but the missionaries are so far from being in a condition to maintain them, that they are hard put to it to subsist themselves; for they do not lead such a life as some ill-informed, or rather ill-affected authors would have made the world believe they did. Nay, and I speak even of those who are at court, who seem by their outside to live in the affluence of all accommodations. It is true, indeed, they go in their silks (according to the mode  
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of the country) when they go to visit persons of quality; yea, and they are sometimes carried in a sedan, or else on horseback, attended by servants, all which is necessary to keep up their credit, and preserve the protection of the Mandarines, for want of which the christians would be often oppressed; but yet that makes the missionaries to lead an hard life, for these expences consuming their whole revenue, or pension, which never amounts to an hundred crowns per Annum, the small portion that remains is scarce sufficient to live on. The missionary is very decently (not to say very poorly) habited in his house, his lodging is very inconvenient, he lies upon the hard ground, or upon a very thin quilt without sheets: As for his table, it is so frugal, that there is never a monk in Europe to whom the canon prescribes such a rigorous abstinence; some of them pass whole years together with only rice, leguminous vegetables, and water; for the Tea, that is usually drank, is neither pleasant to the palate of a Chinese nor a foreigner.

However, I speak only of the time that they are in their house; for as soon as ever they come abroad to travel about the provinces, and to seek the lost sheep in the villages, mountains, and the most remote places, one is not able to express the continual fatigues of their mission; (I speak chiefly of those that perform in the western provinces; for the channels, that water almost all the provinces of the south, make these perambulations less tedious.) Then it is that they labour night and day, lie in barns, eat with the poor countrymen, and are exposed to the scorching sun, and the most vehement cold, oftentimes covered all over with snow, and wet to the skin with rain; and then we meet with nothing to comfort us at our arrival but fervent christians, that quite weary us out by the exercise of our ministry that they expect from us.

The province of Xensi, that fell to my care, is one of the largest in all China. I had some christian churches established within an hundred leagues of one another, whither I must go by roads so toilsome, that even horses are of no use. They have mules bred in the mountains, and managed for this sort of journies, that is to say, for the easiest ways; as for the other ways you are forced to foot it, whether you creep on all four up the rocks, or descend into the precipices. You cross over the valley in water and dirt, exposed to tygers, but yet more to robbers, whose retreat the country does favour.

They are not like those fine ways and delightful pleasant champagne provinces of the south, which art and nature have seem'd rather to have made for the delight of the inhabitants, than for the convenience of travellers. The vallies of the Alps and Pyrenees are much more passable; and one may properly say of China, that, where it is fine, nothing in the world is finer; and, when it ceases to be so, nothing is more horrid and frightful. Nevertheless, since the death of father Fabor, one takes delight to travel along those tedious roads that he watered formerly with the sweat of his brows, where he hath shed abroad that sweet savour of holiness that still upholds the faith of christians, and animates the zeal of the missionaries.

The other churches of this province are more easily come at. I spent a great part of the year in travelling from village to village, catechizing, preaching, and administering the sacraments to believers that assembled upon my passage in all the places that I appointed. I divided my time between them and the idolaters, whose conversion always proves more frequent in these solitary remote places than in great cities, or in the metropolis of a province. Some of them there were, who being already convinced of the truth by reading, or by their commerce with christians,

christians, came of their own accord to receive baptism : Others shaken, and roused either by their relations or friends, came to hear disputations, and, at last surrendered themselves to the grace of Jesus Christ : Many allured by novelty, or by the intreaty of their neighbours, heard attentively, and always disputed with a great deal of heat ; amongst whom, some there were that withdrew from the disputation more hardened than ever ; yet others, more faithful to the drawings of the Spirit, gave glory to God, and humbly acknowledged their errors. All my trouble in this sort of controversies was, that I could not deliver myself as I would. The difficulty of explaining myself in a foreign language deprived the truth of its weight and power. I thought, if I could but have spoken my native tongue, there should not have been one idolater in my auditory, that should not have opened his eyes to truth first, and then to faith. But besides that, men commonly speak enough of it to make every man inexcusable, as St. Paul saith ; yet I made more over this reflection, That he that plants, and he that waters, what pains soever he may take, and how expert soever he may be in planting and watering well, yet does but very little by that. A man ought to refer this great work of converting souls to God ; 'tis he alone that causes these plants to increase, that nourishes them, and raises them up to himself, according to the order of his infinite mercy and eternal purposes. And at these set times fixed and ordained in the eternal counsels of divine predestination, how many times have I seen a few words, ill pronounced, sensibly to triumph over error, because the Holy Spirit, that master within the elect, doth unfold the sense of them ; whereas, private discourses have had none other effect, but only to harden the heart ; when, by a just judgment, God was not pleased to accompany them with an extraordinary

extraordinary evidence and demonstration of the Spirit.

You will, without doubt; most reverend father, be exceeding glad to understand the nature of the main difficulties we meet withal in the conversion of the Gentiles. I have observed three sorts of them that seem peculiar to the Chinese. Persons of quality, and those who would be thought wise, objected chiefly against the mysteries: their hearts rose chiefly against the Trinity and Incarnation; a God that was penetrable, a God that could die, was no less in respect of them, than of the Jews, a stumbling block and a piece of folly. The existence of God, eternal, supreme, infinitely just, infinitely powerful, went easily down with them, and the convincing proofs of it, that I urged to them, made them sometimes forbear entering into the lists with me thereupon.

To proceed in order, and to follow the roads which prudence and holy fathers have chalked out for us on these occasions, I divided our religion into two parts. In the first, I proposed to them whatsoever reason exempt from passion dictates to us. That there is a God; that this God, being infinitely holy, enjoins us to love virtue, and shun vice; to obey princes, to respect our relations, to do no wrong to one's neighbour; that good men, that are oftentimes miserable in this world, enjoy a certain reward in the next; that, on the contrary, wicked men, who spend their life in inordinate pleasures, are rigorously punished after death; that this same hope and fear, that are the beginning of wisdom, are likewise the first rule of our demeanour; but yet, that the inflamed love, that every man ought to have for this supreme arbitrator of life and death, is capable alone to render us perfect.

After I had convinced them by these maxims, I bid them practise, with this spirit of love and fear,

these divine lessons ; prostrate yourselves every day before the infinite majesty of this God that you acknowledge ; in this posture, with tears in your eyes, and an heart broken and contrite with grief for knowing him so late, beg of him from the bottom of your heart ; that he would please to raise you to these sublime truths, which reason doth not discover to you, but which it hath pleased him to reveal to the world by his beloved Son, which at present make up the particular character of the christian faith.

It was not always such an easy matter to obtain what I demanded ; the most part of the Gentiles, accustomed blindly to pursue their passions, found more difficulty to embrace this novel kind of life, than to believe the most abstruse mysteries. Yet I can assure you, reverend father, that, of all those that submitted thereto in earnest, I saw not any that was not a few days after disposed to believe the most difficult things which the new testament teacheth us ; so true it is, that *faith is the gift of God, that cannot be acquired by all the force of reasoning ; and those only obtain, who follow our Saviour's counsel: Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.* God indeed, to accomplish this promise, did concur pretty often to the conversion in a most miraculous manner ; and I observed in several new converts so many enlightenings, just upon their resolving to live well, and be constant in prayer, that the Holy Spirit must needs have illuminated them.

A gentleman, whom reading and disputing had made to waver in his opinion, could not yet resolve to believe ; yet, he determined notwithstanding to practise the morality of Jesus Christ, supposing that a good life would much conduce to dispel their mists. At the first, his doubts got ground of him instead of being vanquished ; the more he looked  
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upon the cross, the more did his spirit revolt. He compared the fables of his own religion with the ignominious death of a God-man that lays the foundation of ours. They both seemed to him equally ridiculous; and, take what care he could to search; nothing could he find that confirmed him more in christianity than in idolatry. His relations, and divers of his friends and acquaintance, used their utmost endeavours to win him over to Jesus Christ, but all to no purpose; and he was just upon the point of taking up his old course again, when our blessed Lord stopped him upon the very brink of the precipice.

One night (as I had it from his own mouth) he saw in his dream heaven open; Jesus Christ appeared to him full of majesty, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and surrounded with an infinite company of blessed spirits; on one hand, he shewed him those eternal rewards that are promised to christians; on the other, he discover'd to him profound abysses, which the torments and shrieks of a great many idolaters made gaspily and frightful. *That is thy portion,* saith he, with a threatening countenance, *if thou dost not follow me.* Oh! son, continued he with a more mild countenance, *Must my cross discourage you? And must a death, which is the source of my glory, make you ashamed?*

This vision frightened him, and he awakened quite another man; he did not look upon it as a dream, he did not busy himself to find out what extraordinary thing chance and an over-heated imagination were capable oftentimes to produce during sleep: the poor man being persuaded, that God had spoken to him, demanded to be baptised with a great deal of importunity; nay, and he was so far from having any trouble to submit to the belief of our mysteries, that he protested he would willingly part with his life to defend the truth of them.

Another, less knowing, but much more obstinate, did not only not forsake his errors, but did even scoff at and deride our most holy mysteries, and was present at my instructions only to jeer them: yet had he permitted his wife to turn christian, because he was not willing, by crossing her desire, to breed a disturbance in his family: but said, he would have a great care of following her example, for fear the world should be apt to believe that all his family was run mad.

Being naturally of a more spritely temper and brisker than your Chinese usually are, I endeavoured to win by fair means more than by disputation; at length, perceiving neither of them prove effectual, I went one evening to his house to see him and taking him aside: I depart to-morrow, sir, said I, and am come to take my leave of you. I must needs confess, it is not without some sorrow, not only because I leave you, but more especially because I leave you in your errors. At least, before my departure, do me one small kindness; your wife is a christian, she hath an image of the God-man, whose religion I preach, do so much as prostrate yourself sometimes before this same image, and beseech him whom it represents, to illuminate your mind, if it be true, that he hath power so to do, and if he be capable of hearing you. He promised me he would do it, and presently after my back was turned he performed his promise.

His wife, ignorant of what had passed, seeing him upon his knees, adoring Jesus Christ by often bowing his head before this image, supposed he was converted, and sent one of her relations into a house adjoining where I was, to acquaint me with it: I ran thither, and found him still so taken up in this action, and in prayer, that I had not a mind to interrupt him.

As soon as he rose from his knees, I told him, I could not sufficiently signify my joy to him, occasioned by the wonderful change God had lately wrought in him.

How! saith he, all amazed, did you see at such a distance what passed in my mind, or hath God revealed it to you? Jesus Christ himself, replied I, lets me understand so much, for he acquaints us, that those who ask any thing of his Father in his name shall be heard. Oh! father, cried he, it is true, I am no longer the same man, I perceive myself a christian without yet knowing what christianity means; but pray instruct me, I am ready to submit, and to receive baptism this very moment if you please.

I told him, I baptised nobody before I had first instructed them; that, being obliged to depart, I would nominate a christian to whom he might have recourse in my absence. He consented to every thing, and we prostrated ourselves before this miraculous image, to ~~thank~~ thanks to the Divine Majesty, who can, when he sees good, from the hardest stones raise up children unto Abraham.

Amongst several other effects of that grace, wherewith it hath pleased God to bless my mission, the conversion of an old officer in the army seems worth the relating to you. From a private centinal, he was got up to be the king's lieutenant in one of the cities of the third order, and, notwithstanding he was very rich, yet had he never a concubine; his wife, being a christian, obliged him to live in a more regular manner than other Mandarines. But nothing could determine him to turn christian; not that he was bigotted to paganism, his desire of advancing himself in the world took up all his thoughts, and he had till that time never owned any deity but his fortune. This indifferency for all sorts of religion is of all conditions the most dangerous; and

I have found by experience, that a man is never at a greater distance from the true God, than when he acknowledges none at all.

Yet had he a great value for christians, because he edified by their innocent life. When I chanced to go to his city, he always made me a visit; and, because he thought it pleased me, he went sometimes into the church to lie prostrate before the altars. I thereupon took occasion to lay the business of his salvation home to him, but he heard the most serious things that I spoke to him thereupon with a smile.

One day, speaking to him of hell in a more terrifying manner than usual: You must not be surpris'd at my undauntedness, says he, it would be a great shame for an old officer as I am, to be afraid. Ever since I turned soldier I took up the resolution to fear nothing; but after all, saith he, what reason can I have to fear? I do nobody wrong, I serve my friends, and am faithful to the emperor, and, if heretofore I have been subject to the usual disorders of youth, I am at present temperate enough in my pleasures. That is as much as to say, reply'd I, that you strive to gratify the world, but you are no wise solicitous to render to God what you owe to him; could you imagine you should be a good officer, in discharging the particular duty of your calling, if you refus'd at the same time to obey and acknowledge the emperor.

