TRAVELS

IN

CHINA,

CONTAINING

DESCRIPTIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND COMPARISONS, MADE AND COLLECTED IN THE COURSE OF A SHORT RESIDENCE AT THE IMPERIAL PALACE OF YUEN-MIN-YUEN, AND ON A SUBSEQUENT JOURNEY THROUGH THE COUNTRY FROM

PEKIN TO CANTON.

IN WHICH IT IS ATTEMPTED TO APPRECIATE THE RANK THAT THIS EXTRAORDINARY EMPIRE MAY BE CONSIDERED TO HOLD IN THE SCALE OF CIVILIZED NATIONS.

" NON CUIVIS HOMINI CONTINGIT ADIRE *CORINTHUM.*"
It is the lot of few to go to PEKIN.

By JOHN BARROW, Esq.

LATE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE EARL OF MACARTNEY, AND ONE OF HIS SUITE AS AMBASSADOR FROM THE KING OF GREAT BRITAIN TO THE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

ILLUSTRATED WITH SEVERAL ENGRAVINGS.

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CHAP. IV.

Sketch of the State of Society in China.—Manners, Cuſtoms, Sentiments, and Moral Character of the People.

Condition of Women, a Criterion of the State of Society.—Degraded State of in China. — Domeſtic Manners unfavourable to Filial Affection. — Parental Authority.—Ill Effects of ſeparating the Sexes. — Social Intercourſe unknown, except for gaming.—Their Worſhip ſolitary.—Feaſts of New Year.—Propenſity to gaming.—Influence of the Laws ſeems to have deſtroyed the natural Character of the People.—Made them indifferent, or cruel.—Various Inſtances of this Remark in public and in private Life.—Remarks on Infanticide.—Perhaps leſs general than uſually thought.—Character of Chineſe in Foreign Countries.—Temper and Diſpoſition of the Chineſe.—Merchants.—Cuckoo-Clocks.—Conduct of a Prince of the Blood.—Of the Prime Miniſter.—Compariſon of the Phyſical and Moral Characters of the Chineſe and Man-tchoo *Tartars.—General Character of the Nation illuſtrated.*

IT may, perhaps, be laid down as an invariable maxim, that the condition of the female part of ſociety in any nation will furniſh a tolerable juſt criterion of the degree of civilization to which that nation has arrived. The manners, habits, and prevailing ſentiments of women, have great influence on thoſe of the ſociety to which they belong, and generally give a turn to its character. Thus we ſhall find that thoſe nations, where the moral and intellectual powers of the mind in the female ſex are held in moſt eſtimation, will be governed by ſuch laws as are

beſt calculated to promote the general happineſs of the people; and, on the contrary, where the perſonal qualifications of the ſex are the only objects of conſideration, as is the caſe in all the deſpotic governments of Aſiatic nations, tyranny, oppreſſion, and ſlavery are ſure to prevail; and theſe perſonal accompliſhments, ſo far from being of uſe to the owner, ſerve only to deprive her of liberty, and the ſociety of her friends; to render her a degraded victim, ſubſervient to the ſenſual gratification, the caprice, and the jealouſy of tyrant man. Among ſavage tribes the labour and drudgery invariably fall heavieſt on the weaker ſex.

The talents of women, in our own happy iſland, began only in the reign of Queen Elizabeth to be held in a proper degree of conſideration. As women, they were admired and courted, but they ſcarcely could be ſaid to participate in the ſociety of men. In fact, the manners of our forefathers, before that reign, were too rough for them. In Wales, wives were ſold to their huſbands. In Scotland, women could not appear as evidences in a court of juſtice. In the time of Henry the Eighth, an act was paſſed prohibiting women and apprentices from reading the New Teſtament in the Engliſh language. Among the poliſhed Greeks, they were held in little eſtimation. Homer degrades all his females: he makes the Grecian princeſſes weave the web, ſpin, and do all the drudgery of a modern waſherwoman; and rarely allows them any ſhare of ſocial intercourſe with the other ſex. Yet the very foundations on which he has conſtructed his two matchleſs poems are women. It appears alſo from all the dramatic writers of ancient Greece, whoſe aim

