

**Cossigny, Charpentier De (Joseph-François)** Voyage à CANTON, capitale de la province de ce nom à la Chine; par Gorée, le Cap de Bonne-Espérance, et les Isles de France et de la Réunion; suivi d'observations sur le voyage de la Chine, de Lord MacCartney et du citoyen Van-Braam, et d'une esquisse des Arts des Indiens et des Chinois. Chez André An VII, de la République Française, Paris. [1798-1799]

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## **Introduction (Avertissement)**

Everything that concerns India and China seems to have a right to the curiosity of the public. One hastens to read the accounts of the English and Dutch Embassies to the Emperor of China. One finds there indeed very curious details; and one must be grateful to the Editors for having brought them to the public, and to the translators for having transmitted them into our language. However, these two works seemed to me incomplete in many points, inaccurate in some, faulty in some others. Their authors did not take, on the arts and on the legislation of the Chinese, the information that circumstances made available to them.

They have not made known to us the spirit of the laws which are most opposed to our customs, our morals, our principles.

These considerations have determined me to share with the public my observations on the two works which I have just cited.

I have extended them when the subject seemed to me capable of development, or when it led me to results which may interest the reader. This kind of writing is perhaps new, when it does not have criticism as its aim. I understand all the advantage that more skillful hands could have taken from it for the instruction of the public. It is fortunate if my work is welcomed for the reasons under which it was taken! In this case, I promise other observations in the same genre, on the Voyage to Bengal, of Citizen Stavorinus, commander of the squadron of the Batavian Republic.

This will be preceded by a Voyage to Bengal, treated from a political point of view, by one of my friends, whose loss I regret. I will add to it a note on Japan which seemed curious to me, and which is by the same hand, and a Memoir which I wrote, some time ago, on the cultivation of rice in Asia.<sup>1</sup>

The observations that I publish today are preceded by a Voyage to Canton which will give an idea of the customs of the Chinese, of the trade that Europeans do with them, and of the productions of this famous region of Asia. I have spoken of the Cape of Good Hope, where I put in twice. My way of seeing is not the same as that of most travelers. This Colony does not seem to me to be as important as people believe. I regard it as a well-situated stopping place for ships going to the Indies, or returning from there: this is undoubtedly considerable; but it is to this alone that its importance has been reduced so far. The importance it may

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<sup>1</sup> IBF - This appeared the following year: Voyage au Bengale suivi de notes critiques et politiques d'observations, sur celui de Stavorinus (.) Cit Charpentier Cossigny. Paris, Emery, An 7 de la république française [1799]

acquire subsequently cannot be very extensive, given the circumstances attached to the place.

It is not the same for the Isle de France, which can combine all the advantages resulting from a large population, fertile soil suitable for the cultivation of exotic crops, its location, being as it were at the centre of the Indian Ocean, and its two ports. I have dwelt a little on this precious Colony, the full importance of which is not sufficiently understood.

Finally, I give an incomplete sketch of the arts of the Indians and the Chinese, about which I have acquired some notions during my travels in India and China; but part of which requires more exact research. We still have many compatriots in India and Bengal. Citizens Agie and de Guignes, who have long resided in Canton, who know the Chinese language, and who accompanied the Dutch Ambassador to Peking, will be able to correct my errors and complete the articles which lack interesting or necessary details. I urge them, in the name of the fatherland, to undertake this work which can be extremely useful.

Meanwhile, the Sketch that I give of the arts of the Indians and the Chinese will perhaps not be without utility. It details some new processes; it indicates others which are totally or partially unknown in Europe; it gives some recipes whose effectiveness has been established by experience. It will put ingenious artists on the path of discoveries; it will inspire travelers more capable than myself with the project of extending and perfecting it and will make them feel that they owe their fatherland a tribute for their observations and their knowledge.

To fulfill this goal surely and effectively, the Government should promise encouragement, and bring the greatest effect to its distribution. This is the case where one must sow in order to reap. This could result in infinite advantages for the Republic. If they were realized, I would applaud myself for having provoked them, and for having excited the emulation of my compatriots.

*The first 70 pages following this Introduction, concern the voyage out from France (Orient) through the Indian ocean and Isle de France to Sumatra, and then on to Canton. From then on to p 152, the narration covers the visit to Canton and substantial descriptions of China from his own and others' observations.*

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From China....

On approaching the lands of China, a pilot, a venerable old man, came to take us under sail at eight o'clock in the evening, and had us anchor five quarter-hours later in the harbor of Macao<sup>2</sup>. I had planned to go over there the next morning, but the sea was rough, the wind and tide favorable, and we headed towards the mouth of the Tigris. Seven leagues away is

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<sup>2</sup> This establishment, which belongs to the Portuguese, is the only one that the Chinese have allowed a European nation to form in the Empire; and although it has fallen far from its former splendour, it still does some trade with the Philippines and with Cochinchina. This situation is one of the happiest for trade, if the nation established there had great objectives, means and activity, and if it understood that the Colonies which have no other resource than trade must enjoy the greatest freedom to do so.

Lion's Tower. Vessels are obliged to pass there at high tide, because in the low tide, there is only seventeen feet of water. The next day we anchored abeam of Isle de Vampou (*Whampoa*). We found in the harbor, six English vessels, six Dutch, one Danish, three Swedish and one French, the same one that we had encountered in the Strait of Banca. A few days later, several French, English and Danish ships arrived.

Navigating the course of the river is enough to impress a European. The immense number of boats coming and going, the flooded plains which present fields of rice, on which we see a few boats sailing, the towers placed on the banks of the river, the picturesque mountains, which present crops, the forts placed at intervals, to defend the entrance to the river, and to prevent the evasion of customs duties, all present the idea of a civilized nation of a great age, and of a numerous, laborious and industrious people.

As soon as we are anchored at Vampou, two Chinese boats come to moor on either side of the vessel, with customs clerks, and it stays until it is loaded and then leaves. As all goods pay entry and exit duties, and there are some prohibited, such as the introduction of opium and the exit of money; nothing can disembark from the vessel without the consent of the customs officers, who provide a passport. We are obliged to have it endorsed by the clerks of four other customs offices, located on the left bank of the river, and sent to Canton. There are three leagues from Vampou, to the European factories, and thirty leagues from the town to Bouche-du-Tigre. Canoes which bear the flag of the European nation to which they belong are exempt from stopping at the four customs offices of which I have spoken; but a customs officer comes to the lodge to visit the canoes. Only captains of ships and the first supercargoes have the right to fly the flag. Nothing can be unloaded until the *haupou* (*hoppo*) or steward of the province has visited on board. He always gets announced. As soon as he appears in his galley, well accompanied, an officer is sent to meet him, he is saluted with eleven cannon shots, he is received with many ceremonies and distinction, and he is entertained. He measures the vessel both in length and width, to determine the anchorage rights, which are due to the Emperor. He usually presents the ship with two oxen, two bags of flour and a few pints of Sams'ou. It is, they say, a spirituous liquor with a strong and fetid odor, extracted from rice by fermentation and distillation. The Chinese drink it and our sailors end up getting used to it. When the *haupou* leaves the ship, he is again greeted by eleven cannon shots.

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Canton is one of the best ports in China, and one of the most considerable. It is not only the only one that Europeans are allowed to visit; but it is also the rendezvous of a large number of the Chinese vessels which go to Cochinchina, Formosa, Haynam, Siam, Malac, Achem, Batavia, the Moluccas, Japan, etc. The Chinese have, for a long time, been the only ones in these eastern countries who carry on trade; however, it is not encouraged by the Government. A law of the Empire forbids subjects from leaving it; from which it results that the state of sailor is despised and degraded. This prejudice, which is false, and which appears very impolitic, takes its source in the high opinion of this people, for its laws, its customs, its morals; in the contempt which it has conceived for foreigners, and which is founded on the comparison which it makes of its legislation, its population, its industry, with those of the barbarian peoples, or those of the less advanced peoples which surround it; in its industry and its activity, which appear to be sufficient for all its needs; in the religious

respect for ancestors and for its great antiquity, which makes China regard any innovation as dangerous; finally in its excessive population which does not inspire in it the desire to increase it through the resources of commerce.

Canton situated on the left bank of the Tigris, latitude 23 degrees 8 minutes, and longitude 130 degrees 43 minutes, is very considerable. Its population is said to exceed a million souls: I readily believe it, considering the great extent of the city; considering the influx of merchant vessels, and that of boats; considering the immense number of workmen, merchants, traders, clerks, porters, boatmen, fishermen, farmers, sailors. The garrison of this city is composed sometimes of twenty thousand, sometimes of twenty-five, sometimes of thirty thousand Tartars. The number of people who are obliged to live on the water in boats, and who cannot, according to the laws, settle on land, can amount to three hundred thousand souls, including the prostitutes, whose total is estimated at forty thousand.

The streets are narrow, paved with large stones, and most of them are aligned; they almost all have barriers, which are closed every evening. Most of the houses have only one storey, which is usually built of wood; the windows are made with oyster shells, or with mother-of-pearl. Those in the suburbs, which belong to large merchants, have gardens. I saw one that was being built. There was water in the garden, which was quite large, artificial rocks that made a beautiful effect, a bridge, a labyrinth, and several small pavilions of very different shapes from each other, very pleasant, open on the sides, in the style of the kiosks. This residence was intended for the merchant's wives. He had spared nothing to make it pleasant for them.

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The quay where the European factories are located is very long; it is on the left bank of the river. They all fly the flag of their nation there. These buildings are next to each other; they are very long; they have only one storey and they have several courtyards. They form, at the back, a street, where there is a large quantity of shops stocked with merchandise of all kinds: it is closed at both ends by barriers that Europeans cannot cross. Formerly they went everywhere, except to the Tartar city, which is contiguous to the Chinese city; I even entered it, without realizing it; but I was held back by a guards in a house who forced me to turn back, without insulting me. We could then leave the town and walk in the countryside; we only went there in sedan chairs, in order to be less exposed to the insults of the country people, and especially of the children, who often threw stones at us in contempt.