'Tis not enough to be regular in all the actions of a private life; the principal duty of a subject is to submit to his sovereign, and the whole duty of a man is to own and fear God. You are in the right, saith he, I do seriously think it. You think so in vain, reply'd I, if that God, which I speak to you of, does not give good thoughts. Beg of him this evening to enlighten your understanding, he will hear your voice; but do you remember also to listen to his, and follow it.

Altho' I could hope no more from this discourse, than from several other preceding ones, yet I observed he was wrought upon: I mentioned some such thing to his wife, who took an occasion thereupon to speak home to him; and one of his officers, being very zealous and well instructed, desired him at least to assist at evening prayer to be performed in his house. His presence stirred up the fervency of his domesticks, and they all begged of Jesus Christ, that he might be converted, with cries and tears, which the infinite goodness of the Almighty can scarce ever withstand.

From this very moment he began to waver, and the various thoughts he revolved in his mind a great part of the night, concerning the danger wherein he was, made him take up a resolution to go thro' with religion. But our Lord instructed him concerning it immediately; for, he seriously protested, that being a little sleepy, he had such horrible representations of hell, that he was no longer in suspense whether or no he should resolve: Upon his awakening, he found himself a christian, or, at least he took up a firm resolution so to be as soon as possible he could. He forthwith repaired to the church where I said mass; when it was finished, I was surpris'd to see him at my feet begging baptism of me, with his eyes bathed in tears: weeping, I say, for scarce could he utter his mind, so much did his sighs and tears interrupt his discourse: He spoke likewise with a much more confident air, and there was observed, in his action, I know not what sort of fear that had seized him, of which he was not master. Whether it was that his imagination was still smitten with the representation of hell, or whether God by this change was pleas'd to make us, as well as him, apprehensive that all the bravery and haughtiness, that war is capable of inspiring, is not proof against that saving horror which he darts (when it pleases him) into the most undaunted hearts. I

I had a great mind, according to my custom, to take some time to examine and instruct him, but he protested that he would not go out of the church till he was baptised: *Perhaps I shall die this very night,* said he to me, *and you would be grieved to know me eternally damned.* His resolution not to forsake me, the intreaty of christians, that went down to the ground to me to obtain this favour, and I know not what internal motion prevailed upon me. I examined him about every point of religion; he understood one part of it, and learned the rest with so much easiness, that two hours after I thought I could initiate him into our mysteries. His conversion made a great noise in the city, several idolaters followed his example; and, since in heaven itself there is rejoicing at the repentance of one sinner, there is no question but the saints and angels were joyful of the conversion of this very man.

This submission of our spirit to the obscurest mysteries, how difficult soever it may seem, yet is it not the thing that troubles the Gentiles most; several other considerations are greater rubs in their way. The first is the restitution of ill-gotten goods, which in reference to the merchants and Mandarines is an almost unfurmoutable obstacle.

Injustice and cozenage are so common in China, in these two conditions, that few of them there are who have enriched themselves any other way. A merchant always puts off his wares at the dearest rate he can possibly, and never utters his good merchandize but when he cannot get rid of his bad. Cunning and craft, so peculiar to this nation, seem to intitle it to the right of sophisticating all things. But the sanctity of our religion doth not permit what human laws tolerate: a man, when he is become rich by unjust dealing, must come and make up his accounts with God, when he does in earnest think he is come to the knowledge of him. I must confess,

that I never insisted upon this point but it made me tremble. This is for the most part a rock of offence to a Chinese.

• They do not boggle at the mysteries, nor ever call them in question; and the reason is, because they seem not cut out for speculative sciences. But as to the business of morality, they have a certain penetrating aptness, and think themselves little inferior to us.

• It is very true, says a merchant to me one day, man is not allowed to defraud or do wrong to his neighbour; but it is not I that cheat when I sell too dear, or when I put off my bad stuffs, the buyer abuseth himself. As he for his part desires to have them for nothing, or as little as he can, if I agree to it; so I likewise am in the right to exact large rates from him, and to receive them, if he be so simple as to give them me. This is the fruit of our industry, and this profit is no violence, but the effect of my calling, that teaches me to improve my trade.

• Moreover, adds he, altho' it should be true that I should possess another man's goods, and that I should have committed a fault by enriching myself at his cost, how can I have the conscience at present to strip my children naked and reduce them to beggary? Believe me, father, those, from whom I have extorted what they had, have, I'll warrant you, done as much to others, who again have enriched themselves after the same manner. Here it is the custom to deal thus, and every one in particular, (if they have any reason) ought mutually to pardon one another for these small faults, otherwise we must undo and overthrow whole families, and introduce a disorder worse than the mischief that one hath committed. As for my part, I freely pardon those who have chowfed me, provided nobody will molest me about the pretended wrong I have done him."

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This is the language of the children of darkness, of whom Jesus Christ saith, *That it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Let a man represent to them what he pleases, yet they always have their own way, being more obdurate than blind; for they seldom fail of admiring justice and an unbiass'd humour in others. See here an example of what I say, whereof I have been witness myself.

A young man travelling in the province of Xensi, where I chanced to be, found a purse upon the road, of about ten or twelve crowns; he had the honour to inquire after the person to whom it belonged, that he might restore it. This was look'd upon as an heroic action by the Chinese; now the Mandarin of the place would not let him do it without a recompence; he made an encomium of it himself in a discourse that was printed in a large character, and affixed upon the palace gate.

But God Almighty, to whom even natural virtues are acceptable, was infinitely more gracious to this young man; for, proceeding on his journey, a person unknown to him accosted him, and said, how came it to pass that you restored the money so generously? Do not you know that it is none but the christians duty to do such things as these? And know, that, in the state wherein you are, all your moral actions will not hinder you from being damned; believe me, you will do well to go to the father of the christians, and embrace their religion, without which all your uprightness and natural equity will stand you in no stead after death.

He immediately obeyed, and return'd back to find me out; he related to me, with abundance of modest simplicity; what had happen'd to him, and anon he would be saying, *What is it to be a christian? And what would you have me do?* I instructed him with so much the more easiness, because he was

nothing amiss: in a word, he was endued with so much innocence and candor, that I was much taken with him; so that when I found him well disposed, I proceeded to the baptising of him; and put him in a way to sanctify his good inclinations for the future.

The devil, who understands the blind side of the Chinese as to matter of interest, hath inspired the idolaters with a maxim that always retains them in their errors. The people fancy that one is christian enough if he be poor, and that christianity was the religion of beggarly fellows; so that if there happen any misfortune in a family, if there chance to be a christian in it, all others presently lay the blame upon him, and load him with their imprecations. One cannot, without a strong faith, resist this persecution, and when one proposes to an idolater, prepossess'd with this false idea, to embrace the christian religion, inward grace must be exceeding strong to oblige him to sacrifice his fortune, and to forsake, as he imagines, all his temporal interests.

This very reason sways almost with all the Mandarines, who venture all as soon as they think of becoming christians. Father Adam's fall, that drew along with it so many illustrious families in the late persecution, makes their hair still stand an end. They know that the religion of the Europeans is not approved of by the laws, and withal, that they may deprive all such as embrace it of their lives and fortunes. What protection soever the emperor may grant to the missionaries, he may hereafter revoke it, he may die; and the parliament watch all opportunities imaginable to root out christianity; so that the fear of losing the deceitful riches of this world deprives a multitude of people of eternal blessings, which they cannot sufficiently value, nor know the worth of.

But now if a Mandarin, who has any work of grace upon his heart, wave all these considerations, and on his conversion he meets with another notable

notable obstacle to his perseverance, still more difficult to surmount than the former; since the pensions of the officers are not capable to supply the usual expences of their family, they have no other way to maintain it besides injustice.

The ministers of state, and chief presidents of sovereign courts of judicature of Peking, do undoe exact considerable sums from the viceroys; and these latter, to make it good, have recourse to the principal Mandarines of the province, who again lay a tax upon the subaltern officers: none dare presume to dispense with it, without running into the danger of being quite undone; insomuch that every one of them, that he may maintain his post, gapes after getting money by hook or by crook.

This ministry of injustice, which the ambition of the grandees, and avarice of some of inferior rank, have introduced into the empire since the last revolution, gives a mortal blow to the establishment of our most holy faith upon a solid foundation, because a christian Mandarin ceases to be a good christian, if he fleeces and robs, or else he ceases to be a Mandarin if he do not cheat.

However, we meet with a great many of them, whom providence preserves, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. We have seen in China, as in the primitive church, some examples of this christian generosity, that count the goods of this world as nothing, in hopes that the kingdom of heaven will one day be their inheritance. During the time of the persecution there past an hundred things of this nature, that might afford matter of edification, but being I set down nothing but what I have seen, I shall content myself to relate a more recent example which likewise much affected me.

A fervent christian, of the province of Xensu, after he had enriched himself in divers honourable employments, did at last retire from the world,

lay out one part of his estate in the service of God, and to dispose of the other in leading a peaceable and innocent life with his family. He had built a church in the country, whither I sometimes went to administer the sacraments, and baptise the catechists, whom he took special care to train up himself; but, his house standing in a place that was a great thoroughfare, the troops, that are continually going and coming in China, laid all his grounds waste, not daring to do the least damage to those of his neighbour idolaters; and this is the reason that induced them to deal with him at this rate.

The Chinese are wont publickly to belch out curses against those that do them wrong, especially, if they cannot be revenged of them other ways. If a man hath been robb'd in his house, and one cannot discover the robber, every morning and evening, for several days together, the family's business is to curse him; the father, mother, children, and the servants take it by turns, and relieve one another in this exercise, and wish him all mischief imaginable; they have (if I may so express it) Formula's of foul language, and dire expressions, which they repeat an hundred times, bawling as loud as possibly they are able, at the gate, or upon the house-top; and they imagine that the robber will come to some harm by them, wherever he be, 'till such time as he hath made amends for the wrong.

Notwithstanding, there is not one of an hundred of these robbers, that give any heed to this tedious noise; yet, some there be that are frighted at it, and this fear prevents abundance of violence. Christians, who love their enemies, and wish well to those that do ill by them, are far from cursing them; so that the soldiers that I told you of, fearing the curses of the Gentiles, spared their goods; and, fearing nothing from the wrath of this zealous christian, they burnt his house, stole his fruit, cut down his corn,

corn, and pluck'd up his trees; so you see his extraordinary patience drew upon him a <sup>the same</sup> which otherwise would have equally fallen upon others.

His friends, more concern'd <sup>at his losses than</sup> himself, often laugh'd at his insensibility, and reproach'd him pretty much in the same manner as Job's friends did him on a such like occasion, telling him, that all his blessing of God would not secure him from losing his estate, and probably not from starving; *Benedic Deo & morere*, Bless God and die.

They were always telling him, that it was a strange thing, that, for the bare observance of his religion, he would see himself reduc'd to the utmost extremity. If so be, say they, you are afraid yourself to utter curses against those rogues, send one of your servants to do it for you, or else let out your estate to Gentiles, who will not be troubled with these ridiculous scruples.

This good man abounding in a lively faith, and that godly simplicity so conformable to the gospel, made answer, That all he had was at God's disposal, that he would preserve it; and that, upon the whole, he had rather receive hurt than do any. He told me one day, my children take it very ill, that I leave my house and goods, at sixes and sevens, to be plunder'd at this rate. You know I have my particular reasons to do thus, but they have none at all complain, since the goods do not belong to them; they have wherewithal to live, without being beholding to any body, upon what I have reserved for myself; but altho' they should be in want, yet I had rather, when I come to die, leave examples of virtue for their portion, that contribute to the <sup>salvation</sup> of their souls, than riches, that may make <sup>men</sup> take them.

These sentiments, most reverend father, <sup>was</sup> <sup>such</sup> matter of joy, that I am not able to exp

You. I said sometimes to myself, in the excess of my joy, *is there more faith than that in Israel?* No, O Lord, I have lost nothing by leaving France, since I find some saints here; *thy Spirit hath indeed filled all the earth*, and that profound science of salvation, that we in Europe have enjoy'd for so many ages, begins at length to be spread abroad to the extremities of the world, by the stupendous efficacy of thy holy word.

Nevertheless, because his children were very urgent with me, to find out some way or other to remedy this disorder, and that indeed it was convenient to prevent the Gentiles malice from prevailing over the Christians patience; I permitted them, on such occasions as these, to make use of threatenings instead of cursings; and to tell them, I wish you no harm; yea, and I forgive that you have done me; but God, who pleads my cause, knows how to punish, tho' I do not pretend to do it; the time will come, when you shall be smitten with all the anathema's that your unjust violence deserves, and that curse, he sends on you at present, will be to you the source of all the miseries which his law forbids me to wish to you: this expedient took effect, and the christians, growing eloquent for their own interest, did so lively represent the judgment of God, that the idolaters durst no longer blame them.