was " to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to ſhew the " very age and body of the time its form and preſſure," that notwithſtanding their extreme delicacy of taſte, and rapid progreſs in the fine arts, their manners were low and coarſe, and that they were entire ſtrangers to any other gratification ariſing from the ſociety of women, than the indulgence of the ſenſual appetite. Even the grave Herodotus mentions, in the higheſt terms of approbation, the cuſtom of Babylon of ſelling by auction, on a certain fixed day, all the young women who had any pretenſions to beauty, in order to raiſe a ſum of money for portioning off the reſt of the females, to whom nature had been leſs liberal in beſtowing her gifts, and who were knocked down to thoſe who were ſatisfied to take them with the leaſt money. This degradation of women would ſeem to be as impolitic as it is extraordinary ſince, under their guidance, the earlieſt, and ſometimes the moſt indelible (I believe I may ſafely add, the beſt and moſt amiable) impreſſions are ſtamped on the youthful mind. In infancy their protection is indiſpenſably neceſſary, and in ſickneſs, or in old age, they unqueſtionably afford the beſt and kindeſt relief: or, as a French author has neatly obſerved, " *Sans les femmes, les deux extremites de la vie ſeraient ſans ſecours,* " *et le milieu ſans plaiſirs.*" " Without woman the two extre- " mities of life would be helpleſs, and the middle of it joyleſs."

The Chineſe, if poſſible, have impoſed on their women a greater degree of humility and reſtraint than the Greeks of old, or the Europeans in the dark ages. Not ſatisfied with the phyſical deprivation of the uſe of their limbs, they have contrived, in order to keep them the more confined, to make it a moral crime

crime for a woman to be ſeen abroad. If they ſhould have occaſion to viſit a friend or relation, they muſt be carried in a cloſe ſedan chair: to walk would be the height of vulgarity. Even the country ladies, who may not poſſeſs the luxury of a chair, rather than walk, ſuffer themſelves to be ſometimes rolled about in a ſort of covered wheelbarrow. The wives and daughters, however, of the lower claſs are neither confined to the houſe, nor exempt from hard and ſlaviſh labour, many being obliged to work with an infant upon the back, while the huſband, in all probability, is gaming, or otherwiſe idling away his time. I have frequently ſeen women aſſiſting to drag a ſort of light plough, and the harrow. Nieuwhoff, in one of his prints, taken from drawings ſuppoſed to be made in China, yokes, if I miſtake not, a woman to the ſame plough with an aſs. Should this be the fact, the Chineſe are not ſingular, if we may credit the Natural Hiſtorian of Antiquity *, who obſerves that, to open the fertile fields of *Byzacium* in Africa, it was neceſſary to wait until the rains had ſoaked into the ground; "after which a "little weakly aſs, and an old woman, attached to the ſame "yoke, were ſufficient to drag the plough through the ſoil," *poſt imbres vili aſello, et a parte altera jugi anu vomerem trahente vidimus ſcindi.*

In the province of *Kiang-ſee* nothing is more common than to ſee a woman drawing a kind of light plough, with a ſingle handle, through ground that has previouſly been prepared. The eaſier taſk of directing the machine is left to the huſband,

* Plin. lib. xvi. cap. 21.

who,

who, holding the plough with one hand, at the ſame time whit the other caſts the ſeed into the drills.

The advantages which thoſe women poſſeſs in a higher ſphere of life, if any, are not much to be envied. Even at home, in her own family, a woman muſt neither eat at the ſame table, nor ſit in the ſame room with her huſband. And the male children, at the age of nine or ten, are entirely ſeparated from their ſiſters. Thus the feelings of affection, not the inſtinctive products of nature, but the offspring of frequent intercourſe and of a mutual communication of their little wants and pleaſures, are nipped in the very bud of dawning ſentiment. A cold and ceremonious conduct muſt be obſerved on all occaſions between the members of the ſame family. There is no common focus to attract and concentrate the love and reſpect of children for their parents. Each lives retired and apart from the other. The little incidents and adventures of the day, which furniſh the converſation among children of many a long winter's evening, by a comfortable fire-ſide, in our own country, are in China buried in ſilence. Boys, it is true, ſometimes mix together in ſchools, but the ſtiff and ceremonious behaviour, which conſtitutes no inconſiderable part of their education, throws a reſtraint on all the little playful actions incident to their time of life and completely ſubdues all ſpirit of activity and enterprize. A Chineſe youth of the higher claſs is inanimate, formal, and inactive, conſtantly endeavouring to aſſume the gravity of years.

To

To beguile the many tedious and heavy hours, that muſt unavoidably occur to the ſecluded females totally unqualified for mental purſuits, the tobacco-pipe is the uſual expedient. Every female from the age of eight or nine years wears, as an appendage to her dreſs, a ſmall ſilken purſe or pocket to hold tobacco and a pipe, with the uſe of which many of them are not unacquainted at this tender age. Some indeed are conſtantly employed in working embroidery on ſilks, or in painting birds, inſects, and flowers on thin gauze. In the ladies' apartments of the great houſe in which we lived at Pekin, we obſerved ſome very beautiful ſpecimens of both kinds in the pannels of the partitions, and I brought home a few articles which I underſtand have been much admired; but the women who employ their time in this manner are generally the wives and daughters of tradeſmen and artificers, who are uſually the weavers both of cottons and ſilks. I remember aſking one of the great officers of the court, who wore a ſilken veſt beautifully embroidered, if it was the work of his lady, but the ſuppoſition that his wife ſhould condeſcend to uſe her needle ſeemed to give him offence.