There are very large Chinese cargo ships, anchored opposite our factories, which are called *hans*: this is the Chinese name. There are some in the port of 1,000 tons. These vessels are flat, frail, and raised at both ends; they have a rudder that is too wide, and consequently too exposed to the waves. These vessels are not made for the high seas: therefore the Chinese hardly ever leave the land out of sight. The sails are artistically made mats; it is said that the cables are of rattan, and that their anchors are of a hard wood, with stones, to increase the weight. Their progress is rather slow. We have always overtaken, and even quite quickly, all those that we have met at sea. They use a composition similar to that of the Indians of Surat, to prevent worms from eating the wood of their vessels, to prevent water from entering through the seams, and to extend the life of the wood.

There is a very considerable suburb on the right bank of the river, opposite the Europeans' *hans*, where the merchants of Canton have stores. The tide rises above the city. Our boats are obliged, to take on water, to go two leagues above and wait for low tide to fill the barrels. The town of boats is one league above Canton. They are all aligned, and form streets; they are quite large and covered, and serve as a home for the whole family; they have a skiff, to go and get provisions, and to go ashore, when their needs require it; but they cannot sleep there. The women of the boats are not careful to hide themselves; I have seen some very pretty ones. I also met some in the streets who were in sedan chairs, very adorned, very colourful and of a pleasant appearance: it was easy to see them through the blinds of the doors, where curiosity held them back to see Europeans.

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There are several canals in the city, over which there are stone bridges with a single arch. I have not seen any of them of any size, but I have heard that there are some of these bridges, in the interior of the Empire, which had nine, eleven and fifteen arches, and even more. The construction of these bridges proves knowledge in architecture, which could be applied to the construction of palaces, temples, or other public monuments, if such were the taste of the Chinese. There are no other public places than the pagodas: again the people have no days of assembly, nor fixed hours to go there; and as all religions, with the exception of Christianity, given its intolerance, are permitted, one cannot regard such or such temple as a place dedicated to the public.

The customs of this people differ so greatly from those of Europeans that it is very difficult to judge them soundly, because men are inclined to relate everything to their own opinions and habits, and they find strange everything that departs from them, and absurd everything that is contrary to them. The Chinese are in the same case when they judge us. How many Parisians will be surprised to learn that in the cities of the first order, even in Nanking and Peking, there are no public promenades, no organised spectacles, concerts, or balls. There are no idlers in this country who seek to be noticed, and who are attracted by changes in fashions. There are no rentiers, no men enjoying the income from their lands, without being involved in their exploitation. Every individual is constantly busy. Women are confined, from which it follows that the opportunities to please, by variety, grace, elegance and richness of adornments, do not exist. All these aspects result in simplicity in costumes; they have neither grace, nor elegance, nor gilding. They are almost the same today, as they were in the most ancient times; I say almost, because the current hat is Tartar. They formerly wore long hair which they were ordered to cut; they submitted to it with difficulty.

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They import into China cloth, azure, coral, yellow amber, pepper, calin, woolen cotton, sandal, ebony, areca, rattans from Malac, white and painted canvas from India, opium, fine delicacies, birds' nests, biche-de-mer, sharks' fins, and silver. The cargoes for Europe consist of tea, which makes up the greater part of the ships' cargo, silks, nankin, porcelain, varnish, rhubarb, borax, cinnabar, musk, esquina, mother-of-pearl, etc.

It is tea that attracts European ships to China; the other articles that make up their cargo are taken only as extras. It has been claimed that the Chinese value our sage; it has even been written that they value it more than tea. If this were true, the Europeans would have had an

object of exchange to offer them. The cultivation of sage, which grows with such ease, and which, by means of cuttings that can be repeated in the same year, would give abundant harvests, would have gained favor in Europe. I have tasted a tea-like decoction of sage, and I can certify that it is very disagreeable. Its aromatic taste and its bitterness will always put one off this drink. Elderflowers and linden flowers, Swiss tea which has a lot of fragrance, speedwell, cherry stems, which when boiled give water a very pleasant taste, could be compared to tea with more reason than sage. It is claimed that the Chinese regard tea as a healthy drink, which corrects the bad qualities of brackish or stagnant water. They attribute many medicinal properties to it; they do not mix with this drink either with milk, syrup, strong liquors, or any acid; in a word, they always take it pure, with a little candied sugar which they hold in their mouth. "It has long been noted that ships from China, returning to Europe, had much less scorbutic fever than all other ships from India returning: this happy effect is attributed to the use of tea." (Extrait d'une lettre à Sonnerat.)

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Several doctors have doubted its virtues; others have attributed harmful qualities to it. The experience of several centuries by the most numerous nation on the globe, by several others which border on it and by the Japanese; that of several peoples of Europe who habitually use this drink, appear to me to be unanswerable arguments. To claim that the Chinese keep the good tea for themselves and only send us the bad, is a ridiculous assertion, which proves the ignorance in which one has of commerce and the mania of wanting to support a false opinion by risky conjectures. To advance that tea loses its qualities during the sea voyage, is still a gratuitous supposition, which proves a lack of knowledge, and even a lack of reasoning; for if the tea loses its good or bad qualities, whatever the cause, it can no longer be harmful.

I am convinced that China owes its large population in part to the habitual use of tea, not because it is prolific, but because it removes the causes of diseases. I presume that England, which has noticed the increase in its population for half a century, also owes it in part to the use of tea, which removes the use of strong liquors, and which makes diseases rarer, and in general less dangerous. "Leprosy," says the famous William Buchan, (Domestic Medicine, Volume III, page 196, Paris Edition, 1788), "so common formerly in Great Britain appears to have had many connections with scurvy. Perhaps it is less frequent today because the English generally eat more vegetables than before, drink a lot of tea, and observe a more diluting diet; and finally because they make less use of salty foods, and are cleaner, better housed, better dressed, etc."

I add to these judicious reflections that the use of smoked meats, which would preserve as well, it seems to me, and perhaps better than salted meats, by taking precautions to prevent the different pieces from having immediate contact with each other, and to prevent their fermentation, or at least to delay and slow it down, would be much less unsanitary than salted meats. It would be enough to arrange these meats in barrels, with well-washed and well-dried river sand. Perhaps industry will find another substance more suitable for producing the desired effect?

I will transcribe here a Memoir which was given to me by a supercargo of the ships of the old Compagnie des Indes, who had made several voyages to China, and who had resided there.

#### Tea in general.

“Tea grows on a small shrub, whose leaves are picked in spring, when they are still small and tender. Its shape is oblong, pointed, and serrated at the edges. Its color is green; its flower is composed of five white leaves, arranged in roses. It is followed by a shell as big as a hazelnut, the color of chestnuts, in which there are one, two, or three gray, wrinkled, bad-tasting kernels. Its root is fibrous and scattered over the surface of the earth; it grows equally in loamy soil as in poor soil. Once its leaves are picked, they are exposed to the steam of boiling water, to soften; when they are penetrated by it, they are spread on metal plates, placed on a moderate fire. They brown themselves there, in the shape that we see them. “

#### Black tea (Thé-bouy) .

“All the black tea grow on a single mountain, on the coast of Emouy (Amoy). The ordinary black tea grows at the bottom of the mountain; the camphou at the top, and the saotchaon in the middle, sheltered from all bad influences; these three trees are the same in their species. It is only the different exposure that gives them different qualities, as well as the different way of preparing them. The word Camphou-bouy means better prepared black tea. The word saotchaon means quintessence. This name is given to the tea that comes from the tree that grows in the middle of the mountain, either because, being sheltered from the ravages of the weather, it improves more than the others, or because only the leaves that are the richest and have the strongest sap are harvested from this tree.”

“Ordinary pekao tea is composed of small, white, velvety leaves that grow at the ends of the branches of these three trees. It cannot be good, since these leaves, being only just born, cannot have much odor or sap. Leaves of ordinary black tea are mixed with it; but true pekao grows on a particular tree. The branches of this tree have leaves only on both sides. On one side of the branch, they are all black, on the other all white; but when this tea is harvested, great care is taken to put in far fewer white leaves than black, because the former are very expensive and highly valued in China. This is what is called lintchessin tea, which the Europeans have improperly named tea flowers.”

“To make the pekao tea appear to have a lot of white leaves, the Chinese mix in small leaves that are still white and nascent and grow at the top of ordinary black tea trees. I was shown some pekao tea, which I was told was genuine. It was worth eighty-five taels a pound. This tea was very heavy and spongy; it had a strong odor, and the leaves were full of down, equally mixed with white and black leaves.”

” All black tea in general must be dry and heavy in the hand. This is a sign that they have food and sap. They must give water a yellow colour tending towards green; this is a sign that they are new, because old teas give a reddish colour. The leaves must be large and whole; this is a sign that they have not been kept; because the more they are, the more they are stirred and disturbed, which breaks the leaf and makes dust on it.”

#### Green tea

“There are three kinds of green tea, namely: sonlo tea, bin or imperial tea, and haysuen tea. I say that there are only these three kinds, because the others are either unknown to foreigners, or they do not usually take them.”

“The industrious Chinese, in the way of preparing teas, have considerably multiplied the species.”

“The bin or imperial tea comes from a different tree. Its leaf is larger and more swollen than that of the other two. All these teas must have a green and leaden look; the older they are, the more yellow the leaf becomes. They must also have a roasted, grilled smell that pleases the sense of smell. When they are old, they have a fishy smell, approaching that of sardines. Green teas do not come from the same place as black teas; they grow in a much further place from Canton: so they arrive there much later.”

Black tea comes from the provinces where it is cultivated and taken to Canton in baskets called barces, and green tea in small crates. All the barces are poured out in the presence of the supercargoes, who smell the tea as it falls, and who reject any that is moldy or powdered. Then it is put into large fir crates, lined with laminated lead on the inside, covered with paper. As it is placed in the crates, a porter tramples it with his bare feet. When the crates are filled, they contain about three hundred and fifteen to three hundred and thirty pounds of tea, and weigh nearly four hundred pounds gross.

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The English would like to introduce the cultivation of tea into Bengal; if they succeed, it will only be in the northern parts. We tried it on the Isle de France. I had small tea trees in my garden which flowered and bore fruit. I saw several in the national garden which appeared to be thriving; but they all perished. I believe that we could hope to establish this culture on the mountains of the southern part of Madagascar, and even better on those of the Cape of Good Hope; but we would have to take care to bring plants from the interior of China, of the two kinds of tea, the black and the green: because that which the curious cultivate in Canton is of a very inferior quality.