The second obstacle in my way, in converting the Chinese, proceeded from the multitude of wives which the laws of that country permit them; that is, in respect of the persons of quality only, who, besides their own wives, take as many concubines as they are able to maintain; for, as to the ordinary sort, they have not wealth enough to allow this expence. The Mandarines are by their condition debar'd from all other divertisements, they are permitted only to eat now and then with their friends, and give a play; gaming, taking the air, hunting,  
private

private visits, publick assemblies would be held upon in them as crimes of state; so that they go no further than their house to find what will supply the want of those pleasures which they abridge them of.

Here and there one of them applies himself to study, as the surest means to advance him, but the greatest part of the Mandarines compose a kind of seraglio, wherein they spend all the time that they can steal from their affairs. One may judge by that, how little they are inclined to deprive themselves of delights, to be satisfied with one wife, whose age, nay, and many times antipathy, have but already too much disgusted them.

It is true, those, who are converted, are permitted to take one of their concubines to wife, if the lawful spouse hath not a mind to turn christian; but the laws prohibit them to do so: and in China, one cannot divorce his wife, except in some very few particular cases authorized by custom: moreover, the relations of her, whom her husband should have thus repudiated, would certainly be revenged on him, nay, and would force him by law to take her again; so that, when we propose to the Mandarins the other difficulties of our religion, they dispute, they consider how to conquer them; they do not seem to do violence upon their inclinations; but the law point discourages them at first dash, and deprives them of all thoughts of being converted. I will give you a notable example of what I say.

I was going one day from one village to another, in pretty bad weather, and, making haste to get there in time, I heard an horseman behind, who galloped up to me; he was a man of between fifty and six-score, well mounted, and attended by some servants; as soon as he had overtaken me, he told me, that the great esteem, he had for the christian religion, gave him some thoughts of getting himself fully in-

therein, and that nothing could ever be able to divert him from this resolution, because he perceived in his mind a wonderful desire to embrace it. This ardency, saith I, fir, without all doubt comes from God; flesh and blood do not inspire such like sentiments into you; for my part, I am ready to assist you; I hope, on your part, you will be persuaded to follow the voice that calls you. We were afoot in the middle of a great highway, and, taking him aside a little, I began to instruct him: every thing appeared rational to him; and, after having run over all the mysteries that are most difficult, I advised him to follow me into the church, whither it was my duty to go, when I call'd to mind that I had forgot the material point; I suppose, fir, added I, that you have no concubines, or, at least, you are resolved to send them packing; for, without doubt, you are not ignorant, that it is not allowed christians to marry several wives. The religion which I preach, and Jesus Christ taught, applies itself principally to wean our hearts from sensual pleasures, nay, and doth even sometimes exhort us, to deprive ourselves of those which reason permits.

How! saith he, startled at this, am I oblig'd (if I have any thoughts of being a christian) to turn off my concubines? Ah! what hurt is there in keeping them? What will people say of me in the world? What will become of my children? And what will become of myself? But, is that really an article which cannot be dispensed with? I endeavour'd to pacify him, and make him apprehend that he labour'd under a mistake, so, to overcome the difficulties of his conversion, he relied wholly upon his own natural strength, and present inclination: God, said I, who knows our corrupt nature, hath secret methods whereby to assist us, that we do not at first so much as dream of; endeavour only to keep alive that good will he hath granted you, he will accomplish the rest, you will find yourself changed in respect of this, as of all other things,

He listened to me a good while without speaking a word, but at length taking his leave of me on the sudden, and making a low bow, he mounts briskly on horse-back, puts spurs to his horse and rides full speed towards the place from whence he came; I quickly lost sight of him, but methought I still saw him, so lively was his countenance for some time imprinted upon my spirit; and I am still quite disconsolate for losing a soul in an instant, which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ had been so long preparing for me.

But now, in respect of womens conversion, it is much more difficult. A concubine, for example, acknowledged the verity of religion, and the miserableness of her state and condition; she had a great desire to come out of it, and receive baptism: it was told her, that the first step that faith acquir'd of her, was to live separately from her pretended husband, and to forsake her sins, so far she consents, nay, she desires it with all her heart; but to observe what she represents to herself: I belong to a *Mardian* who bought me, if I go out of his doors he hath a right to claim me, and take me again, and inflict punishment upon me as his slave. If by good fortune I avoid his pursuit, whither can I retire to be in more security? My kindred, who sold me, dare not harbour me, and I shall infallibly fall into the hands of another person, who will engage me in the state that I seek to avoid; I must therefore remain in the house where I am; but how shall I be able to resist a brutish fellow, who only consults his passion, justified by the laws and example of the whole empire? It is to no purpose to lay before him the holiness of Christianity that I desire to embrace: my intreaties, yea, my resistance, and all the efforts that a poor I, can make, are not able to hinder him; nevertheless, I am resolved to run away whatever it costs me, in order me to do something, but pray do not refuse me baptism.

It so falls out sometimes, that an idolater, taking distaste at some extravagant caprichio of his christian wife, does wrongfully accuse her, and obtains leave, by the force of money, to sell her to another; yea, sometimes without any legal proces of justice, he sells her, and retires into another province; this woman gets into the hands of another man; how can she avoid sin, receive the sacraments, and persevere in the faith? In truth, the missionaries are at their wit's end, having at that time no other course to take, but to go to prayer, that God, who sincerely desires the salvation of all men, would please to make use of those secret means, that his almighty power is wont to produce, when his ordinary providence, and the efforts of our good desires, prove ineffectual.

We have, most reverend father, so much the more reason to hope for these distinguishing favours from God in such like occasions, because he often grants them, even then when we do not judge them absolutely necessary. It is true, miracles are not so common in China, as the state of that empire would seem to require: The emperor, to whom we have related those which God hath been pleased to work in other nations, does sometimes reprove us for it. Are we, saith he, in a worse condition than the Barbarians, that have so frequently seen their sick healed, and their dead raised to life? What have we done to God, that he renders our conversion so difficult? You come from the utmost ends of the earth, to preach up a new law to us, contrary to nature, elevated above reason: Is it just, that we should take your word for it? Do some miracles that may warrant the truth of your religion, and I'll pass my word for the sincerity of our faith.

We have frequently told him, that God was the master and giver of these gifts, and that he distributed them according to the decrees of his eternal will; that it is out of our sphere to fathom their

depth; that sometimes he did not work these prodigies in kings courts, because he foresaw the ill use they were likely to make of them; sometimes, because giving them better parts and abilities, and more penetration than to others, these ordinary graces were sufficient for them; whereas the simple vulgar, and the rude, unciviliz'd nations, stood in need of the sensible marks of his almightiness, for the more easy discovering of the truth; yea, and it is more than probable also, that carnal prudence, which is at such enmity with the Spirit of the blessed Jesus, the softness, ambition, and luxury of great persons draw upon them this terrible chastisement, and that God in his just judgment refuseth miracles to persons who do themselves refuse to submit to the most plain and ordinary laws of nature.

But, my lord (have some replied) the charity of that great number of missionaries, who joyfully forsake Europe, where their quality, estates, and sciences ought naturally to detain them; who traverse a thousand dangers, to come hither to sacrifice themselves to the happiness of your people; and with so unbiaſſed and constant zeal, sir: Is not there something of a prodigy in it? And should it not be as powerful to persuade you as miracles? If they be such knowing, learned men as your majesty allows them to be, how do they abuse themselves? And if they be wise, as you seem to think them, why do they abandon all the pleasures of this world, to come so far to deceive others, and all to no purpose? After all the reflections they have made this hundred years upon the different religions of China, there is not one of them, who hath not judg'd them all wholly contrary to reason; but, during so many ages that we have examined the christian religion, we have not observed amongst us one wise man, and of good morals, that hath suspected it of falshood. These answers do usually put him to a stand, at a distance

him to make certain reflections that do not a little disturb him.

In short, most reverend father, if miracles be wanting at Peking, the business is otherwise in the province; several are there wrought, and those of father Faber are so generally known, that it is somewhat difficult not to believe them; not that I go about to justify all that is related of those, nor of a great many more prodigies, which they relate on small grounds: but, you'll give me leave not to doubt of those whereof I myself have been witness; and peradventure, most reverend father, you rely so much upon my sincerity, as to be inclined to believe them likewise upon my testimony.

In a village in the province of Xensi, near the city of San-uyen, there lived an idolater, devout in his way, and extremely addicted to these superstitions: at the time of full moon, he burnt commonly, in honour of his gods, gilded, or silver'd papers, wrapp'd up in different figures, according to the custom of the country. One day, preparing to offer this kind of sacrifice before his gate, there arose a storm that forc'd him to retire into his house, where he lighted the said papers in the middle of a hall, without taking any farther care; but the wind, blowing open the gate, drove them up and down every where, and they had not time to prevent one part from flying into a stack of straw, which set fire on the house.

People came running, but the conflagration became so furious, in a moment, that it was impossible to extinguish it. The house, on one side adjoining to the idolater's, belong'd to a christian, and by this time seem'd (half encompassed with the flame driven furiously by the wind) to be in danger of being quickly quite consumed. This poor man, attended with divers others, got upon the house-top, and did his endeavour, but all in vain, to defend himself from the conflagration; when his brother very confidently

came as near the fire as he durst possibly, and fell on his knees upon the tiles, and looking up to heaven, said, *O Lord, forsake not those that put their trust in thee; all that thou hast bestowed upon us is here; if we lose it, the whole family is reduced to the utmost extremity: preserve it, O my God, and I promise before thee, that I will assemble all the christians in the neighbourhood, and we will go to church together, to demonstrate my acknowledgment of the same.* Thereupon, he loosed a small relique from his chaplet, and threw it into the middle of the flames, that by this time cover'd part of the house.

This action, perform'd with such a sprightly air, did equally attract the attention of christians and idolaters, who, mightily astonish'd at their companion's confidence, expected the event of the business; when Heaven, all on a sudden, declar'd itself in a most miraculous manner: the wind, blowing violently, forthwith slacken'd, and a contrary wind, stronger than that arising at the same time, drove the violent streams of the flames to the opposite side, upon the house of a wicked false-hearted christian, that had lately abjur'd: it was consumed in a moment, becoming an example of divine vengeance, as the house, that Heaven preserved, was an evident token of his protection.

I was at that time six miles from the village. 'Tis true, my urgent business hindered me from being myself upon the spot; but I sent very credible persons thither, to be inform'd about it. The pagans, first of all, bore witness to the truth; and, some while after, the christians thereabouts, conducted by him who was lately heard in his prayer, appear'd in my church to fulfil his vow; where, with one accord, they eccho'd forth the praises of the great God, who alone is able to cause his voice to be heard by the most insensible creatures, to the confusion of false gods, that are not themselves capable to bear the voice of rational creatures.

Some months after, there happened a thing no less surprizing, the consequences whereof were very beneficial to religion: an idolater, of an indifferent fortune, felt himself assaulted with an unknown distemper; it was so catching, that his mother and wife shar'd in it likewise: two or three times a week he fell into fainting fits, which, at the beginning, look'd like swooning, and then turn'd again into cruel head-achs, pains in the stomach and bowels; sometimes they found themselves extremely agitated, as if they'd had a fever; they lost the use of their reason, their eyes rolled in their heads, and men judged by several other unusual postures, that the devil had a hand in the matter.

They were the more persuaded to it, because they often found their house all put out of order, the chairs, tables, and earthen vessels overthrown, not knowing on whom to lay the fault. The physicians, whose interest it was to pass judgment, that nature on the one hand, and the malice of the people of the family on the other, were the cause of these several actions, made use of all their medicines to cure them. The Bonzes, on the contrary, assured them, that the devil was the author of the mischief, and demanded unreasonable alms to stop its course. So that the good people, abused on every hand, had thrown away all their estate, in four years time, upon the covetousness of these impostors, without finding any benefit: however, seeing the distemper afforded them some intervals, they sought up and down in the cities thereabouts, for new remedies for their griefs.

One day, this idolater going for this purpose to the chief city, he found a christian upon the road, to whom he told his condition, and how miserably he was handled. No question, saith the christian, but it's the devil that torments you: but you well deserve it: why do you serve so bad a master? We fear no

such thing, because we acknowledge one God, whom the devils adore; yea, they tremble before his image; and the cross only, that we wear about us, hinders him from coming near us. If you will accept of a picture of Jesus Christ, and you and all your family will honour it, it will not be long before you see the effects of it: however it is soon tried, it shall cost you nothing, and you may judge by that, that I have no other aim but your benefit.