I will not stop to describe the laws, customs, usages, and religion of a people whom I have not been able to study, in a stay that was too short, and whose language I do not know. Thus, I will not pronounce between its admirers and its detractors. I will only say that its large population presupposes a wise police force, and that we are not sufficiently educated or sufficiently free from prejudices to make a sound judgment on laws and customs so different from ours. The exposure of children, tolerated in China, seems to us a barbarity. However, on reflection, we will see that this tolerance of the legislator is a consequence of his humanity and his policy. He wanted thereby to prevent secret infanticide, which is perhaps much more common in the States of Europe than is commonly believed. Children at risk often find adoptive fathers; the Government maintains agents, whose sole function is to take them in. And what proves that this tolerance is not as disastrous as one might think is that no country is as populated as this Empire. It would seem that the Government should establish homes for foundlings; but let us consider that in such a populated country, the maintenance of several million children would be an overload beyond the means of the Government.

There are no hospitals in China. They are less necessary there than elsewhere. The principles of education, in accordance with the laws, require that children take care of their fathers and mothers, their brothers and sisters, and recommend kindness to all relatives. This extends to all those who bear the same name. Also, one does not see in this country any beggars other than lepers. It is accepted that one should not refuse them, even if one gives them only a grain of rice. The Japanese, who have much in common with the Chinese, and whose



population is perhaps greater, in proportion to the size of the country, likewise allow the exposure of newborns; but they have hospices for indigent travelers. It seems likely to me that it is religion, rather than legislation, which has instituted them by ordering pilgrimages.

A modern author who has denied the large population of China, whose journey of Lord Macartney to Peking has provided us with statements which appear authentic, has claimed that the day when the Emperor descends from his throne to the plough was a ceremony as frivolous as the worship rendered by the Greeks to Ceres, and which does not prevent thousands of Chinese from dying of hunger. He did not see that this festival, which is repeated on the same day throughout the Empire, by all the governors of provinces, and by all the commanders of cities, of all orders, was religious, and that its object was to implore the beneficent protection of the Divinity, over agriculture. The Emperor, and all those who are to take part in the ceremony, prepare for it by three days of fasting. It is preceded by a solemn sacrifice. The harvest from the plowed field is preserved with respect. It is only used in the great sacrifices to the Chang-ti, or sovereign lord.

The homage that a great people renders to the Divinity is pure; it is not altered by superstition; it is not debased by ridiculous or extravagant ceremonies; it can be adopted by all religions. The Bonze, the Talapoin, the Lamist, the Jew, the Mohammedan, the Christian, the Deist, all come together to celebrate the benefits of the Creator. This is perhaps the only circumstance where the sectarians of all the religious opinions spread over the earth can form a unanimous concert. The prayers that millions of voices raise to heaven, the thanksgivings that they render to the Supreme Being, do not pass through the intermediary of priests, who everywhere arrogate to themselves the exclusive right to address to him the wishes of the people, and to implore his benevolence, as if their mediate intercession were more agreeable to the Divinity.

China is said to be subject to famine; this may be so. This event is in the natural order of things, but its immense population proves that it is rare for thousands of Chinese to die of hunger. One would like the Government to encourage maritime trade, in order to draw aid from abroad, in times of scarcity; but where would one go to seek it? And what aid can one expect from neighboring countries, for such a considerable population? A thousand ships of a thousand tons each, entirely laden with rice, would not provide six pounds of rice to three hundred and fifty million inhabitants; it is therefore for six days of food at most, reducing the ration of each individual to two-thirds. All the eastern countries, up to and including Sumatra and Java, if contributing, would not provide nearly this quantity of rice. It is therefore in his own soil, in his labor, in his industry, in his foresight, that the Chinese must seek his subsistence. And it is an error to believe that trade is an assured means of providing the subsistence of a great people: because other nations must have a surplus, and this surplus is, as we see, an insufficient resource. The English, masters of the sea, and whose population is only equivalent to the smallest of the provinces of China, or even better to the forty-first part<sup>3</sup> of that of this vast Empire; the English, who have an immense trade, and who have carried off, like true pirates, all the American vessels loaded with provisions for France, have

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<sup>3</sup> I suppose the population of the three kingdoms, so too sumptuously named, to be eight million inhabitants, and that of China to be three hundred and thirty-three million, according to the census furnished by Lord Macartney.

found very little resource in their trade and in their piracy, during the famine they experienced last year.

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To prevent famine, the safest way is to promote agriculture by all means available to the Government, to establish granaries in years of abundance, to put order and economy into consumption when food becomes scarce, to promote the cultivation of the earliest and most abundant crops. This is why I would advise the Chinese to introduce among themselves the cultivation of potatoes, Madagascar and Malaga potatoes, yams, manioc and cassava in the southern provinces, etc.

They are reproached for not having made progress in the fine arts and in the sciences. But is it proven that perfection in the former, and skill in the latter, make a people happy? We Europeans, who are so proud of having excelled, in the past, in the former, and of having made, recently, the greatest discoveries, which promise new ones, are we wiser, better governed, and happier for it? Let us not forget that all our knowledge, of which we boast so much, is of recent date, and that that of the Chinese goes back to the most remote antiquity. They cultivated rice according to a very ingenious method, when our fathers lived on acorns; they spun and wove cotton and silk, at a time when our ancestors clothed themselves with the remains of forest animals. They had the compass<sup>4</sup>; they had invented paper and printing, gunpowder, porcelain and varnishes, from the earliest antiquity. Finally, they had the same legislation and the same police as today.

If they have not made progress in the sciences, they are our rivals in matters of speculative and practical morality, in agriculture and perhaps in legislation; for they appear to have had, for forty or fifty centuries, that which is best suited to an immense population. If modern legislators were charged with giving uniform laws to all of Europe, whose population is at most half that of China, I dare to believe that they would be very embarrassed, despite all the resources of instruction, example and genius.

The establishments which appear to me worthy of note and which date from the highest antiquity are those of an academy, a tribunal of rites, a tribunal of mathematics charged with observing the heavens, a tribunal of censors and a tribunal of history. The tribunal of censors is composed of scholars, the most learned and the most commendable for their probity. It is charged with denouncing crimes and abuses, and with making remonstrances to the Emperor himself on his public and private conduct. It must at the same time defend innocence, uphold the truth, and recommend justice. History is in China a matter of State which essentially occupies the Government. It entrusts the care of it to the most learned and most commendable scholars for their probity, and takes all the precautions that prudence suggests, to ensure the merit and accuracy of their works. These measures prove how much the Chinese are attached to the history of their country, which has so much influence on the morals of this people and on the acts of the Government, and how much they are attached to the truth.

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<sup>4</sup> The origin of the compass in China dates, according to the Chinese, more than 2600 years before the Christian era; which makes 4400 years of antiquity. It only dates back to the twelfth century in Europe.

Let us reflect that this people is continually occupied, and that it has no time to devote itself to the study of abstract sciences. The necessity of providing for its subsistence and that of its family diverts it from all other cares. All its ideas relate solely to its present needs. Its religious and even superstitious respect for the customs of its ancestors, which have procured such a long duration for the Empire, makes it regard all innovation as dangerous. Love, this passion which does so much good and harm to men, is unknown in China. It is love which inflames the imagination, which makes talent blossom, and which gives birth to genius. It is love which inspires that delicacy, that taste, without which the fine arts languish in mediocrity. All peoples whose morals are opposed to the free communication of the two sexes will never know the masterpieces of genius; but are they more or less happy with them? This is a moral problem to be resolved, the solution of which must influence legislation.

The spirit of criticism often makes us unjust; it animates us against abuses, and prevents us from seeing the good. With a little reflection, we would recognize that abuses are inevitable, that they make exceptions, and that a large population supposes that the mass of good outweighs that of evil; and if we were to look back on ourselves, we would be more indulgent, and less hasty in our judgments.

The polygamy permitted in China has always excited the declamations of critics. I do not know if they are well-founded. Montesquieu thinks that polygamy is in conformity with the climate of Asia, not in the sense that desires are more violent there, but because the number of females is much greater than that of males<sup>5</sup>. Another reason could be given, which seems plausible to me. It is that in general, in Asia, women are precocious and age early, and their attractions fade in youth. The people do not have the faculty of using the freedom given to them by law to have several wives; thus it is only the well-to-do who are polygamous. It is also only among them that there are pederasts. They have no qualms about it, and do not seek to hide their tastes. The Legislator has not passed any law to repress them, and prejudices are not contrary to it. More than one rich Chinese has kidnapped exposed children to furnish his two male and female herds.

Theft goes unpunished in China when the thief is not caught in the act. Here is an example of which I witnessed. A man climbed very cleverly at night onto the terrace of our pavilion, which overlooks the river. The doors of a large salon which communicated with this terrace were not closed; he entered, slipping gently, like a snake; he crossed the salon in this manner, then a long corridor which communicated with a second, at the end of which was a storeroom, where there were goods from Europe; such as cloth, ginseng, coral, azure; I occupied a room next to this same storeroom. The thief knew the people in our pavilion perfectly; he had been employed there several times as a porter. Having reached the door of the storeroom, he managed to open it quietly and without breaking in, and entered; but he had been noticed by one of our people who slept on the floor of the living room, of whom I have spoken. When he judged that the thief, whose plan he guessed, was far enough away, he quietly woke his comrades, and told them what he had just seen and heard. They set out on the trail of the thief, walking on all fours, and waited for him at the door of the storeroom

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<sup>5</sup> According to accurate information from the time of the Great Yu, 2205 years before the Christian era, repeated 1100 years later, and in the years 1615 and 1616, twenty-five girls were born in China for every twenty boys.

where they arrested him. He had made a bundle of pieces of cloth, which he had put on his back, and he intended to return by the same route, in the same way that he had come, that is to say by sliding on his stomach. Our people did him no harm; they led him to the guardhouse of our pavilion, composed of about sixty French soldiers; his feet and hands were tied.

“Upon the complaints being made, a Mandarin of Justice came to our pavilion, accompanied by a large retinue. He sat down in an armchair, which had been placed in a courtyard opposite a table covered with a carpet. His assessors stood at his sides. His lictors, eight in number, formed two lines in front of him. The culprit was brought in and stood on his knees. He was interrogated in the midst of the lictors by the Mandarin himself; the witnesses were heard, the judgment passed, and the punishment inflicted at the same time, in the presence of the judge. The lictors stretched the thief face down, tied his arms and hands to two bamboo poles, and gave him twenty blows with a chabouc on the buttocks. The leaders of the Canton council of direction, present, like me, at the judgment and the execution, asked for and did not obtain pardon for the guilty man. I saw him an hour later in the streets, laughing and talking with several Chinese who surrounded him, to whom he was probably telling his adventure. Chabouc is nothing dishonourable to China. Theft is punished there, as in Lacedaemon, only when caught in the act. In this case, the injured owner has the right to take justice into his own hands, provided he does not shed the offender's blood. One can also file a complaint with the Mandarin, who inflicts the penalty of chabouc, but never death, and who does not attempt to endanger the liberty of the guilty party. Justice is administered without any expense. I remember that the Fiador (this is the name given to a Chinese merchant who answers to the Government of each European nation) rejected the proposal made by the heads of commerce of the French Company to offer a present to the Mandarin who had been kind enough to come to our factory. I must add that people of a certain order regard theft as beneath them, and that it is only tolerated in those who have needs. (Extract from a letter to citizen S. pp. 16 and 17.)”

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The chabouc is not the only punishment that the Mandarins of Justice can inflict. The Cangue is composed of two pieces of wood notched in the middle, which are placed on the shoulders of the guilty person and then joined together. They also have banishment, the galleys; (this is the obligation to pull the imperial boats for a determined time), and the brand of a hot iron on the cheeks; but no one, of whatever order, even the Tsoung-tou, who is the governor of the province, has the right to pronounce the death penalty against a guilty person, of whatever crime he is convicted. The Mandarins of Justice instruct the trial, and address it to the Emperor who alone has the right, by law, to pronounce the death penalty. The law requires that the Emperor sign the sentence three times, in three different councils, for it to be carried out.

It is doubtless a feeling of humanity which dictated this formality. However, by a contradiction too frequent in human institutions, the Chinese have cruel punishments. They were probably ordered, in the first times of the reunion of this people in society, and when they were barbarians. As they hold to their ancient customs, civilization has not made any change to this part of their legislation, and perhaps they have become accustomed to believing that the severity of the punishments was a necessary restraint, to which they owed the rarity of crimes which are committed in the Empire; for it is claimed that the executions

of criminals condemned to lose their lives amount to hardly more than two hundred per year.

Emperor Can-hy, who honored the throne, grandfather of Kien-long, abolished mutilation of criminals, but not torture. No legislator of this Empire has thought of abolishing slavery; it is soft, because morals are soft, and it is not common: it is composed of criminals condemned to lose their freedom, captives, debtors who are unable to pay, men who have sold themselves in public calamities to save their subsistence, or children whom their fathers have sold, finally the unfortunates born into slavery.

An institution which does honor to Chinese legislation, and which was probably only established when this people had advanced in the state of civilization, and when, after their stay in the mountains, they had spread over the plains and the coasts, is that which orders shipwrecked persons to be treated humanely. From whatever nation they may be, they find safety, protection, assistance. Not only are all their effects returned to them, but all their needs are provided for, and they are sent back to their country, at the expense of the Government. If we compare this benevolent law to the customs and habits of Europeans, erected into rights, in a similar case, what a shame for them! And yet they claim to surpass the Chinese in legislation, morality, and humanity!

This people abhors the shedding of human blood. One of our officers, a young fool, had entered a porcelain shop; he was haggling over some pieces, when one of the shop's boys, who was perhaps becoming impatient with the fact that he was displaying a large quantity of them without buying any, tried to snatch a chamber pot from his hand. The officer, either through clumsiness or carelessness, gave a violent blow to the head of the Chinese man with the piece of porcelain he was holding in his hand; the blood immediately flowed abundantly. In an instant the shop was full of people. Fortunately, many Frenchmen, and some English and Swedes who were in the street, ran up at the noise; the owner of the shop, a sensible man, had the aggressor and the wounded man removed, and had given orders for the wound to be dressed, which was not found to be dangerous: the officer was freed, money was given to the sick man, who declared to the assembled multitude that he was satisfied, and that his injury was only minor. By this means everything calmed down; but if the wounded man had complained, he would have stirred up the people, and the matter would have become very serious. The merchant behaved on this occasion with great wisdom.

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Curiosity took us every day to the various merchants of Canton. We went most often to the workshops of the embroiderers and those who paint porcelain. It is men, not women, who embroider: their work is known in France, and is highly esteemed. At Kim-tet-chim, where the porcelain workshops and kilns are located, they paint on the biscuit (*bisque, unfired ceramics*), and cover it with enamel. When one wants to have painted pieces, according to a design brought from Europe, it must be sent to Kim-tet-chim; but then, one can only have the porcelain the following year. Travelers who cannot wait, buy white, enamelled pieces in Canton, and have them painted before their eyes. Then the paint is applied over the enamel, and blends with it, by means of fire; it is therefore raised in a boss (*embossed, raised*). However, it can be removed with a diamond. I saw in Paris plates which had been armorialized in China, and from which the arms had been removed very cleanly, and without

it showing. I know that several people who were unaware that it was easy to erase the painting from porcelain, broke those armorial plates which they had, during the time of the revolutionary regime, for fear of being compromised.

The Chinese have several ways of putting together broken pieces of porcelain. 1st. They nail them together very skillfully, and much like the workmen who mend earthenware; but these kinds of nails which hold the broken parts together do not pass through. 2nd. They glue them. This method seems to me preferable to the other. They take the bone meal, which they have made into a paste and washed well; they mix it with egg white; they let the mixture ferment, and they apply it to the joints of the broken pieces, which they keep tight for a few days. The Malays have another method. They dry curdled milk, the caseinous part, to use it on this way, scraping a little of it which they mix with lime and milk.

I went for a walk twice in the outskirts of Canton, in a sedan chair, with several French people. We passed through some mediocre and rather badly built villages. We saw Chinese tombs, a mosque, many bamboos, fruit trees, rice fields. We were taken, the second time, to the foot of the wall of the Tartar city, in a place where it forms an angle; it is built of bricks, and seemed to me to be at least forty feet high; it has no ditches, and it reveals a great antiquity. There was a belvedere in the angle. I conjecture that at least in this place, the wall is terraced, like our bastions. We saw at the foot of the wall, a very large quantity of bones. We are told that criminals were sometimes thrown from the top of the wall and abandoned to carnivorous birds. Deprivation of burial is a great punishment in China. It was added that adulterers are tied together, face to face, between two planks, and thus thrown from the top of the wall.

Opposite the Quay of the Europeans, the river is very wide. On this bank, which is the one on the right, following the course of the water, another town is built, much smaller than Canton, but which is a dependency of it. A lot of large goods are unloaded there, such as ebony, sandalwood, sapan, rattan, etc., because several merchants have their stores there. I was curious to go there with one of my friends. I witnessed a weighing of ebony wood which came from the Isle de France, where it grows naturally. It was done by *une romaine* means (*there is a romaine balance used in weighing*), with great promptness and precision. We dined there. I saw a pagoda which had nothing remarkable about it. It seemed to me that almost all the houses in this town have gardens.

This is where the tombs of the Europeans are. I had the sorrow of paying my last respects to one of my friends, who died of chest inflammation, and whose body I accompanied, which had been placed in a coffin, according to our custom. An inscription was placed on the tomb. The Chinese respect tombs; I saw several which had ancient dates.

I am sorry I did not take instructions on how they treat diseases, and on those which are most common in Canton. We took moxa (*dried mugwort*) from them. We know that they use massage, a process which they learned from the Indians, and which should, it seems to me, be adopted in Europe in many cases. They highly esteem ginseng, rhubarb and okiao, or donkey-hide glue, which is used against spitting blood. They never bleed. Venereal disease is rare in China; they combat it by using a strong decoction of Esquina (*the horsetail, Equisetum hymale*); they do not know the preparations of curative mercury, so widely used in Europe.

Elephantiasis is quite common in China, but especially among the Malays. This disease does not appear to exist in Madagascar; but there are others that are quite unusual. The phalanges of the fingers, hands and feet, but especially the hands, fall off one after the other, without pain.

I do not know that the Chinese are subject to gout, and I do not believe that this disease exists among the Indians. However, Europeans are just as tormented by it, in China, in India, at the Cape of Good Hope, in the Isles of France and Reunion, as in Europe; but their way of life is very different from that of the natives. I do not know if the Chinese make use of the mineral waters that they have in their country. I have not heard that there are any volcanoes in this Empire. There are, however, sometimes earthquakes, especially around Peking. The one in 1730 shook this capital and its surroundings.

They are very fond of strong odours; they use musk, ambergris, eagle wood, sandalwood oil, thyme oil, and probably some others. These aromatic substances provide remedies for medicine, but I do not know when and how they are administered.

The diseases that most affect Europeans in China, as in all the East Indies in general, are dysentery and blood flow. Ipecacuanha (*Carapichea ipecacuanha*, a Central and South American plant), properly administered, is the specific for these two diseases; but it must be used repeatedly until completely cured. I do not believe that the Chinese are very subject to them.

There are several ways of administering ipecacuanha; here is the one that has consistently worked for me in the Isle de France, where stomach aches, dysentery, and bloody discharges are quite common among whites and blacks, but especially among the latter, who are generally not sober and do not take much care of their health. These illnesses are generally quite frequent in all hot countries, and especially in those where the air is unhealthy.

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The patient is given powdered ipecacuanha for three days in a row to induce two or three bouts of vomiting; thus the dose is proportionate to the age, sex, and condition of the patient. Instead of hot water, he is given a herbal tea which is nothing other than a weak infusion of ipecacuanha, and every evening he is given an enema composed of a somewhat strong decoction of this root. On the fourth day he is gently purged, and given the same herbal tea to drink and the same enema. Rhubarb is added to the composition of the medicine. Then, he is given ipecacuanha for three days in a row, as the first time, and he is purged on the eighth day, as before. If the illness persists (*or the patient!*), the treatment is repeated.

When the disease does not have a venereal principle, or is not accompanied by marasmus (*malnutrition and body-wasting*), or some other complication, it always yields to this treatment properly administered. The desire to be useful to humanity has led me to publish it, since it has in its favour a constantly happy experience, for more than thirty-four years since I put it into practice.