The idolater consented to it, and, hanging the holy image in the most honourable place of the house, he prostrated himself before it with profound respect, and begged every day, morning and evening, of our Saviour, that he would vouchsafe to heal his body, and enlighten his mind. His mother and daughter followed his example; and, from that very moment, the demons abandoned the place, of which Jesus Christ had taken possession.

These good people growing stronger and stronger in faith, as the evil spirit gave ground, began at last to think of being converted in good earnest. They came to inquire for me at Sigan, the usual place of my residence, and demanded baptism of me; they had already got themselves instructed; they had moreover got all the prayers by heart that we teach the late catechumens: but, their distemper making a great noise in the country, I was willing every body should be witnesses of this conversion, and so went to the village myself, hoping this miracle might settle christianity therein, upon a solid basis.

Just upon my appearing, all the inhabitants followed me to the place where the image was still hanging; then I began to tell them, that they were not to question the verity of our religion, God having himself spoken by a manifest miracle; but that I had caused them to assemble, to instruct and baptise them: For, in a word, what do you desire more to be convinced of the weakness of your gods, and the power

of our God? the demon laughs at you, so long as you oppose him with nothing but idols; but he is not able to hold it out against the image only of the christians God. Do you imagine to escape this God after death, whose power hell owns, and whose justice it experiences every moment.

The multitude interrupted me by a thousand ridiculous objections, which I easily answered; at last, somebody told me, that the devil had no hand in the malady in question; that, how extraordinary soever it appeared, it might proceed from several natural causes: That is, said I, the most rational thing you can say, but yet does no way extenuate the greatness of the miracles. Let the malady come from the devil, or from nature, I will not examine that; but it is certain at least, that the cure comes from God, whose image this man hath worshipped; and there is no less power requisite to cure natural distempers, than to drive out evil spirits. This reason should have made an equal impression on all minds; but grace, that acted differently in the hearts, gave place in some to voluntary obdurateness, whilst it triumphed over the obstinacy of others. Twenty-five persons at last gave glory to God, who alone worketh great marvels; *Qui facit mirabilia magna solus*; and were shortly after baptised.

These hauntings and infestations of demons are very ordinary in China amongst the idolaters; and it looks as if God permitted it so to be, to oblige them to have recourse to him. Some time after this accident that I but just now related, a maid, just upon her marriage, was attacked with a complication of several diseases, which the physicians knew not what to say to, and which the Chinese are wont to ascribe to the demons. Her mother persuaded her to turn christian, and he, that was to marry her, promised to build a church to the God of the christians, in case baptism gave her any relief: as soon as ever this  
maid

maid had taken this course, she found herself not only relieved, but perfectly cured.

But her husband was so far from following her example, that he misused her several times for having obliged him to renounce his faith; for the Bonzes persuaded him, that this sickness was but a piece of artifice in his mother-in-law; and this fancy alone put him into such a fit of melancholy, that he was insupportable to the whole family, but especially to his wife, who, from that very instant, became an object of his aversion. It was in vain to represent to him his own mistake, and the malice of the Bonzes, for he always protested, that, if she would not take up her old religion again, he would lead her an ill life all her days.

God, to undeceive him, suffered the demon to torment his wife as before; so she relapsed into her former convulsions: she was more especially scared at the sight of a great company of spectres, that let her not have an hour's rest. Thus tossed up and down, abandon'd to her husband's inhumanity, that beat her cruelly, she in all appearance led a very uncomfortable life; yet, remaining immovable in her faith, God always upheld her, and temper'd and allay'd, by the inward sweetness of his grace, the bitterness of these afflictions; he comforted her likewise by sensible visitations, by his word, and by the unspeakable cogitations that he from time to time infused into her soul: insomuch, that this condition, that gained her the compassion of all that knew her, was to her a foretaste of paradise. She express'd herself much-what to this purpose to her mother, who related it to me with tears in her eyes; for her husband could not endure that I should see her.

At first, I gave little credit to this discourse, yet at length I was apt to believe there was something supernatural in it; for one day, coming to a city distant from the chief city, where I sojourn'd, about  
threescore

threescore miles, there I found this good woman with a great company of christians of the neighbouring towns, which she had taken care to get together, being confident that I would come at the very minute that she had fix'd in her mind, and it fell out accordingly. It much surpris'd me to see her there, for I had no design to come thither; and it was only by chance that somebody had, about five or six hours before, made me resolve to come thither, so that nobody could give her notice of this my resolution. I took her in private, to learn of her how she came to know this; she told me, that her daughter, after a violent assault of a demon, had been visited by our blessed Lord; that, when this extasy was over, she advis'd her to acquaint the christians, and bring them to this village, for without peradventure I would come thither on such a day: In fine, added she, not being able to come thither myself, and seeing my sins render me unworthy to partake of those sacred mysteries, pray desire the father to offer up the holy sacrifice of the mass for me, and the conversion of my husband. This poor mother, relating to me this accident, wept bitterly for the present state of her daughter; nevertheless, the accomplishment of this prophecy comforted and built her up in her most holy faith. I cannot tell what happened since that time, for the necessity of my affairs oblig'd me to leave that province.

The extraordinary things that I have seen, the zeal of the christians, and the inclination of idolaters to be converted, inspir'd me with an affectionate zeal for their salvation, and I heartily wish to bestow the remainder of my life upon the cultivating this precious portion of our Lord's inheritance: but some superior reasons, which I am bound to obey, snatch me from it sore against my will; at this separation, I was more sensible than ever of my loss.

These good people, so affectionate to their pastors, were almost ready to offer violence to me; but, understanding that they could not detain me without opposing the will of God, they abandon'd themselves to sorrow, and gave such abundant marks of their affection, that I myself never shed more real and bitter tears: they waited for me upon the highway in crowds, where they had spread tables from space to space, covered with all sorts of fruits and confectionaries. It was sometimes necessary to make a stop, not to eat, but to hear their complaints, and to comfort them, for leaving them *as sheep without a shepherd*. They made me promise them to return as soon as possible, or to send them somebody in my place. Thus I took my leave of these fervent christians, melted with their tears, but much more edified with their faith and the innocence of their lives.

God, who knows the violence I committed upon myself, comforted me by an eminent conversion he vouchsafed to work at the farthest limits and last village of this province. There is something in it so signal that I cannot forbear relating it.

I departed from Sigan the metropolis of this province upon the eve of a considerable festival of our Lady, which I was naturally engaged to spend in that church, where the multitude, and devotion of believers invited me to say mass that day, and to administer the sacraments to them, being the last time I was likely to do it; yea, and the publick edification did even seem to require it of me, every one in general desired I would; and, I don't know how contrary to reason, I was very obstinate and resolute not to delay my journey a minute; but the truth is, I felt inwardly I know not what internal motion that would not give me leave to stay any longer; nay, more than that, in spite of the superstition of the Chinese, who observe lucky and unlucky days to begin journeys, I made my idolater guides to depart on a day

marked in the kalendar for an unfortunate one. They were surpris'd at this precipitation; yea, and I myself, reflecting afterwards upon it, could not choose but condemn it, not understanding then by what spirit I was influenced and impulsed, but God let me presently understand it. On the fourth day after my departure, I continued my journey, and I was just upon my arrival in the very farthest city of the province of Xenfi, when a man that rid post, passing just by me, fell to the ground, and by his fall was like to have turned me over on the other side: this accident stopped me a little, and afforded time to the traveller, who was got up again, to take a view of me.

Notwithstanding the multitude of passengers was great, yet, my long beard and European mien made me presently be known to be a missionary: I am very fortunate, says the man immediately, to meet with you; that accident, that happened to me, spares me the labour of a long journey, and will engage you to a good deed. My master, who lives not above half a league from hence, ordered me to ride post to Sigan, to engage you to come to him; he hath been indispos'd these several months, and we are apt to believe that he seriously thinks of being converted. I quickly left the highway to follow him, and we reached the house at one o'clock in the afternoon.

He was a doctor of high renown by his extraction and understanding, living formerly at Pekin, but banish'd some years before into Xenfi, for I know not what bad business; the time of his banishment expired, and he was resolv'd to return to court, as soon as his health should permit him to take his journey, for he did not look upon his distemper to be dangerous: the fever had left him, and besides a cough that troubled him now and then, and made him still keep his bed, he perceiv'd no considerable inconvenience.

His servant being just departed, when he saw me come into his house, he was seized with astonishment, as if God had transported me into his house in a moment: Is it possible, cries he, all in tears, that Heaven should work wonders for such a wretch as I am? God hath solicited me these many years to go to him, without receiving any thing from my hardness of heart; 'tis but a moment since I begged of him to come to me in the person of one of his ministers, he not only hears me, but does even anticipate my desires. This is somewhat beyond the power of nature, and this favour does the business of my change. You know by that, father, that this great God is concerned in my salvation, and that it is his pleasure that you should contribute something to further it. Then proceeding, You see, saith he, my wife, children, and daughter, they have been all christians a long time ago; and I can say, that God hath made use of me as an instrument to undeceive them of their errors. I have given them your books, I have explained the maxims and morality of it to them, for the sanctity, which your religion inspires, persuaded me I should have a well ordered family, as soon as it should be a christian family. I was not mistaken, and my conscience would not have given me the lye, had I followed their example; but I have a long time laboured to procure their welfare, and could never find in my heart to consult my own: now it is high time to follow that way I have shewed to others. The court, whither I am going, is not a proper place for conversion; and I thought it was my duty, *whilst it is called to day*, to seek God, for fear the hurry of the world, wherein I am going to engage, should hinder me from finding him hereafter.

All his family, which came about us upon this, wept for joy; but that, which affected me most, was that fervency I saw expanded in the eyes, countenance, and in all the motions of the sick person.

had taken no refreshment, and it was near two of the clock, and I was desirous to defer his baptism till after dinner; but I found it impossible to obtain any delay. I therefore began to examine him, and he was ready to answer to all the articles of religion, that I yielded at length to all his urgent intreaties. I baptized him, and he accompanied the whole action with such ardent and lively meditations of love, humility, faith, and hope, that nothing in all my life did ever so much demonstrate to me what the holy Spirit is able to do in a heart, when it alone pleases to take it to task, without the assistance of its ministers. Some while after I left him alone full of consolation, and retired to a chamber to take a little repose, of which I had extreme need.

But scarce had I been there half an hour, but I heard great cries in all the family. They called for me every where; and, running upon the noise to the sick man's chamber, I found him expiring in the embraces of his wife and children. I endeavoured to put him in mind of the last thoughts of baptism; he still repeated with a languishing note the names of Jesus and Mary; but yet he received the extreme unction in a manner insensible, after which he calmly gave up the ghost. All those that were present cried, O it was a miracle! and recollecting what had happened at my departure, upon the road, and in the house, they did no longer question but that all that had been managed by an over-ruling providence, that had made use of all these secret methods, for to procure him a blessed exit.

At that time the Spirit of the Lord seized upon all hearts, nobody wept; the spiritual joy was so universal, that nothing was heard any where but blessings, praises, and thanksgivings, to that gracious God, that had but now wrought such stupendious miracles in his servant. What is to be most admired is, that there was not observed in him that deformity

deformity that death commonly leaves behind it; but, on the contrary, I know not what air of sweetness and devotion seemed display'd over his countenance, and did sufficiently intimate the blessedness of his soul. He was laid in state, according to the custom of that country, where I found him the next day twenty hours after just as he was; his hands and arms besides were as flexible as if he had been but in a slumber.

Thus God, by one of those many profound secrets of his predestination, vouchsafes to enlighten a soul sometimes in the midst of the darkness of idolatry, and snatch it from the jaws of hell by a continual series of miracles; whilst millions of others, educated in the bosom of the Church, are, by his just judgment, given over to a reprobate mind.

These are, most reverend father, the most extraordinary things that have happened to me, during the small time that I have had the care of the mission of Xensi: If I mention not what passed in the other provinces of China, it is not because God doth not work such like miracles therein, but by reason I have no exact memorial of them, I was afraid, lest, relating upon hear-say, I should be deficient in some considerable circumstances; and I had rather let them be set down in writing hereafter, by those who are better informed than myself.

This I can add over and above, to give you a more exact account of what good there hath been done in the empire. There are above two hundred churches or private chapels, dedicated to the true God, and governed by certain ecclesiastical superiors: Pekin, Nankin, and Macao have each its particular bishop, by the nomination of the most serene king of Portugal, who, by his zeal and liberalities, continues to uphold christianity throughout all the East, which all his predecessors have there established with so much glory.