We have from the late Dr. Pringle, whose writings on medicine are justly esteemed, that ipecacuanha, taken in small but repeated doses, had more effect than in large doses. He had his patients take only five or six grains at a time, and repeated this dose two or three times in the same morning. Experience has confirmed the efficacy of this practice; but I have proven for myself and on many individuals that the theiform decoction of this root (*tisane*) had as much effect as the root itself taken in substance, and that the addition of a little sugar did not diminish its emetic and purgative virtue. I put six or eight or ten grains of powdered ipecacuanha in a cup; I pour over it four or five spoonfuls of boiling water; I stir the mixture with a teaspoon, then I let it stand, and I decant the liqueur. I add a little sugar to it; I make the patient take it, and I give him immediately after, a bowl of light tea, or elderflower, lime, white broth, or a decoction of capillary, slightly sweetened. When the patient vomits, he takes at his choice, either pure lukewarm water, or sweetened, or tea, or a decoction of the aforementioned flowers, sweetened or not, to his taste. When the vomiting has passed, he takes a second dose of ipecacuanha, similar to the first, and even a third, fourth and fifth dose, in the same morning, according to the case. This method of administering this remedy seemed to me the most effective, and the one that is least repugnant to the patients. It is especially suitable for children, who usually show such reluctance to take remedies.

Ringworms are common in China and even more so in India. Only topical remedies are used for their cure, but they are rarely effective. If these remedies make them disappear, it is usually only for a time. They almost always disappear by themselves, after some time spent in Europe. If, to the use of topical remedies, we added that of baths and dry friction, some purgatives, a suitable diet, it is likely that in China itself and in India, we would make disappear these skin spots called ringworms, and which are sometimes quite inconvenient because of the sharp and frequent itching they cause.

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I have said that there are lepers in China. I do not know what the government's policy is towards them, and what remedies are used against this cruel disease. The author of *Philosophical Researches on the Egyptians and the Chinese* claims that the broth and flesh of vipers, known under the name of Coluber, abundant in Egypt, were regarded as a specific against elephantiasis. "It is the water of the Nile," he adds, "which really has the quality of producing pustules on the skin of those who drink it pure, and especially during the first days of its flood." This water, says Pococke, also causes descents and dysentery. (*Description of the East*, B. IV) (*Pococke, Richard A Description of the East, and some other Countries. London, Nourse, and J. Rivington, 1743-5*). The first attributes these effects to natron (*sodium*), or to alkali. I confess that I have difficulty in yielding to his authority. If leprosy were a disease peculiar to Egypt, I could believe that it is due to the quality of the waters of the country; but leprosy, which was formerly common in Europe and which no longer exists today, seems to me to have another cause in Egypt. The priests of this country who were also the doctors, and who are considered to have had extensive knowledge in the practice of medicine, would not have been slow to recognize that the mixture of a little vegetable acid would have been enough to correct the poor quality of the waters of the Nile. As for the virtues of broths and viper flesh, I have difficulty in believing them as they are said. The use of the viper may be a good preservative against leprosy; but I doubt that it is a curative remedy. Fifteen or eighteen years ago, in the public papers of the Isle de France, the flesh of lizards was announced as a specific against leprosy: it was claimed that this secret was



obtained from the Indians. The experience that has been made of it has not confirmed this assertion.

A ship's surgeon, of German origin, and who had a reputation for his profession, composed pills which he claimed to be a specific against the flow of blood. I do not know their composition; I only know that he put in them petrified crabs reduced to powder; he had not been able to obtain any; I was more fortunate than he; I bought a very large quantity of three species; some gray, others reddish, wider than long, of moderate size, to which many legs were missing; but I found four very large, very fat, round, redder than the previous ones and more complete. They must all be in the national cabinet, with the exception of those which I gave to the surgeon, who was employed on the same ship as me.

I had some conversations with a scholar, who was the first clerk of one of the largest merchants of Canton; he was a young man of about 26 years of age, of good height, with a pleasant face, a gentle air, a calm bearing, without affectation, easy and honest manners. The difficulty of understanding each other prevented me from profiting from his conversations. All the merchants of Canton speak a corrupted Portuguese, which the French learn quite easily, for ordinary uses, but which can hardly serve as an intermediary, when it is a question of deepening the legislation, the morals, and the procedures in the arts, of a people so different from what we know.

I remember that this young man, who was training in commercial practices, no doubt with a view to later becoming head of a business, if he had the means, made his principal a very advantageous deal with the supercargoes of the French company. They had in store a fairly considerable quantity of Canadian ginseng, which had formerly sold for an exorbitant price, but the Chinese and the Japanese, to whom the first had brought it, had recognized that this root did not have the same properties as Tartarian ginseng, and no one wanted it. The Company had unwisely fixed the sale at three piastres per pound. Our young scholar, who already had a more commercial mind than our supercargoes, appearing to enter into the embarrassment in which they found themselves by the non-sale of a commodity which could only spoil or deteriorate in the store, proposed to them to deliver to him all the ginseng they had, payable in a year, at the price it would then have in Canton. By this means, they did not go directly against the orders of their Company; they avoided the inconvenience of drying out, of decay, in a word of deterioration of this root; and as they flattered themselves that they would not receive any from Europe the following year, they could hope that its price would be higher. The deal was accepted, to the great advantage of the merchant, who himself brought down the price of the commodity to one piastre per catis, which is equivalent to nearly twenty French ounces. He sold part of it for double or more, and set aside the other part, to bring down the price at the end of the year. He therefore had, in addition to the profit on the part sold, that resulting from the interest on the money, for a year, in a country where it is very high.

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This scholar, above the prejudices of his country, appeared to have conceived a high opinion of Europeans. Although phlegmatic by character and by principle, he loved French vivacity, provided that it was not carried to the point of thoughtlessness, and preferred it to the arrogance of the English, and to the icy coldness and self-interest of the Dutch. The

merchant who he was with, although a mandarin himself, had great consideration for our scholar. All positions in China are given only to scholars. To be qualified as such, one must have studied, have passed examinations in three different grades. There are even tests for military mandarins. They consist of demonstrating strength, skill and agility, and doubtless intelligence, in matters relating to the art of war. Favour, it will be said, sometimes obtains positions which should only be given to merit; presents and money often have preferences; I have no doubt about it; but these are inevitable abuses which will be found everywhere among men, in all constitutions, in all societies.

Our scholar had polite and easy, but decent manners. The author of the *Philosophical and Political History* said in the second edition of this work: *The rites, the ceremonies which move this nation, give more exercise to the memory than to the feeling. Manners arrest the movements of the soul and weaken its springs.....* The excess of Chinese politeness proves a high degree of civilization; the consideration they have for one another, keeps quarrels away, and inspires in them feelings of general benevolence for their fellow men. Also, murders are extremely rare in China. The great spring of the Government is not religion, since they are all permitted there, and one can be an atheist without consequence; nor is it a severe police, although in fact it is and must be repressive; it is paternal authority, it is infinite respect for ancestors. This feeling inspired by nature, by education, by legislation, confirmed by example, maintained by habitual practice, is the basis of the morals of the Chinese, and holds a great people in the respect and submission that it owes to those who govern.

Filial piety is the basis of Chinese legislation<sup>6</sup>. This principle, which is taken from nature, is much more extensive, much more fruitful, and much more powerful, when it is examined in depth, than is commonly believed. Respect for parents, the sentiment which is a consequence of it and which prescribes to children obedience to the orders of their fathers and mothers, the infinite attachment which they have for the authors of their days, extend to the Emperor, the common father, to the governors of the provinces, to the commanders of the cities, to the members of the tribunals, in a word to all the mandarins who have any authority. They are all regarded as the fathers of the people. All give the example of filial piety. The Emperors who are on the throne, whether by policy, by sentiment, or by court etiquette, are exact in conforming to this useful prejudice. They all show the greatest respect for their ancestors, and for their mothers, and never exempt themselves from the public ceremonies which subject them on many occasions to often painful demonstrations, which manifest their feelings.

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<sup>6</sup> It is the only government known from ancient and modern times that had this basis. Although the respect of children for their fathers was consecrated by Roman legislation, the basis of its government was the love of the fatherland. Montesquieu said that honor, virtue, and fear were the bases of the different governments, monarchical, republican, and despotic. By the word virtue, he understood a public virtue, but filial piety is a private virtue. It is therefore appropriate to add this principle to those admitted by the famous jurist I have just cited.

I will not speak here of Chinese agriculture. Details of the method of cultivating rice and other rather curious processes will be found elsewhere<sup>7</sup>. They know the art of grafting<sup>8</sup>, and practice it in all the provinces. The invention of hothouses, new in Europe, dates back to a very ancient time. Their object is not only the preservation of exotic plants, which require a warm temperature, but also to have early vegetables and fruits, and flowers during the winter.

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They fertilize their lands by covering them with water, after the harvest, with the grass and straw that are there until the following spring, and even for a whole year. They also fertilize them by spreading, by irrigation, water loaded with manure, or with loamy earth, or with lime, or with mud or that from ponds. They are very inquisitive. I even believe that they would accept, with gratitude, exotic and useful plants that one would bring them, and that they would give them care. I urge the friends of humanity who go to China to take these presents there, more precious than any that one could make to them. It would be worthy of the Governments to take care of them. Instead of always regarding themselves as in a state of war with other peoples, principles which philosophy and good politics condemn, why not act as the friends of foreign nations with whom they maintain relations as benefactors of humanity? We make more partisans by doing good deeds than we acquire power by force; and this power is not lasting.

Emperor Can-hy, great-grandfather of the one who has been on the throne for two years (? *Qianlong ascended the throne in 1735*), said in his work on natural history, on the occasion of the three species of vines that he transplanted to Peking from the kingdom of Hami: *I would rather provide my subjects with a new species of fruit or seeds than build a hundred porcelain towers.*

The same man who had great vision, great insight and humanity, and who aspired only to make his people happy, had cultivated before his eyes all the kinds of wheat, grains, vegetables and fruits that he had gathered from the different parts of his Empire. It

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<sup>7</sup> Here is one that Europeans have not yet imitated, as far as I know. It is not a provignement (proving: laying a stock or branch on the ground to propagate), it is not a graft; it is a happy combination of two plants of the same genus, but having different colors, to obtain variegated flowers that nature has not given. "They join two plants of *matricaria* of different colors, they make a rather long cut in each at the bottom, which penetrates close to the pith, and then they tie the two plants with thatch, so that they remain closely united. They obtain by this means beautiful variegated flowers, of determined colors. The patient and thoughtful Chinese have succeeded in obtaining brilliant and fragrant flowers from a wild and almost infected plant." General Description of China, page 87. What is the power of education on the plant kingdom, and even on the animal kingdom!

<sup>8</sup> Grafting is difficult and very rarely successful in countries located between the two tropics: this operation of the art of gardening is used in the southern provinces of China, and especially in the northern ones. The Chinese graft *matricaria* by clefts onto *aurona* or mugwort plants; they graft male peonies onto females; they graft oaks onto chestnut trees, and quince trees onto orange trees, etc. There are trees in hot countries that are easily propagated by cuttings; but there are others that do not succeed by this means, whatever precautions are taken, whatever care is given to them. On the other hand, they are all propagated quite easily by raising suckers; for this, the earth at the foot of the tree is dug, a few roots are discovered, which are cut off, and left in the earth; They are watered from time to time; they grow shoots which are removed and transplanted where desired. Transplanting trees is very successful in hot countries, taking the precautions that art and experience indicate; but I have observed that trees grown from seeds in place prosper better than those transplanted and that they resist hurricanes better, because they have a taproot and the others do not.

happened one year, he said, that a plant of rice grew in ears and ripened long before the others..... *I had the rice from these early ears collected separately, and had them sown in a particular field. All that came from them for several years has ripened much earlier than the other.* (Memoirs on the Chinese, by the missionaries of Peking. Vol. IV. p. 477.) Here then is a kind of early rice, which the foresight of this wise Emperor has procured for his country. I quoted this anecdote to give our farmers the idea of making observations of the same kind.

This Emperor congratulates himself, in the same work on natural history, for having provided China with Hamy melons, which are tender, sweet, of an exquisite taste and very healthy. Slices are dried in the sun, from which the rind is removed, and they taste very good seven or eight months later. Providing men with innocent pleasures is an act worthy of a true philanthropist.

The industrious Chinese even cultivate the bottom of the waters. Lakes, ponds, marshes, and watery ditches provide them with harvests of fruit. They plant there plants that are the delights of the best tables. We could also, following their example, multiply a species of water chestnut that the Latins named *tribulus*, and try to naturalize among us the *nymphœa nelumbo* (*Nelumbo nucifera*, the lotus plant), from which the Chinese make good use.

I do not know that any other nation, except the ancient Egyptians<sup>9</sup>, had the industry to cultivate the water soil, and to obtain crops suitable for the food of man, and to increase the sum of his enjoyments. I would be tempted to believe that ponds covered with plants, are much less unhealthy than those which have none, because they absorb in whole or in part the mephitic gas which corrupts the air, and transform it into vital air. It is possible that experience has enlightened the Chinese on this salutary effect, and that the attention they have paid to populating all stagnant waters with plants, has had as motives not only the harvests of various fruits and the pleasure of the view, because the ponds covered with the leaves and flowers of the water lily present a pleasant sight, but also to contribute to the salubrity of the air. It would be worthy of the French Government to gather the opinions of farmers and botanists of the Empire on aquatic plants, whether indigenous or exotic, whose cultivation would promise greater success and greater advantages, and to have them tested in the different departments of the Republic, and especially in those which have localities where the air is unhealthy. It is up to philosophers, observers, and scholars to enlighten the Government on all useful enterprises. All citizens of the Empire are called upon to fulfill these functions. Patriotism often takes the place of talent, and sometimes makes up for lacking knowledge. I have no other title, I regard it as the most glorious with which a Frenchman can be honored. What satisfaction for a citizen, for a friend of humanity, when his advice has been useful to the fatherland!....

The author of the new travels in North America says that the marshes and lakes of the Akança country, along the Mississippi River, are covered with wild oats, which rise in tufts above the water (page 115), and that the savages make abundant harvests of them every year; they reduce this grain to flour by pounding it in a mortar. We ate it, adds the author

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<sup>9</sup> They also cultivated the *nymphœa-nelumbo* in the waters, and that called by the Latins *lotometra*, whose very thin seed was used to make a kind of bread known under the name of *cace*. Both plants which are supposed to have been transplanted from Ethiopia to Egypt no longer exist in the latter country. (Philosophical Researches on the Egyptians and the Chinese, volume 1, page 157).

(citizen Bossu), in pancakes and porridge, which I found very good and very refreshing. He proposes to try to sow the marshes of France with this precious grain, and claims that our climate has some resemblance to that of the Akança country.

I would like an educated farmer to study all the agricultural practices of the Chinese. They are very ancient; they have in their favour numerous experiences, repeated from century to century. The Government grants distinctions or honourable titles to farmers who have cleared land, and even to Mandarins who have helped with the clearing with their own money. Those who have cleared one hundred and thirty acres acquire ownership of it, and also obtain charges, within the time prescribed by law, if they are eligible. We know that they make paper with silk, with bamboo, with thatch<sup>10</sup> and especially with the bark of the Tchu-Kou<sup>11</sup> (2) (*Broussonetia papyrifera*, *paper mulberry*). It is believed that this tree is of the fig tree genus. It might be possible to naturalize it in France. In any case, I will report the way in which they cultivate it, to give an idea of their knowledge of agriculture. They doubtless made many attempts before discovering the method they follow, and which is the most profitable, both for quantity and quality.

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They wash the seed of this tree; I do not know if they use for it a prolific liquor, the use of which is quite familiar to them for other plantations. They mix sesame seeds with this seed, and throw them pell-mell on the ground in the spring. We suppose that the soil has been ploughed and prepared properly. They do not cut the sesame; they are content to harvest the seeds, from which they extract the oil. The following spring, they set fire to the field. Some time later, the young Tchu-Kous grow vigorously; after three years they are cut, and their bark is converted into paper. It is likely that fire destroys the first shoots of this tree, but not its roots, which then produce new shoots. They follow the same method for planting mulberry trees. They mix the seeds with those of millet, in equal parts. The latter grows more quickly and protects the young trees from the heat of the sun. When it is ripe, the seed is harvested, and as soon as it is windy, it is set on fire. The mulberry trees grow more vigorously the following spring. To make an oak seedling succeed, say the farmers of this country, it is necessary to set fire to it at the end of the first or second year. I conjecture that fire makes the land more productive. I have observations which confirm my opinion. Although this is not the place to report them, I will say that in the Sugar Islands, it is customary, after cutting a field of cane, which is then covered with a thick mattress of leaves and debris of this plant, to set fire to it, and that it has been recognized by experience that

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<sup>10</sup> In Ning-hia, a city in the province of Chesni, China, paper is made from beaten hemp mixed with lime water.

<sup>11</sup> Long before the invention of paper, the Chinese wrote, it is said, on the bark of bamboo. It is likely that this bamboo is of a different species than those of the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, whose very thin and very smooth bark is not easy to lift. The Indians write with a sharp iron stylus, on dried palm leaves, although they make coarse, yellowish and brownish paper: I possessed Indian books, composed of palm leaves; one of our soldiers had taken them during the war, in an abandoned pagoda; they were stolen from me, I suppose that it was my Indian servants, who did not want to leave in the hands of a profane, books which they perhaps regarded as sacred. Palm leaves are less changeable than paper; the characters written on them are indelible, but these leaves are flammable. There are authors who claim that after the use of writing on bamboo bark, they adopted that of writing on canvas and silk. However that may be, the invention of paper among them dates back to an antiquity of more than two thousand years; I do not know if it preceded the invention of printing. This does not exist among the Indians. It is possible, however, that the Chinese took from them the invention of paper, and that they had the industry to take advantage of it for the printing of their characters and for painting.

the stumps, which do not perish from the effect of the fire, produce more beautiful, more numerous, and sweeter shoots than when the fire has not passed over them. I agree that this practice is not applicable to all lands and all plants. Whatever the material of their various papers, whether vegetable or animal, they are less white, but much smoother than ours. They do not write with pens, but with brushes. Their characters, which are well known, do not have delicate features, like ours.

I have not seen in China any animals peculiar to that Empire, with the exception of a species of Ourang-Outang, of which I am going to speak. I was passing one day in front of a Pagoda, when a Chinese stopped me and presented me with an Ourang-Outang in a cylindrical cage. It was standing; it was hardly more than twenty-four to thirty inches, it was quite large and black; it had little beard, and some hair on its body. Its face was elongated, it appeared very sad, as if plunged in sorrow. Its fate interested me: I bargained for it, the Chinese agreed to let me have it for twenty piastres. It was necessary to return to *Ham* to look for them, and to take my captive there; I was preparing to make this journey, when the friends with whom I was, dissuaded me from it. They represented to me that this animal would hinder me on the crossing, and that it would die before arriving in France. I therefore renounced this acquisition; but it was with great regret. I did not have time to find out from the merchant the history of this animal, nor from which country it came. It is the only one I have seen in China. I have seen others in Batavia, and even in the Isle of France which came from Java; but none approached as much to the human figure as the one I have just spoken of. I saw at Chandernagor in Bengal a You-you which came from very far away, it was said, and which greatly resembled the so-called Ourang-Outangs of Java.

I bought a beautiful wild tabby cat, very gentle, bigger than our beautiful angoras; I sent it on board. It got out of its cage, I don't know how, and grabbed the chickens: they chased it, but it was very alert, they couldn't catch it; finally it threw itself into the sea and swam towards the Isle of Vampou (*Whampou*), where it landed. This species of animal is known. I will not speak of the Brilliant Scarabs, which are very common, and which serve as an ornament on women's heads, with artificial flowers, perfectly well imitated, and whose colors are very bright, because they excel in the art of imitation. I saw flowers and shrubs laden with fruit, made of ivory, with natural colors so similar that one took them for reality.

I think I will be excused from speaking of Confucius, that famous Chinese philosopher, whose name is greatly venerated in China; I will add nothing to all that is known about him. His doctrine may be regarded as the ancient and natural religion of the Chinese. His descendants have titles of honor. It is the only family in the Empire which has distinctions and privileges. I will not speak of the small feet of women. Those we see in boats have feet of natural size. I have seen some Chinese with very long nails; we know that this is a ridiculous and inconvenient effect of vanity.

It must be assumed that a traveler who only stays a few months in Canton, and who is busy, cannot gain extensive knowledge of the beliefs and religious practices of this people. Thus, I refer for this purpose to what authors more learned than myself have said about it. The dogmas of Foé (*Fo, the name of the Buddha*) came to them from India a long time ago; which suggests that the peoples of this part were civilized before the Chinese. It appears

that this is also the opinion of the learned Bailly, whose letters will always regret the premature loss.