The other provinces, when I departed, were under the jurisdiction of three apostolick vicars, \* one whereof is an Italian of the order of St. Francis, † two others are ecclesiasticks, Frenchmen by nation, doctors of the Sorbonne, of singular worth; missionaries, that labour under their order, are of a wife of different nations. There are four ecclesiasticks of the seminary of foreign missions of Paris; amongst whom the abböt of Lionne is very eminent for his zeal and application to the study of languages; they reckon much about the same number of fathers of St. Dominic, twelve or fifteen Franciscans, and three or four of the order of St. Augustin: all these monks are Spaniards, and come into China by Manille.

The jesuits who founded this mission, and who by the extraordinary favours of his majesty the king of Portugal, as well as of the emperor of China, have been in a capacity to make considerable settlements, do maintain a great number of missionaries there; there were about forty of them at the time of my departure. Since that time the fathers Grimaldi and Spinola || brought several others thither. But what signify forty or threescore labourers in such a vast field? May it please the Master of the harvest to hear the voice of those that labour therein, who, groaning under the burthen and heat of the day, beg relief: or, at least, may he please to shed abroad abundantly upon us that first spirit of the gospel, which, in one apostle alone, was sufficient heretofore to convert the greatest empires.

Not but that the present state of the church doth afford matter of consolation, to those who are concern'd for the glory of Jesus Christ. They labour with no small success; nay, there are but few missionaries, that do not baptise every year three or four

\* The reverend father *de Lionissa*,  
and monsieur *Pin*.

† *Monf. Maigrot*

|| *Father Spinola* died by the way.

hundred persons; insomuch, that in five or six years they reckon above fifty thousand idolaters converted. Besides that, they baptise every year four or five thousand children in the streets of Pekin, where they go to look for every morning from door to door, where we find them half perish'd with cold and hunger; nay, sometimes half eaten up by dogs. If they should do no more good but this, the missionaries would think themselves well enough rewarded for all the pains they take.

But that, which ought to animate us to cultivate this mission better than all others, is the hope one day to convert the emperor; the change of whose religion would infallibly be followed by the intire conversion of the whole nation; so that although we should wait for this happy moment three or four ages, without any other profit than what we hope for, in time to come, we should be too happy in preparing by our patience the way of the Lord in this new world, which perhaps will make better improvement of the faith, that our successors shall bring to it, than Europe does at present of that our forefathers intrusted it withal.

In short, altho' amongst the christians that are in China, we can reckon no more princes and ministers of state since the last persecution of father Adam; yet, for all that, we baptise every year Mandarines, doctors, and other persons of quality; yet it is true that the common people make up the greatest number: *Non multi potentes, non multi nobiles.* And it is no news to own, that the poor have always been the elect portion and precious inheritance of Jesus Christ in the church.

The main body of christians is in the province of Nankim, and more especially in the territory of Cham-hai; but the faith is more lively in the provinces of Quantum, Pekin, Xensi, and Xansi. There are in proportion as many Tartarians as Chinese christians

They are more docile, and much easier to be converted; yet in the time of temptation they have not half so much courage. The Tartars, on the contrary, being naturally of a brisk temper, do not easily stoop under the yoke of the gospel; but those, of whom grace hath once triumphed, are endued with a virtue that is proof against the fiercest persecutions. As for women, which we see more rarely, altho' they be less instructed than the men, yet their innocence, their constant attendance at prayer, their blind submission to the precepts of faith, and the most harsh and severe practices of christian piety, do in some measure supply their defect of knowledge, as to the particulars of our mysteries.

It were to be wish'd, that the beauty and ornament of our churches might answer the devout fervour of christians: but, besides that the Chinese are no great architects, this novel christianity, so frequently shaken by persecutions, composed for the most part of the poorer sort of people, only tolerated by the bye, and always forced to observe a great many punctilio's, and keep within bounds, hath not yet been in a condition to rear magnificent temples. Nevertheless it is matter of astonishment, that the missionaries, with such a pitiful fund as theirs is, should be able on this score to do so much.

The church of Pekin is very well built; the front piece, the stones of which were laid by the missionaries themselves, is very proportionable and pleasing. Those in Kiamcheu, Cham-hai, and Jocheu, that which the fathers have at Canton, and divers others are as fine as our ordinary churches of Europe; but the church of Hamcheu was so very pretty and neat, that one could not enough admire it: you could see nothing but gildings, paintings, and curious pictures; it was all over adorn'd with them; yea, and there was a great deal of symmetry and order in the whole. That delicate red and black varnish, which the Chinese

nese are so expert at, to which they give a particular relief or embossment, by the flowers of gold and other figures wherewith they enrich it, did produce the finest effect in the world to compleat the work.

But this goodly church, the product of christ's devotion, and of father Intorcetta's zeal, is late reduc'd to ashes by a dreadful conflagration, which consum'd one quarter of the city; and, in all probability, we shall not be in a capacity a long time to perform any thing like it. Nevertheless it will be our comfort to support us after this loss, if it shall please our blessed Lord to destroy, at the same time, that pack of idols which have overflow'd the whole empire; and that he will vouchsafe to raise himself living temples in the hearts of the new believers, where he may be worshipp'd in spirit and truth; wherein, for want of ours, they may offer to him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

I shall not entertain you, most reverend father, concerning the transactions of the Indies, where the revolution of a huge kingdom, the jealousies of some Europeans, together with the continual thwartings of hereticks, have broken all the measures that christian prudence oblig'd us to take for the sake of religion; so that the most part of the French missionaries have been hitherto more conspicuous by their sufferings, than by their conversion of idolaters.

Some of them, after having lingered out several years in the most darksome prisons, scarce begin to see the light, and are not yet in a condition even to exercise their functions with any freedom. Others driven from their settlements, wander up and down upon the most tempestuous oceans, carrying along with them the miserable remainders of their ruin'd millions; and, that they may return to the remotest parts of the world, they commit themselves a fourth time to the mercy of the waves and their enemies.

Several buried in shipwracks, or worn out with  
sickness, have gloriously finish'd their course; and, tho'  
their companions live still, it is only to consume by  
the and little the sacrifice of their lives, by the ill ha-  
bit of body they have contracted by their first labours.

You see, most reverend father, what sort of per-  
sons they be I speak of, you know their names, you  
understand their worth, and, since they were chosen  
from amongst a great many other candidates for the  
East-Indies, you have been pleas'd always to honour  
them with a most particular affection: and, may I  
be bold to add, that you were not satisfied with only  
sending of them, you follow'd yourself in some re-  
spect, and became the fellow, or rather the head of  
their apostleship, sharing, like one of the most zea-  
rous missionaries, in the success of their holy under-  
takings, zealously lending an helping-hand to their  
labours, delivering them from their chains by a pow-  
erful protection, or, at least, lightening the weight by  
consolatory letters, full of that lively hope that  
makes a man take delight in the most rigid perse-  
cutions.

This courage, most reverend father, which you  
have inspir'd into us, does not only alleviate our suf-  
ferings, but also assures us, that the ruins of this grand  
edifice, that we have laid the first stone of to the  
glory of God, will one day serve for a basis to ano-  
ther work, yet more considerable and solid than the  
first; so that neither the shipwreck of \* three of our  
brethren buried in the sea, nor the loss of † three  
more, who sacrific'd their lives aboard the vessel in  
relieving the sick, nor yet the death of a great many  
more whom the fatigues of the mission have snatch'd  
from us in the Indies, nor the prisons of Pegu, Siam,  
Moluccas, Batavia, Rotterdam nor Middleburg,  
where pagans and hereticks have tried our patience

\* *Barnaby, Theonvil, Niwart.*  
*Serls, Daudy.*

† *Rochette, le Blanc*

by turns: all that, I say, does not blunt the edge of our courage, being fully persuaded that Jesus Christ hath made use of the cross to propagate and establish religion: so the missionaries cross is always to be the foundation of their churches, and, as it were, the seed of new christians.

In the mean time, these first labours have not been altogether in vain; we baptised at Boudychery above four hundred idolatrous children: the people of Comandiel have been relieved, as were those of Ceylon, Pegu, and Bengala. They labour'd with no small success in divers provinces of the empire of the great Mogul, and, above all, in the missions of Madura. Such missions, as in them we see in our days the ages of the primitive church reviv'd; wherein believers, wretchedly poor and depriv'd of all the comforts of life, seem to live only by their faith, hope, and charity; wherein the missionaries, to comply with the customs of the country, and obtain the people's favour, spend their lives in forests and desarts, half naked, scorched by the sun-beams, and walk, for the most part, upon scalding hot sands; where upon the ways, full of briers and thorns, they take no other sustenance but a little rice, with some insipid plants, and no other beverege, but yellow muddy water from the ditches and marshes.

There it is, where a great number of our brethren have suffer'd, and do still daily suffer imprisonments, chains, scourgings, and all the torments that hell is wont to suggest, to the enemies of our most holy faith. There father Brito, illustrious by his birth, as also by the particular esteem wherewith his majesty of Portugal honoured him, but yet more, much more by his rare virtues, had the honour to part with his life in the cause of Jesus Christ, where his brethren, after his example, labour, by their fervency, to obtain the same favour from Heaven.

Perhaps

Perhaps, most reverend father, this portraiture will offend the men of this world, not being ready to bestow upon sufferings the just value they deserve, *to forsake the things that are of God*; yet I know, it will not abate the zeal of our fathers living in innocence, who have so many years aspir'd to toilsome and tedious employments.

The missions, in respect of them, have so many more allurements, as they appear to others more hideous and frightful: if they expected to find in the Indies only common crosses, whereunto providence makes every kingdom subject, but wherewith Jesus Christ hath in a special manner enrich'd christianity, they would have been contented with their recluse religious way of living; and, with the eminent virtues practis'd therein, they would never perhaps have had the least thought of leaving their friends, relations, and country. But they seek, elsewhere, what we here want of the passion of Jesus Christ, according to the apostle's counsel, and they are willing to fill up the whole extent, the breadth and depth of this divine law, which carries them out, with St. Paul, to become victims of the most pure charity, even so far as to be anathemised, that their brethren may be saved.

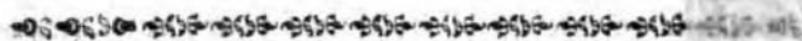
Yet these are those apostles, most reverend father, whom envy sometimes, in France, paints out to us in such black colours, whom heresy, evermore opposite to true zeal, so often accuseth of ambition, avarice, impiety, and idolatry; they are too happy in being the butt, that all the shots of calumny level at, provided they have none for their enemies, but the enemies of the church and truth; and, without doubt, the war, that such adversaries declare against them, with so much heat and animosity here in Europe, does no less justify them, than that which they themselves declare against paganism in the Indies.

Nevertheless, what justice soever wise men may do them in this point, yet it is most true, that that does not suffice to justify them before God, before whom the very angels are impure; after all the efforts of zeal, we must not only acknowledge in all humility that we are unprofitable servants, but confess it with thoughts full of horror, that it is in vain to win over all the nations upon the earth to Jesus Christ, if in the mean time we be so sluggish as to neglect our own salvation, and unfortunately lose ourselves. I am, with a profound respect,

*Most Reverend Father,*

*Your most humble*

*and most obedient Servant,*



L E T T E R XIII.

*To my Lord Cardinal de Janson.*

*The Christian Religion newly approved of by a publick Ediēt, throughout the whole Empire of China.*

*My Lord,*

**I**T seems as if Heaven, sensible of the labours of our missionaries, who, for these several years, have, with the sweat of their brows, watered China, had a mind, at length, to establish this new church upon a solid foundation. Hitherto it hath been subject to abundance of revolutions, flourishing under the reign of some emperors, persecuted in the time of their minority, and, in a manner, totally ruin'd during

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the intestine commotions; but always in a tottering condition, by reason of the rigour of the laws, that have permitted a right to destroy it, even to those that have the most defended it.

For the sovereign courts of China, declar'd enemies to all foreign worship, rather out of a spirit of policy, than any sincere affection to the religion of the country, have frequently condemned the christian doctrine, and punish'd those who had the courage to embrace it. Several of them, for all that, hearkened to the voice of God, rather than to the voice of man; but the greatest part, apprehending danger as to their fortune, were so far from pursuing the known truth, that they durst not so much as get themselves instructed therein.