The pagodas of China do not approach those of India, either in extent or in the apparatus of the buildings. The peoples of India have only one religion, that of Brahma. I do not speak of Mohammedanism, which is the religion of the conquerors, the Mogul Tartars, because they are intruders from another nation who form a separate band, and who do not ally themselves with the natives. The unity of religion among the Hindus, the immensity of their pagodas, their religious dogmas, which have so influenced their civil constitution, seem to prove, as I have said elsewhere, that the government among them was theocratic in ancient times, and that they are the elders of the Chinese.

The Bonzes are respected by the people; but the homage they pay them is purely voluntary, as are the gifts they make to them. Priests do not dominate in China. Deism is the only religion avowed by the Government. The Emperor and all the Tartars who are in the Empire are of the sect of the Dalai Lama, which is that of Fo; but they do not seek to propagate their doctrine, nor to extend this cult.

Under the reign of Out-Song, of the Tang dynasty (General History of China, Volume VI, page 488) more than forty-four thousand temples of Bonzes were destroyed, and their property was confiscated for the benefit of the State. Chit-Song, Emperor of the Heout-Chéou destroyed thirty thousand of their temples which did not have authentic titles of their foundations. (Ibid. Volume VII, page 445) However, their temples are still very numerous today. According to the history of the Chinese, it appears that this people is credulous and easily gives itself over to superstition. They believe that the elements have a spirit which is their God: thus fire, water, air, etc. have their spirits. The children found on the water with a calabash around their necks have been consecrated to the spirit of the river. Such is the fatal effect of superstition, to make man barbaric and bloodthirsty.

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I have seen their theatres; they build them in the street; but they leave the passage free underneath. Their plays, it seemed to me, begin in the morning and end in the evening. The spectators are standing; they follow one another. I believe that this expense is borne by the Government.

The Chinese have musical instruments which have little effect: several authors have spoken of them; but what surprises me is that this people does not know dance; at least I did not see any performed, not even in their theaters, during my stay in Canton. The Indians have their bayadères, or dancing girls, who are attached to the pagodas; but nothing similar exists in China. Chinese gravity, the retirement of women, the lack of public or private assemblies, the continuity of work, are probably opposed to the taste for dancing. One might add that their clothing is the greatest obstacle. Loose-fitting drawers, long dresses, wide boots with very thick shoes, are not suitable for this exercise.

We wanted to give the Chinese an idea of our shows. We had a theatre set up in a very large room in a factory; it was decorated according to our custom. We performed Zaire, then Radamiste, and two short comedies, as well as we could have done in France. We invited

foreigners to attend, and we gave them supper. The principal merchants of Canton were there; they seemed very satisfied. We sometimes gave concerts, either in our *ham*, or in that of the English, or in that of the Swedes. The Europeans who loved music<sup>12</sup> would get together; it did not seem to be to the taste of the Chinese. They do not appreciate our stews either and prefer their own. I have eaten several times at the homes of merchants who had dishes prepared at their homes served, with other dishes that we had brought, prepared by our cooks, so that the table was served in the Chinese and French style. They have a stew made from pig's tripe which is generally highly esteemed by Europeans. They only have two meals a day, one at ten o'clock in the morning, the other at six o'clock in the evening.

They drink neither European wine, nor coffee, nor chocolate. Their *sam-sou* is a strong liquor; but they take it moderately: for I have not seen a single drunk Chinese, while European sailors often get drunk on this liquor. Of all the spices, pepper is the one they consume the most. Their dishes are seasoned with salt and a little pepper, they rarely mix in chili pepper: that of China is milder than that of India. Rice is the basis of their diet in the southern provinces.

I will not speak of the arts of the Chinese; we know their silks, their porcelains, their varnishes. We know that they have brought the art of embroidery to the highest degree of perfection. They work ivory, mother-of-pearl, and tortoiseshell to a high standard. They also make marquetry works and gold jewelry, which do not have the finish of ours, but which prove their skill and intelligence. Although their colors are very vivid and very beautiful, painting has not made great progress among them; however, they are skillful copyists. Sculpture is little practiced there: therefore, it has remained below mediocre. Architecture is less neglected. I doubt, however, that one would find in China monuments worthy of note, with the exception of their bridges.

"That of Siuen-Tchéou-Fou, in the province of Fukien is built on a dangerous arm of the sea. It is entirely of a blackish stone, or a very dark blue, very hard, and supported by more than three hundred pillars, ending on either side at an acute angle, to break the violence of the waves. It is not arcaded, but five stones of equal length and thickness occupy the space from one pier to the other. It is bordered by enriched balustrades, at equal distances with globes, lions, and pyramids placed on bases. It is more than three hundred and sixty poles long, that is to say, more than three thousand six hundred Chinese feet (which are very nearly equivalent to our ancient king's feet). General History of China, Tom. XII, page 123."

I believe that their knowledge of astronomy and geography was rather limited before the European Missionaries instructed them. Botany, chemistry, and physics are sciences of which they have little idea. Experience alone has taught them curious, useful, and interesting processes, the causes of which they do not seek to explain. At the end of this volume, you will find an incomplete account of some of the arts of the Chinese, about which you would like to have more extensive knowledge.

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<sup>12</sup> The invention of music is very ancient in China: Ling-lun, who discovered the twelve semitones, which are contained within the limits of an octave, and which are called the twelve Lu, flourished under the reign of Hoang-ti, in the year 2637, before the Christian era. (Memoir of Father Amiot, vol. VI, p. 77.) It is in this work that we find developed the musical system of the Chinese, and the description of their musical instruments, which are very numerous.



The Emperor Kien-long, who has been on the imperial throne for a long time, is one of the greatest princes mentioned in the history of China. *He united to his states the vast extent of country which properly formed the kingdom of the Eleuthians, Little Bukaria, the towns of Casghar and Yerguen, with all their dependencies*; but what crowns his glory is the subjugation of the Miao-tse, a savage people who inhabited the mountains of the interior of China, and whose brigands and incursions could not be repressed. Poet, historian, philosopher, great legislator, friend of humanity, he was the admiration of his century, he will astonish posterity. His benevolence, his constant application to the Government, during a reign of sixty years, his love for justice and for the laws of the Empire, his taste for letters<sup>13</sup> and his esteem for scholars, but above all his filial pity carried to the highest degree, will assign him a distinguished rank in the history of the Empire.

It is said that scholars believe that their country was peopled by Colonies coming from the heights of Tartary. This opinion may be true for a part of the provinces of China, such as Pechelia and Kiangnan; but is it likely that Tartar Colonies, who left their native land, with the intention of inhabiting a better one, would have preferred the mountains inhabited by the Miao-tse to fertile plains? I do not think so, and I presume that these mountaineers are the natives of China, who withdrew to places inaccessible to horsemen, when they were driven from the plains they inhabited by hordes of Tartars. It would be very interesting to know if these Miao-tse, who were subdued by the Emperor Kien-long, had some principles of civilization, if they had a form of government, and some idea of religion; what was their language, what were their arts, what were their customs, what were their uses, what was their tradition, what was their population; if they were farmers or shepherds, if they had fixed residences; in a word, the history of this people would be as curious as it was interesting, and could provide ideas on the early ages of the Empire of China.

I will not leave this country without speaking of its commerce. It is easy to guess that the interior trade must be immense, not only because of the extraordinary population of the Empire, the fertility of the land, the industry and activity of this people, the modesty of the duties and their invariable fixation, but also because its rivers are navigable, and because the artificial canals are very numerous there. The Chinese only settled on the banks of rivers and canals. So, on the great imperial canal, one finds towns every league, so to speak.

The prohibitive laws are very few in number: they are limited to forbidding the importation of opium into the Empire, the entry and exit of glass, and the exportation of gold, silver, and rice. The first commodity is regarded as very disastrous and likely to disturb public tranquility; thus policy and humanity have advised this police regulation. Gold and silver materials are regarded as necessary to the Empire. The law which forbids their exit has more in view the exportation that the emigrants could make of them than that of commerce; for it is not difficult for merchants to export it. As for rice, it is a staple food in an extremely populated country. All other goods, whatever they may be, manufactured or not, are permitted, both for entry and exit. Thus the reasons of State which, in other countries, have set limits to competition or the consumption of foreign goods, are ignored or disdained in

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<sup>13</sup> The collection of his poems contains twenty-four small volumes. He made an abridgement of the history of the Ming, and a collection in more than one hundred volumes of Chinese monuments, ancient and modern, drawn on the spot, engraved and accompanied by explanations which make them known.

China. Several writers have, in our days, attacked the principle on which they are established. This is not the place to begin this discussion.

As a historian, I limit myself to recounting a fact which seems to me worthy of being noted.

The foreign trade of the Chinese is very considerable, since the Japanese Government and that of Cochinchina have forbidden their respective subjects to leave their States. With the exception of the inhabitants of the islands of Liu-Kieou, the Chinese are the only ones who trade in these eastern countries. They go to Cochinchina, Tonkin, Cambodia, Tsiompa, Siam, Malac, Achem, Queda, Palembam, Batavia, Borneo, the Molucas, Japan, and the Philippine Islands. They have compatriots established in all these countries.

Much has been said against the Chinese taste for theft, and against the deceptions of merchants in the qualities and quantities of merchandise. It seemed to me that roguery was no more frequent there than elsewhere. The merchants and all the large merchants are faithful in trade. We have even seen a merchant from Canton pay a considerable sum to a French shipowner, who had been robbed, on the occasion of the merchandise he had supplied him, although he had not participated in the theft. He wanted to obtain, by this sacrifice, the confidence he deserved.

I do not know if among Europeans one would find many as noble and as delicate.

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I knew a very old Chinese merchant, particularly attached to the French Nation, who had acquired a great fortune through loyal trade with it, and who, out of gratitude, advanced two cargoes to the East India Company, in a circumstance where its ships were short of funds. Would the most famous merchant in Europe have behaved so nobly and generously? Let it be noted that the Chinese could not be reimbursed until after twenty or twenty-four months, at the earliest.