It is a matter of an hundred years, that we have labour'd to remove this almost invincible obstacle to the conversion of great persons. The hour of the Lord was not yet come; he was pleas'd to exercise the patience of his christians, to try the constancy of the missionaries, and thereby inance the worth of them both. But now at last the happy day begins to dawn, and the emperor hath granted an intire liberty of conscience to his subjects, by allowing in a publick edict the christian faith throughout the whole extent of his empire. *\* Thou hast, O Lord, broken the chains that held thy holy religion captive; now can we offer sacrifices, and call publickly upon thy name; we present to thee our vows, not in secret as formerly, but in presense of all the people, in the temples they suffer us to rear to thy glory, who are about to change the old Babylon into the new Jerusalem.* Here I do present you, my lord, with the occasion, and the whole continued series of this happy event.

Father Alcalá a Spanish Dominican, one of the most zealous missionaries in China, had purchased an house at Lanki, a little village of the province of

Chekiam, notwithstanding this settlement was expressly against the edict of 1669; the Mandarin of the place, who at first did not oppose it, being afterwards nettled at some indiscreet words, that escaped unawares from some of this father's menial servants was resolv'd not to dissemble the matter any longer, but to proceed according to the course of law against him.

He therefore asked the missionary, how he durst presume to settle in the city? Why he preach'd up a foreign doctrine? And moreover, by what right he pretended to remain in the empire? This father foresaw the storm gather, and had prepar'd himself before-hand: 'I wonder, my lord, says he, in answer to the Mandarin, that you reckon that criminal in me at present, that you did not disapprove at the beginning. You know that for some years the emperor hath kept and preserv'd in the empire five of my European brethren (he meant us) that he hath not only sent for them to court, but also hath by a publick edict granted them power to settle in whatsoever place of the kingdom they shall think fit: it is for one of them that I have bought this house, and I lodge in it till such times as he come himself to take possession of it.

'Moreover, you cannot be ignorant that the missionaries had liberty granted them to come again into their churches, when the emperor did them the favour to recal them from their banishment. Consult, I pray, consult your registers upon the business, and there you will find my name.

'Some months after another Mandarin, solicited by him of Lanki, or at least urg'd to it by his example, was resolv'd to put a stop to the progress of our holy doctrine; he prohibited the exercise thereof through the whole extent of his government, by an order, which he caused to be affixed in divers places. They treated religion in such a despiteful manner,

that

that father Intorcetta of our society, and missionary in the metropolis of this province, thought himself oblig'd not to dissemble the affront without betraying his ministerial function.

He supposed likewise, that he had a right on his formally to accuse this sworn enemy of the gospel whose behaviour was so excentrical from the emperor's intentions; for this prince had blotted out with his own hand a great many lines of a book that attacked the christian doctrine in the number of dangerous and popular heresies: this book was of moment, not only by reason of its author, eminent for his quality and desert, but much more, for that it was composed for the people's instruction, by whom it was to be read, according to the custom, several times a year.

Father Intorcetta did therefore judge it a piece of boldness, that made the Mandarin liable to the lash, to condemn, by his private authority, that which the emperor seem'd to allow of and approve, so that the father writ a very smart pithy letter to the governor of the capital city, in which he desir'd him to order the subaltern officer to retract his words, and so get the injurious writing to be torn in pieces: he likewise added, that, to repair this fault, he could wish that the Mandarin might affix other papers in the place of those, more favourable to the religion, and more conformable to the emperor's intentions.

The governor dispatched this letter to the Mandarin, and, as ill luck would have it, it was deliver'd to him upon a day that he heard causes, in sight of all the people, at the very time that he was busy in passing judgment. He so much resent'd this affront, that contrary to the custom of the Chinese, and naugre his natural phlegm, he started from the bench transported with choler, complain'd of the impudence of the missionary, and protest'd openly, that he would be reveng'd.

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That he might carry on the business more secretly, he associated himself with the Mandarin of Lan-ki, and combin'd with him, if possible, utterly to destroy the christian religion. Their first attempt was to assault the Dominican friar, on whom they thought more easily to accomplish their design; for they could not imagine, that he was of the number of the apostolic missionaries. To be rightly inform'd of the matter, they caused to be produced certain authentick copies of every procedure during the whole course of the persecution against father Fui (for so was he called) with a design to confront him with himself.

It is a peculiar trick, pretty common in China, with the Mandarines, to question the criminals not only about matters of fact, but also concerning abundance of insignificant circumstances, causing all they answer carefully to be taken in writing. Then, when they have talked a pretty while of a matter quite foreign to the subject in hand, to distract their mind, all on a sudden they return to the thing in question; they begin over and over the declaration; they change the order of the interrogatives, and cunningly interpose answers contrary to those the guilty person made, on purpose to make him contradict himself, the more easily to sift out the truth.

Father Alcala, without all doubt, would have been put to his trumps, if he had not, by a particular providence, preserv'd a copy of these ancient proceedings. Wherefore, knowing the intent and design of his judges, he so well inform'd himself of all that had heretofore past to this purpose, and deliver'd himself so pertinently, and conformably to the first interrogatory, that his enemies were never able to prevail over him, as to his answers.

So that all the storm fell upon father Intorcetta again, against whom they were much more animated and incensed; but, forasmuch as this father did not live within their jurisdiction, they suborned many  
 confide

considerable Mandarines, and the viceroy in particular, who added to his absolute power in the province a greater aversion for the christian religion.

They all unanimously resolv'd to beat down christianity, and after having caused all the proceedings, formerly made against missionaries, to be sought out in the archives of the intendant of the city government, they found at last the decree of 1669, that strictly prohibited them to build any churches; to teach in publick or in private the European law, to administer baptism to the Chinese, to distribute medals, chaplets, crucifixes, or other such like tokens of religion, to christians.

The missionaries were not ignorant of these prohibitions; but their particular zeal, and the example of Pekin, where the gospel was preach'd under the emperor's very nose, no body pretending to say any thing against it, put them upon waving the usual rules of human prudence. These very considerations made most part of the Mandarines to connive, and, whenever any one of them took upon him to impede the progress of the faith, they endeavour'd to pacify him by presents, and letters of recommendation procur'd for us by the fathers of Pekin; or else, if need required, we made use of the emperor's authority against him.

The christians of Hamcheu, under the cure of father Intorcetta, were none of the least zealous. Their courage had appear'd under the government of divers Mandarines, great sticklers against our most holy faith; but their courage was never more apparent than in the present occasion; for the viceroy supposing, that he was impower'd to undertake any thing by vertue of the decree aforementioned, caused to be affix'd to the gate of our house, in all the publick places of the capital city, and afterwards in above seventy cities of his government, a new sentence, by which he forbid under grievous penalties

ties, to exercise the christian religion, charging all those that embraced it to forsake it\*.

Moreover, being informed, that father Intorcetta was formerly in the province of Kiamfi, and that he had not obtained leave from the court to settle in that of Chekiam, he sent to ask him by what authority he durst presume to stay there; yea, and he commanded him forthwith to avoid the country; the officer, that brought this order, added, I command you withal, in the name of the viceroy, to burn all the books of your religion, together with the tables of printing, that you have in your house. They are thin boards, upon which they have engraven all the leaves, from which they may take copies, according as occasion serves.

The father, not at all surpriz'd, answer'd, That he was in the city by the authority of him who granted the privilege to the viceroy himself, to remain there: 'Have you forgot, added he, that the emperor, passing this way three years ago, sent two grandees of his court to my church, to offer presents, in his name, to the true God, with express orders, to lie prostrate before the altars? I went to render him my most humble thanks for his gracious favour; and, that I might give him further demonstrations of my acknowledgment, I was willing to accompany him upon the canal at his departure, where he was with his whole court.

' This grand prince, who had formerly honoured me with more than ordinary demonstrations of his benevolence, taking notice of my barge, amongst a great number of others, caused it to approach his own, and spoke to me such obliging things, that, after all that, I could not suspect I should be exposed to any straits, or insults from any one of his officers.

' But, since this example hath made no impression upon the spirit of the viceroy, go tell him, That

\* This happened about the middle of August, Ann. 1691.

the emperor, not being willing I should accompany him any farther, sent me back with these his last words to me, which are too advantageous to me to presume to alter, add, or diminish any thing in them: Your years, says he to me, do not permit you to attend me any longer, you are no way in a condition to endure the fatigues of a journey; I order you to return to your church, and there to spend the remainder of your days. But, now, if the viceroy does not only disturb this tranquillity by ordinances injurious to the God whom I adore, but forces me shamefully to quit this province, I leave him to judge, whether of us two does more openly and peremptorily contradict the emperor's will and pleasure.

As to what relates to the table, on which they have engraven the law and maxims of Jesus Christ, God forbid I should be so wicked as to commit it to the flames. However, the viceroy is the master, since I cannot resist his violence; but tell him from me, that, before he resolve upon that, he must begin with the burning of myself.

The viceroy, surpriz'd at the undauntedness of the missionary, durst attempt nothing upon his person; but he referr'd the business to certain subaltern Mandarines, who received orders, to summon this father before their tribunals, and to perplex and trouble him upon all accounts, without allowing him a moment's respite. Father Intorcetta, who just then fell sick, might have been dispens'd with from appearing; but he was afraid to lose these precious junctures of time, that providence had put into his hand, openly to confess the name of Jesus Christ; and being resolv'd not to recoil, or give ground during the combate, he got himself carried before judges; much oppress'd, by reason of the malady he labour'd under, and much more at the sight of his desolate church: but, besides, he was so animated by the holy

holy Spirit, wherewith martyrs are corroborated, that of all the Mandarines that interrogated him, not one of them but admir'd the greatness of his courage.

So that, in despite of the vigorous orders of the viceroys, every one of them almost treated him with abundance of deference; even to that degree, that one of them caused an officer of justice to be soundly bastinado'd in open court, for having been wanting in his respect to the father. Adding withal, that indictments do not render a man guilty; and that he must have been convicted, to deserve to be treated as a malefactor.

Father Intorcetta, presently foreseeing that the persecution would be violent, had written to the missionaries at court, to the end that they might remedy it. The emperor was then in Tartary, where he diverted himself in hunting. Father Gerbillon, a Frenchman by nation, and one of those the king sent to China, accompanied this prince thither, by whom he was particularly beloved, retaining him almost always near his person; so that the letters were directed to him.

This father did not judge it convenient to speak of it to the emperor, but contented himself to desire a letter of recommendation from prince Sofan, one of the most powerful ministers of the empire, and his particular friend, who immediately writ to the viceroy in a most effectual manner. He represented to him, that such a procedure, as his was, smelt somewhat of violence, and was inconsistent with his wonted moderation and prudence. We live in a time, saith he, that requires much gentleness and discretion. The emperor seeks all occasions to favour the doctors of the christian law, how can you possibly think to please him in persecuting that? Believe me, sir, the example of a prince ought to make a greater impression upon our spirits, than all the decrees of courts of judicature, and the ancient edicts.

edicts, that the court itself can no longer follow, ought not at present to be the rule of its conduct. If you favour the missionaries, reckon that the emperor will take it kindly from you; and, if I may be permitted to subjoin any thing to this last motive, be assured also that I shall resent all the good offices you render them upon my recommendation.

Prince Sofan is so considerable thro' the whole empire (whether it be by the honour he hath to be a near relation to the emperor, or whether by his place of grand master of the palace, or whether by his credit or capacity) that upon any other occasion the viceroy of Chekiam would have looked upon it as a great favour to receive one of his letters, and would not have balanced one moment to satisfy him; but passion had blinded him, and the vexation, to perceive himself less powerful at court than a stranger, inclined him to let the missionary understand, that he was at least the master in his own province.

Wherefore, he began to seize upon several churches which he bestowed upon the priests of the pagan gods, after he had violently taken away the sacred monuments of our religion.

He issued out proclamations much more rigorous than the former, he threatened the father with his indignation if he did not abandon his flock, and he caused several christians, that had but too openly declared themselves, to be apprehended; some of them were haled to prison, they severely punished others, and then the persecution became bloody by the torments, that these generous confessors suffered for the name of Jesus.

Amongst those that signalised themselves, a physician more eminently made his faith appear; he was much grieved to see the altars of the true God violated and despoiled, crosses broken in pieces, the holy images exposed to the scorn, laughter, and im-

piety of idolaters : to repair this loss, and that believers might not be left destitute of the ordinary marks of their religion, he distributed to each of them images and Crucifixes. He went from door to door with the precious pledges of our salvation ; animating the weak, and confirming the more courageous in their faith : *Do not fear*, said he to them, *him who can only exercise his weak power on the body ; but fear that great God, who, as he has deprived you of life, can also punish your soul with an eternal death, and rather suffer all sorts of torments, than forsake his holy law.*

The Mandarin, offended at the boldness of the physician, commanded him to be loaden with chains ; and, having caused him to be dragged before his tribunal, they prepared all things for his being cruelly bastinado'd, when his godson, who came running thither with other christians, threw himself on his knees at the judge's feet, and begged of him with tears in his eyes, that he would permit him to receive the chastisement of his godfather.