Gold is regarded in China only as a commodity. It is not, like silver, a representative sign of things. The payment of taxes, which are collected in silver, cannot be made with gold, nor can the purchase of goods and debts. Contributions are paid in commodities. It follows from this that gold does not have the same value in China as it would have, if it were, like silver, a representative sign of things. This function increases the price of metals, according to the certain principle that things have more value in proportion to the need and scarcity, which increase demand. It is therefore the price that foreign nations place on gold which maintains its value in China. The use made of it in jewellery and gilding, being very limited, would not be enough to maintain it at the rate at which it is, especially since Cochinchina, which produces it abundantly, can supply it at a mediocre price.

The Chinese are not familiar with banking. They have no idea of our financial operations. They have no public debts. The revenues of the Empire are greater than the expenses. They keep the surplus in deposit for extraordinary cases. The Emperor is the sovereign dispenser of revenues, but he does not apply them to his particular expenses. He has domains which are sufficient for this. One of their Emperors had created a paper flood for a limited time. It

would be curious to know its history. The same needs give rise to the idea of the same resources in very different countries.

The interest on money is at a very high rate. This fact seems to prove that it is not distributed in proportion to the needs, or that the laws on lending are not favourable to it, or that the profits of trade are very considerable.

P 146

“China, says Smith<sup>14</sup>, has long been one of the richest states in the world, both in the fertility of its soil, and in the excellence of its culture, and in industry, and even in the number of its inhabitants; but having reached this state of opulence, one would say that it has become stationary. Marco Polo, who visited it more than 500 years ago, describes its culture, industry and population to us, almost as modern travellers still paint them. Perhaps it has been, since the most remote centuries, at that apogee of wealth which the nature of its laws and institutions have allowed it to attain.”

This proposition is evidently erroneous. All the assertions that follow are tainted by the same vice; there are even some monstrous ones, and all the consequences that he deduces from them, starting from a false principle, are so many serious errors; I will say just one word to combat both. It is that it has been demonstrated that for 500 years, I would even say for a century, the Chinese population has made the most astonishing progress.

Agriculture has also increased in the same proportion. European trade has increased the plantations of tea, mulberry trees and cotton trees, the culture of silkworms, and several other branches of industry. The increase in the population of the natives must necessarily have increased, in the same proportion, crops and manufactures. The enslavement of the Miao-tse, these untamed mountain people, who committed frequent brigandage, and whose incursions, in their vicinity, stopped the progress of agriculture and population, will give China a new prosperity. To reach the highest level to which it can rise, this empire only needs to find the means to prevent the famines to which it is subject.

Although the city of Canton is in the tropics, the cold there is quite biting during the winter; however, it does not freeze there; there are neither stoves nor fireplaces in the apartments; in the northern provinces, people dress in furs; the Chinese value them, and especially otter skins, which were formerly very rare and very expensive. But since the new discoveries made in America, these skins have become common, and have greatly diminished in price. In Canton, skins are sold whose hair is fine and very white, which are said to come from a species of mountain cat, and which resembles the ermine.

P 148 (*Cossigny leaves Canton*)

The ships being loaded, we left in January to make our return. We set sail on the 14th from the Lion Tower, where we had been anchored, accompanied by a lot of sampans to tow us; we passed the bar, at high tide in twenty-one feet of water, the ship drawing twenty feet six inches ahead, and nineteen feet five inches behind. Passing, on the 16th, in front of Macao,

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<sup>14</sup> Research into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations Volume I, page 149, an instructive work which reveals great truths and gives food for thought.

we put in to wait for two missionaries from Tonkin, one Italian and the other Tonkinese, who were coming to Europe. The ship's cargo was more than a million francs.

We stopped before Palembang, where we found a French vessel at anchor, returning from Cochin-china with a cargo of sugar. It had encountered bad weather at the entrance to the Strait of Malac; it had lost all its large anchors, and it had grounded, which obliged it to go to Batavia. It had sent, eight days before, one of its boats to Palembang, to look for anchors and cables, and it asked us for another anchor and a cable, which we supplied it with.

It is said that at the same time, the monsoon is not the same on the western coast as on the eastern coast of Sumatra. On both coasts, land breezes and sea breezes are experienced every day, unless the winds are stormy.

We took the same route on the way back as on the way there, that is to say, we passed through the Straits of Banca and Sunda. The vessels which leave from the Coromandel coast, from Bengal and from the East coast, to go to China, and those which return to the aforementioned countries, cross the Strait of Malac, which is much longer than those which I have just named. In time of war, several French vessels passed through the Straits of Baly, or of Lombok, or of Combava, to escape the cruisers. I even believe that it was they who opened this route; they always did it without accidents. In 1761, five English vessels leaving Canton in January, fearing to encounter French corsairs in the Sunda Strait, decided to sail to the East. The Griffin, one of them, was lost at night on the reefs, not far from Xolo, also called Yolo or Solo, an island located about a hundred leagues southwest of Mindanao, and the other four ran great dangers: they collected the shipwrecked crew, and they abandoned the ship.

We disembarked on February 5th, without incident, and arrived at Isle de France on the following March 5th; we left on the 15th. We stopped for four days at Ascension Island. In three nights we caught ninety-four turtles; we kept seventy, and we put the others into the sea. The females come ashore to lay their eggs, and that is when they are caught. They are kept on the deck of the ship; care is taken to refresh them from time to time with sea water, and to turn them over, that is to say, to keep them on their backs for a while. The crew was fed for thirty days. It is quite astonishing that these animals can live so long without taking food. It is true that they lose weight, but they are still edible on the thirtieth day. There are ships where they have been kept alive for six weeks, and which have even landed some in the East. This food is considered anti-scorbutic. Each turtle can weigh three or four hundred pounds. The meat is succulent and very nourishing; the sick are given its broth. The fat is green, but appetizing; the liver, tripe, and breastplate baked in the oven with seasoning, are very pleasant dishes. They all had eggs of different sizes.

Most French vessels pass by Ascension Island on their way back from the Indies; but turtles are only caught there during the egg-laying season. It is unfortunate that this island is not cultivable, and that it provides neither water nor wood. It would be a well-situated place to rest. It has no port, but one never experiences gales there although the sea breaks on the shore, and it is never rough in the harbour. There are several coves around the island, near which the anchorage is very good. I have already said that it shows all the appearances of a newly volcanized land. It would seem that the multiplicity of turtle hunting should diminish

their number. However, this diminution is not noticed. Here is the reason. There is on the Island a prodigious quantity of birds of different species which devour the small turtles which hatch: these, as soon as they come out of their shells, have the instinct to go to the sea; unfortunately for them, their lightness keeps them above the water for the first nine days; they are exposed the first nine days; they are exposed, during all this time, to the voracity of their enemies.

The Europeans who land on the Island are careful to destroy as many birds as they can. They find nests everywhere, filled with eggs, which are on the ground, or on rocks. We notice in fact that there are much fewer birds than before. I would like some men to be kept there, solely to destroy the birds.

The encounter of some ships during the crossing, the sight of several species of fish and birds, that of a large quantity of seaweed, by the Azores and beyond, do not provide events interesting enough to be mentioned. We arrived in the Orient on July 2, after nineteen months and fourteen days.

End of the voyage to Canton.

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#### OBSERVATIONS

On the journey to China of Lord Macartney, Ambassador of the King of England, to the Emperor of China, written by Sir George Staunton, in four volumes in - 8 °

The Republic of Letters will long regret the unfortunate loss of this excellent Dutch patriot, who had sacrificed thirty years of his life to observe the vast Empire of China. He had spent several years in Canton, to learn the language, the customs, the uses of the country. Then he disguised himself as a Chinese and went to Nanking. There, he managed to be admitted to the number of scholars, and became a Mandarin. In this capacity, he occupied different positions, and traveled through a large part of the provinces of the Empire. Equipped with an ample collection of observations, he returned to his homeland, on a ship of his nation, which perished at Texel (*Dutch island port in North Sea*), and which swallowed up our scholar and all his manuscripts.

It is understood that a stay in China, as short as that of the English embassy, cannot provide very extensive or very exact knowledge of the constitution, laws, morals, customs, usages, religion, and arts of such a numerous people. However, we must be grateful to Sir Staunton for having combined the observations of his traveling companions with his own. The author proves that he has knowledge, and appears to have been guided by the love of truth. If I find him inaccurate in some points, it is because he did not have the time to ascertain them. The reputation of this work, and that of the people who cooperated in its preparation, encourage me to point out the errors that I have noticed in it, and to note the details that do not seem complete to me.

I have not travelled in the interior of China, but I resided for a few months in Canton, at a time when Europeans were free to leave the city, and I have since conceived a great esteem

for one of the oldest peoples of the globe, and the one whose population is without a doubt the most numerous.

The observations that I give to the public will add to the knowledge that we have on this vast empire, and will perhaps not be without utility in some points.

I shall reveal the extensive and ambitious views of the British Government, whose desires are not satisfied by the immensity of the territorial possessions from which it reaps the revenues in the Great Indies. Blinded to its own interests, insatiable for conquest and domination, aspiring to the invasion of the commerce of the whole world, it does not see that a great extension would be its ruin. Its own means do not allow it such a great enlargement, and sooner or later, it will return within the limits which nature seems to have prescribed for it.

France, whose destiny promises it to play the leading role on the globe, has too much neglected, under the old regime, the means of extending its possessions in the East Indies, of multiplying its colonies there, and of enlarging its trade. The weakness of the Government made it fear the rivalry of the English; the incompetence of its ministers made them indifferent to the projects most advantageous to the nation; the expenses of a lavish court left no means for their execution. Let us hope that the new order of things will bring more satisfactory results; and that at peace, the nation will take into consideration the plans of establishments which will be presented to it by citizen travellers and observers, to increase the trade of the Republic, and to give it in the East Indies a power which is appropriate to its extent and its dignity. I have submitted, at different times, several memoranda to the Government on this subject, and I have learned with satisfaction that my views have been approved by enlightened citizens, and some adopted by the educated public. When circumstances permit, I will present them again, with all the zeal of a citizen who ardently desires the prosperity of his country.

I did not intend to write a literary critique; but to report on the knowledge gained from my travels; to awaken the attention of my nation to matters of public utility, and to inspire travellers with a taste for observation, so that they may be useful to their country by sharing their discoveries and reflections with it. If I have been mistaken on some points, I will gratefully receive any advice that anyone may give me on my errors. My motto is truth and love of country.