This zealous physician, who aspired to nothing more than martyrdom, was so far from giving his place to another, that he constantly and steadfastly forbid it ; and, at that time, there arose such a scuffle between them, that the angels admired, and that made the christian religion to be respected by the very idolaters. The judge stood amazed at it, and turning towards those eminent confessors of Jesus Christ. *Go your ways*, says he to them, *this forwardness to suffer the punishment of your faults deserves some indulgence ; I pardon you, but, henceforward, think of pleasing the viceroy, and be more careful to obey the emperor's orders.*

When the Spirit of God hath once seized on the heart, mens words are not capable to touch them. This zealous physician, whom the sight of execution had made more courageous, continued his acts of cha-

city as before, and his zeal made such a noise up and down, that the Mandarin durst no longer mince the matter; he seem'd much concern'd at the contempt he us'd of his threatenings, insomuch that he gave orders to his officers to bring him out, to make a severe example of him.

In effect, he caus'd him to be beat so cruelly in his presence, that those, who were present, were equally surpris'd at the severity of the judge, and the patience of this good christian. This bloody execution once over, some of his relations; who came running at this doleful spectacle, were thinking to carry him to his house, but he positively desired to be carried to church; and what endeavours soever they us'd to divert him from it, yet he had strength enough left to crawl thither himself, borne up by the arms of several christians. He came thither all bathed in his gore; and, kneeling down at the foot of the altar, *O Lord, saith he, thou seest this day, that I prefer thy holy law to all the sweetness of life: I come not to demand justice of thee for all the blood thy enemies have spilled, I come to offer thee that which remains of my own; I do not deserve to die for such a good cause; but thou, O my God, deserveest the intire sacrifice of my life.* And then turning towards father Introcetta, who began to comfort him, *Ab! father,* answered he; *I shall be now at the height of my joy, if it were not my sins, but my zeal that had brought this light chastisement upon me.*

This example, and many others, that I forbear to relate, made such impressions upon the idolaters hearts, that a great many of them resolv'd to embrace the christian faith, being persuad'd, that sentiments, so opposite to corrupt nature, could not possibly proceed either from passion or error.

Among them, whom the holy Spirit did effectually touch, were three who appeared full of that very

faith, that made in former times almost as many martyrs in the primitive church as believers; they were young, handsome, of quality, and what is more, engaged by their condition blindly to comply with the viceroy's inclinations. Nevertheless, counting their temporal estate as nothing, they demanded publick baptism.

The father, to bring the faith of these neophytes to the test, hid nothing from them that might very wise stagger them; but it was all in vain to represent to them the rigour of the edicts, the viceroy's indignation, the desolation they were like to cast their families into, the danger of losing their estates, honour, life, and all these considerations served only to animate them the more; so that, after a pretty long trial, they were initiated into our sacred mysteries, and took part as others did, in the cross of Christ. Their conversion fortified the feeble-minded, and comforted father Intorcetta for all the evils that the persecution had made his church to suffer.

But the viceroy was so much the more provoked, because he had not the liberty at that time to shew his resentment; for, just then, they delivered him two letters from prince Sofan; one of them was for father Intorcetta, the other, that was directed to himself, was full fraught for reproaches, for that he seemed to make no account of the prince's commendation: *I could never have believed, said he to him, that to please a company of ill affected people, who have exasperated your spirit at the christians, you would have deviated from the counsels I gave you. It is a friendship that I endeavoured to inspire you with better sentiments: think upon it once more, and reflect seriously with yourself, that it is I that speak to you. I expect three things from your friendship; first, that you deliver the letter yourself to father Intorcetta, according to the superscription. The second, that you do so well satisfy the father,*

that he may have occasion to bless himself for the kind offices you render him, and that he himself may testify the same to me. And the third is, that henceforward you do not any longer disturb either the missionaries or christians. In short, I am extremely sorry, for being obliged to write to you so often about this subject. If you for the future mend your manners, I shall write to you a third time to thank you; but, if your passion continues, this is the last letter you shall ever receive from me.

Then did the viceroy repent him of his former proceedings; yet, was he so far engaged, that he thought he could not handsomely go back with any honour. He found it especially very hard to sue to a missionary for his friendship, whom he but just now treated, and that publickly, with the utmost disdain; but yet, dreading prince Sofan's resentment, who was the most powerful and in most credit of all the ministers of the empire: On one hand, he resolved to stand to what he had done already against the christians, without driving matters any farther; and on the other hand, to dispatch one of his officers to Peking, to purge and clear himself to the prince.

In this interim, father Intorcetta having a secret item of the letter that the viceroy had received, intimated to the fathers at court the small effect they had produced; insomuch that those fathers resolved to signify the same to the emperor, in case prince Sofan should think it adviseable. Wherefore they related to him what had passed at Hamcheu, the obstinacy of the viceroy, the affliction of father Intorcetta, the danger wherein his church was, the ruin whereof would infallibly involve in it the utter ruin of all the missions in the empire. *Since all your endeavours, my lord, added they, seem ineffectual, there appears nothing that can put a stop to the violence of this obstinate Mandarin, but the emperor's*

*authority; but we should be wanting to our true interests (and what sways the more with us) to the acknowledgment we are bound to give for your favours if we were ruled by any other considerations than yours.*

The prince, already provoked by the viceroy's behaviour, was not sorry at this overture, and believed he had now found a fair opportunity to revenge himself; so that these fathers having recommended the importance of their affairs to God Almighty, wherein the solid establishment, or utter ruin of religion was concerned, came to the palace on the 21st of December 1691, and demanded audience.

The emperor sent some eunuchs, his confidants, to know what their business was: The fathers presently declared to them, the heinous excess of the viceroy of Hamcheu, as well in respect of the missionaries, as in respect of the christians under his government; they added moreover, that they had suffered a long time without complaining, in expectation that their patience would pacify his spirit; but since the mischief became every day greater and greater, without all hopes of remedy, they came to prostrate themselves at the emperor's feet, as to the usual asylum of oppressed innocence, most humbly to beseech him, to grant to their brethren in the provinces that happy peace they themselves enjoy'd at Peking, in the very sight, and under the protection of his majesty.

The emperor, to whom they reported this discourse, had a mind to try the fathers constancy, and so returned them no favourable answer; but they never ceasing to represent the unhappiness the indifference of this prince was shortly like to bring them under, he sent new eunuchs to acquaint them, that he was amazed to see them so infatuated with the christian religion: 'Is it possible, he bid them tell them, that you are always busied about a world which

‘ you are not yet come, and count that wherein you  
 ‘ are at present, as nothing? Believe me, sirs, there  
 ‘ is a time for all things; make better improve-  
 ‘ ment of what Heaven instructs you with, and de-  
 ‘ fer all those cares till you cease to live; cares,  
 ‘ that are profitable to none but the dead: For my  
 ‘ part, said he, in a drolling way, I do not concern  
 ‘ myself in the business of the other world, and I do  
 ‘ not pretend to determine upon the cause of these  
 ‘ invisible spirits.’

Then the fathers, oppressed with grief, shedding  
 a torrent of tears, prostrated themselves to the very  
 ground; they conjured the eunuchs to report to the  
 emperor the sad condition whereunto they were re-  
 duced: *This would be the first time, said they, that  
 this great prince abandoned innocent persons, and ap-  
 peared insensible of our lamentation: Is it because we  
 are unprofitable strangers that he deals thus with us?  
 At least, gentlemen, pray tell him, that the great God  
 of heaven and earth, whose cause we maintain, for  
 whom we fight, nay, and to whom he himself is beholden  
 for all his grandeur, well deserves, that he should ex-  
 ert all his power to make him known, and his justice in  
 punishing those who do him an injury in the person of  
 his ministers.*

In fine, after all these trials, this gracious prince,  
 moved with compassion, could no longer dissemble  
 his real sentiments; he therefore sent to the fathers  
 (that were still prostrate before his palace gate) an of-  
 ficer of his bed-chamber to acquaint them, ‘ That he  
 ‘ did not allow of the viceroy of Hamcheu’s pro-  
 ‘ ceedings, and that he was willing, for their sakes, to  
 ‘ put an end to his unjust persecution; and that, in  
 ‘ a word, there were two ways to accomplish it:  
 ‘ The first, to send to the viceroy a secret order im-  
 ‘ mediately, to give satisfaction for mischiefs past;  
 ‘ that this way, tho’ not so exemplary, was the most  
 ‘ easy and sure. The second, to present a petition,

‘ and obtain from the tribunes a favourable decree  
 ‘ for all the missionaries, which would decide all  
 ‘ differences. That they should consult among them-  
 ‘ selves, what should be the most convenient in the  
 ‘ present conjuncture; and, when they had weigh-  
 ‘ ed the reasons on both sides, that they should con-  
 ‘ back the next day to declare to him their positive  
 ‘ resolution.

The fathers signified their most humble acknow-  
 ledgments to the emperor by customary protestations,  
 and returned full with great hopes of happy success,  
 yet very uncertain what course to steer.

They considered on one hand the danger that there  
 was to put their cause into the hands of the Lapou,  
 who always declared against the christian religion;  
 that in all probability there needed no more to re-  
 vive all the ancient accusations which time seemed  
 to have forgotten: That the missionaries settled in  
 the provinces, whom they had concealed from the  
 court till that time, would be obliged to quit China,  
 or else forsake all their missions: That at least, the  
 proceedings of those who had built new churches, and  
 converted a great number of idolaters against the ex-  
 press prohibitions of parliaments, was sufficient to  
 warrant the viceroy of Hamcheu: That in fine,  
 things may be brought to pass by the subtle de-  
 vices of our enemies, and secret undertakings of the  
 Bonzes, that they might be so far from quenching  
 the flame of a particular persecution, as we sup-  
 pose, that we should kindle a general conflagration  
 in the empire, that would not terminate but in the  
 total desolation of christianity.

These reasons, altho’ very substantial and solid  
 in themselves, were nevertheless balanced by the fol-  
 lowing reflections. What protection soever the emper-  
 ors might have given till that time to the missiona-  
 ries, yet they experienced, that it was not sufficient  
 to oblige all the Mandarines of provinces to counte-

nance the christians, and that there was a great number of them, who (prejudiced against us either by that universal contempt which the education of China did usually create in them for foreigners, or by the calumnies of the Bonzes, or else by a false zeal for the publick good) thought it was a piece of good service to destroy us, and spoil in a few days that which had been the work of several years.

These particular persecutions were so much the more feared, as they administered occasion to our secret enemies, to declare themselves openly against us, and to compose a strong and great party, which was commonly upheld by the courts appointed for the ordering rites and ceremonies, who always waited for occasions to stop the course of new foreigners into the state; so that if in these critical conjunctures the emperors, by a particular providence, should not have honoured us with their benevolence, christianity would have long since been destroy'd in China, and, it may be, the memory of it would have been totally obliterated.

We should therefore consider, that the court perhaps would not be always so favourable to us; that there needed no more but one moment alone to lose the emperor's gracious favour, or, what was still more dangerous, to intail his indignation upon us, and those of our religion; that, in this fickle state wherein religion was, the least opposition from the Mandarines would suffice to set the people's hearts against it; that the great ones themselves durst never declare, or be converted, for fear of being one day responsible to the parliaments for their conversion, which probably in time might be made an heinous crime.

On the contrary, if so be the christian faith were once approved by publick edict, nothing afterward could disturb its establishment, since it would be dangerous to the idolatrous people, because the christians

christians would make a publick profession, of it, and, at last, the new missionaries would enter without interruption into the vast field of the gospel, and would there sow, without any contradiction, that sacred word, which would then produce an hundred fold.

The only hope of such a great benefit determined the fathers to try this last means; and so much the rather, because they believed they could not in future time meet with any occasion more favourable to accomplish it. The remembrance of signal services, father Verbieft had rendered to the state, was still very recent; the emperor declared how sensible he was of the resolution that father Grimaldi an Italian had taken to cross the seas again for his sake, and to undertake a most tedious journey. Father Thomas, a Flemming, was wholly taken up in mathematicks, wherein he acquired the reputation of a learned knowing man, and most pious missionary. Father Pereira a Portugese, for his part, took a great deal of pains a long time in certain instruments, and several engines that the prince took great delight in: but that which did our business, in getting his heart, was the peace which father Gerbillon had but just then concluded, three hundred leagues from Peking, between the Chinese and Muscovites. Prince Sofan, nearly related to the emperor, and plenipotentiary, stood amazed at his zeal, and publicly declared, that, but for him, this negotiation would never have terminated to the advantage of the empire. He spoke of it to the emperor to that purpose; and at that very time he inspired him with sentiments of esteem and affection for this father, which have continued ever since beyond whatsoever we were able to expect or hope for. Besides, this same father, together with father Boyet, both French, and of the

A number of those whom the king sent into China in 1685, applied themselves for many years to teach geometry and philosophy to the emperor, with such success, that he could never be weary in discoursing with them upon these matters.

But because these zealous missionaries were fully persuaded, that, when religion is concerned, human assistances are very insignificant, if God Almighty do not secretly direct and order the whole work; they began to implore the assistance of him whom nothing is able to resist; they spread open their wants before him, and discovered their hearts in his presence, and told him with the same confidence that once animated Judith: *Make bare, make bare, O Lord, thy arm on our behalf, as thou didst heretofore, and bring to nought the obstacle our enemies oppose against us: Let those who have boasted that they could destroy the temple, who have already profaned thy altar, and trodden under foot the tabernacle of thy holy name; let them at present be sensible, that before thee all their force is nothing but vanity and weakness: Put into our mouths, Lord, that holy word, and replenish our hearts with those wise counsels that make truth always to triumph; to the end thy house, that hath been so many years in a tottering condition, may at this day be immoveably settled and confirmed; and that all nations may in the end confess, that thou only art the true God, and that, besides thee, we ought to seek for none other\*.*

After this fervent prayer they secretly presented their petition to the emperor, that they were afterwards to offer him in publick. He read it, but not finding therein what was the most capable to make impression upon the spirit of the Chinese (for they insisted upon what principally related to the sanctity and truth of the christian religion) he drew up another himself in the Tartarian language, which he sent back to the fathers, yet leaving them to their liberty  
to

to retrench, or add thereto, as they shall judge most convenient.

Indeed, if one do but never so little reflect upon the particular character of the emperors of China, one cannot sufficiently admire, that this present emperor should vouchsafe to descend from the highest degree of grandeur, which he observes every where else, nay even in respect of the greatest princes, to make himself familiar with pitiful missionaries: for a man to consider after what manner he takes a particular account of all their affairs; how he speaks to them, how he puts them in a way, would he not conclude that it is a private man that manages the concerns of his friend? Yet nevertheless, it is one of the greatest kings in the world, that is pleased thus to stickle to please a company of strangers, even at the peril of the fundamental laws of the nation.

But after all, it is no wonder that a God, who, to establish his religion, humbled himself so far, as to make himself like to men, does oblige sometimes the greatest princes of the world to divest themselves of their majesty and innate pride, to co-operate and concur in this grand work. For certainly, what care soever we may have taken to make this prince favourable to us, yet must we needs herein principally acknowledge the efficacy of divine grace. It is the almighty voice of the Lord that alone can, to speak in the scripture expression, *bruise the cedars, and shake the mountains of the wilderness*; that is to say, *abase the great ones of the world, and give to their hearts what motion he pleases.*

Whilst all these things were transacted at Peking, the viceroy of Hamcheu, that had now leisure to make some reflections upon his behaviour, was not peaceable in his province. The credit of prince Sosa did grievously perplex him; and above all he dreaded his just resentment: for to pacify him, he

thought it the wisest course to send one of his officers to him, under pretence to justify himself to him, but in effect, to exasperate the principal Mandarines of Lipou against the missionaries, in case he should find any opportunity to do it.

At that time this officer arrived at court, but prince Sofan would not so much as hear him; and, packing him away, briskly told him, that he much wonder'd that his master made such little account of persons whom the emperor honoured with his affection, and employed and trusted in his service.

*As to what relates to their business, I am no more concerned in it than the emperor would himself. These fathers have implored his protection, and he well understands how to do them justice without my intermeddling: besides, when I wrote on their behalf, it was not so much to do them a kindness, as thereby to exhibit a token of friendship to the viceroy, in plucking him from the precipice whither he had so indiscreetly thrown himself.*

This answer did so startle this officer, that, without ever dreaming of making any other progress, he returned to his master at Hamcheu to render an account of the ill success of his commission. The fathers, who had notice of it, understood by that, that they were to lose no time, and that they were speedily to improve the good disposition of prince Sofan; so that upon Candlemas-day they went to the palace, and offer'd to the emperor, with the usual ceremonies, the petition that he himself had composed, of which we here the translation.

May it please your Majesty,

**W**E expose to you, with the most perfect submission, and most profound respect that we are capable of, the beginning, end, inducements, and motives of our most humble request, being confident that you will vouchsafe to hear it with  
the

the same prudence that attends all your actions, and with that benevolence wherewith you have been graciously pleased to honour us.

On the ninth month of the moon, father Terocetta, one of your majesty's subjects, who abode is in the city of Hamcheu, did acquaint me that the viceroy had strictly charged the Mandarines of his province to pull down all the temples of the christians, to burn the printing tables, upon which are engraven all the books of our religion. Moreover, he hath publickly declared, that our doctrine is false and dangerous, and consequently not to be tolerated in the empire, and hath added several other things most disadvantageous to us.

Upon this news, sir, seized with horror, and penetrated with grief, we thought ourselves obliged to have recourse to your majesty, as the common father of the afflicted, to lay before you the deplorable condition whereunto we are reduced; for, except you grant us your protection, it is altogether impossible to avoid the stratagems of our enemies, and to ward the blow wherewith they threaten us.

That which administers comfort to us, sir, when we appear at your majesty's feet, is to see with what wisdom you influence and move all the parts of your empire, as if it were the body, of which you are the soul; and with what unconcernment and impartiality you regulate the interest of each private man, without acceptance of persons; insomuch that you could not be at rest if you knew but one single subject oppressed by injustice, or but even deprived of that rank and recompence he deserves.

You surpass, great sir, the mightiest kings amongst your predecessors, who have in their times permitted false religions in China; for you do intirely love truth, and do not approve of falsehood.

For this reason it is, that, in taking your progress to view your provinces, you have given a thousand testimonies of your royal affection to the European missionaries that were in your road; as if you meant thereby to testify, that you value their doctrine, and that you would be very glad that they would settle in your states; what we deliver here, in publick, is generally known to the whole empire.

Therefore, when we behold the viceroy of Hamcheu to stifle the christian religion, the false and dangerous religion; when we are informed that he uses all his endeavours to destroy it; how are able to stifle our just sorrow, and forbear to declare to your majesty what we suffer?

This is not the first time, sir, that they have persecuted us without any reason; therefore father Adam Schaal, your subject, on whom your predecessors heap'd many extraordinary favours, made it known to all the court, that the rules of the celestial motions, established by the ancient astronomers of China, were all false; he proposed others, that did perfectly agree with the constellations that were approved, and made use of with no small success, so that this change brought order again into the empire. Your majesty is not ignorant of what pass'd at that time in Pekin; we may, we hope, have leave to remember how matters stood there, since they are so many singular favours we there received; yet upon the account of exploding and abolishing of these errors, how much did the rather afterwards suffer by calumnies of his enemies? Sam-quam sien, and those of his faction, falsely accused him of several crimes, under pretence of novelty, as if this new astronomy had not agreed with heaven; he died, not being able at that time to justify himself; but your majesty put father Verbiest in his place, and heaped on him so many favours,

' favours, that the life of this father was too short,  
 ' and his words too faint to demonstrate to all the  
 ' world the greatness of his acknowledgments: yet  
 ' did he deeply resent all these benefits, and it was  
 ' on purpose not to be ungrateful, that he was  
 ' busied for above twenty years in composing all  
 ' sorts of books for the publick benefit, both in  
 ' astronomy, arithmetick, musick, and philosophy;  
 ' that are still extant in the palace, together with  
 ' divers others which he had not time to compleat  
 ' and finish.

' But, since your majesty is perfectly instructed in  
 ' all these particulars, we dare not presume to tire  
 ' out your patience by a longer discourse; we do  
 ' only humbly beseech your majesty to consider,  
 ' that all this is not sufficient to intitle us to the  
 ' people's affection for us, and confidence in us.  
 ' If, as they accuse us, the law that we preach be  
 ' false and dangerous, how can we, sir, justify the  
 ' conduct of princes, who have honour'd us with  
 ' their esteem?

' Nevertheless, not to mention any thing of your  
 ' predecessors, your majesty yourself hath made so  
 ' sure of our loyalty, that you order'd father Ver-  
 ' bieft to found some cannon of a new model, to  
 ' put an end to a dangerous war: you made father  
 ' Grimaldi cross the vast ocean to go into Muscovy,  
 ' with the letters and seals of the high court of the  
 ' militia; you sent the fathers Gerbillon and Pereira,  
 ' upon very important affairs, to the very farthest  
 ' parts of Tartary; nevertheless, your majesty well  
 ' knows, that those, who are governed by the prin-  
 ' ciples of a false religion, never use to serve their  
 ' prince faithfully; they almost ever abandon them-  
 ' selves to their own passions, and never aim at any  
 ' thing but their own particular interest.

' If therefore we do exactly discharge our duty,  
 ' and, if to this very day we have always fought the  
 ' publick

publick good, it is most manifest this zeal proceeds from an heart well affected, full of esteem and veneration, and (if we may be bold to say so) of a singular affection for the person of your majesty. On the contrary, if this heart once cease to submit to you, it would be, from that very time, contrary to right reason, good sense, and all sentiments of humanity.

This being supposed, sir, we humbly beseech you to consider, that, after the fatigues of a tedious voyage, we are at length arrived in your empire, exempt from that spirit of ambition and covetousness, that commonly bring other men thither, but with an ardent desire to preach to your people the only true religion.

And truly, when we appeared here the first time, we were entertain'd with abundance of marks of distinction, as we have often said already, and which we cannot repeat too often. In the tenth year of Chun-tchi they prefer'd us to the sole direction of the mathematicks. In the fourteenth year of the same reign, they gave us leave to build a church at Pekin, and the emperor himself was willing to grant us a particular place for the burial of our dead. In the twenty-seventh year of your majesty's glorious reign, your majesty honoured the memory of father Verbiest not only by new titles, but also by the care you took to cause the last offices to be perform'd to him, with an almost royal pomp and magnificence. Some while after, you appointed an apartment, and masters to the new French missionaries, to facilitate their learning of the Tartarian tongue. In a word, you seem'd so well satisfied with their deportment that you caus'd the services they had render'd to the state by their voyages into Tartary, and negotiation with the Muscovites, to be insert'd in the records of the nation: What a happiness, sir, and a glory is it for us to be judg'd capable of serving so great a prince!

' Since therefore your majesty, who does so wisely  
 ' govern this grand monarchy, vouchsafeth to em-  
 ' ploy us, and put such confidence in us, how is it  
 ' possible there should be one single Mandarin so  
 ' rational to refuse one of our brethren <sup>missionaries</sup> to  
 ' live in his province? Verily, sir, one cannot suffi-  
 ' ciently deplore the hard fate of that good old man,  
 ' who, in a little corner of the earth, humbly requires  
 ' so much space, as is necessary peaceably to spend the  
 ' remainder of his days, which yet he cannot obtain.

' It is for this reason, sir, that all of us, your ma-  
 ' jesty's most humble subjects, who are here like for-  
 ' saken orphans, that would injure no body; nay,  
 ' who endeavour to avoid law-suits, quarrels, wrang-  
 ' lings, and the least contestations; it is for this rea-  
 ' son (we say) that we beseech you to take our cause  
 ' in hand, with those sentiments of equity that are  
 ' so essential to you; have some compassion, sir, up-  
 ' on persons who have committed no fault; and, if  
 ' your majesty, after being fully informed of our  
 ' carriage, does really find, that we are innocent, we  
 ' beseech you to let all the empire understand, by a  
 ' publick edict, the judgment you entertain of our  
 ' morals and doctrine. It is for the obtaining this  
 ' favour, that we assume the liberty of presenting to  
 ' you this request. In the meantime all and every  
 ' your subjects the missionaries will expect with fear,  
 ' and intire submission, what you shall be pleased to  
 ' appoint, touching the premises. In the thirtieth  
 ' year of the reign of Cham-hi, the 16th day of the  
 ' 12th month of the moon.'

The emperor graciously receiv'd this petition, and  
 sent it the 18th of the same month to the court of  
 rites, with an order to examine it, and, with the  
 first opportunity, to make report of it to him; but,  
 because there is a vacation in all the courts of judic-  
 ture in China, much about the same time, until the  
 15th of the first month of the year following, the  
 Lipou could not answer till the 18th of the first  
 month.