Their manners in domeſtic life are little calculated to produce that extraordinary degree of filial piety, or affection and reverence towards parents, for which they have been eminently celebrated, and to the ſalutary effects of which the Jeſuits have attributed the ſtability of the government. Filial duty is, in fact, in China, leſs a moral ſentiment, than a precept which by length of time has acquired the efficacy of a poſitive law; and it may truly be ſaid to exiſt more in the maxims of the government,

vernment, than in the minds of the people. Had they, indeed, conſidered filial piety to be ſufficiently ſtrong when left to its own natural influence, a precept or law to enforce it would have been ſuperfluous. The firſt maxim inculcated in early life is the entire ſubmiſſion of children to the will of their parents. The tenour of this precept is not only "to honour thy father "and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land;" but to labour for thy father and thy mother as long as they both ſhall live, to ſell thyſelf into perpetual ſervitude for their ſupport, if neceſſary, and to conſider thy life at their diſpoſal. So much has this ſentiment of parental authority gained ground by precept and habit, that to all intents and purpoſes it is as binding as the ſtrongeſt law. It gives to the parent the exerciſe of the ſame unlimited and arbitrary power over his children, that the Emperor, the common father, poſſeſſes by law over his people. Hence, as among the Romans, the father has the power to ſell his ſon for a ſlave; and this power, either from caprice, or from poverty, or other cauſes, is not unfrequently put in force.

A law that is founded in reaſon or equity ſeldom requires to be explained or juſtified. The government of China, in ſanctioning an act of parental authority that militates ſo ſtrongly againſt every principle of nature, or moral right and wrong, ſeems to have felt the force of this remark. Their learned men have been employed in writing volumes on the ſubject, the principal aim of which appears to be that of impreſſing on the minds of the people the comparative authority of the Emperor over his ſubjects and of a parent over his children. The reaſonableneſs

ſonableneſs and juſtice of the latter being once eſtabliſhed, that of the former, in a patriarchal government, followed of courſe; and the extent of the power delegated to the one could not in juſtice be withheld from the other. And for the better allaying of any ſcruples that might be ſuppoſed to ariſe in men's conſciences, it was eaſy to invent any piece of ſophiſtry to ſerve by way of juſtification for thoſe unnatural parents who might feel themſelves diſpoſed, or who from want might be induced, to part with their children into perpetual ſlavery. A ſon, ſays one of their moſt celebrated lawgivers, after the death of his father, has the power of ſelling his ſervices for a day, or a year, or for life; but a father, while living, has unlimited authority over his ſon; a father has, therefore, the ſame right of ſelling the ſervices of his ſon to another for any length of time, or even for life.

Daughters may be ſaid to be invariably ſold. The bridegroom muſt always make his bargain with the parents of his intended bride. The latter has no choice. She is a lot in the market to be diſpoſed of to the higheſt bidder. The man, indeed, in this reſpect, has no great advantage on his ſide, as he is not allowed to ſee his intended wife until ſhe arrives in formal proceſſion at his gate. If, however, on opening the door of the chair, in which the lady is ſhut up, and of which the key has been ſent before, he ſhould diſlike his bargain, he can return her to her parents; in which caſe the articles are forfeited that conſtituted her price; and a ſum of money, in addition to them, may be demanded, not exceeding, however, the value of

theſe articles. Theſe matrimonial proceſſions, attended with pomp and muſic, are not unlike thoſe uſed by the Greeks when the bride was conducted to her huſband's houſe in a ſplendid car; only, in the former inſtance, the lady is completely inviſible to every one.

To what a degraded condition is a female reduced by this abſurd cuſtom! How little inducement, it would be ſuppoſed, ſhe could have to appear amiable or elegant, or to ſtudy her dreſs, or cramp her feet, or paint her face, knowing ſhe will be conſigned into the hands of the firſt man who will give the price that her parents have fixed upon her charms. No previous converſation is allowed to take place, no exchange of opinions or compariſon of ſentiments with regard to inclinations or diſlikes; all the little ſilent acts of attention and kindneſs, which ſo eloquently ſpeak to the heart, and demonſtrate the ſincerity of the attachment, are utterly unfelt. In a word, that ſtate of the human heart, occaſioned by the mutual affection between the ſexes, and from whence proceed the happieſt, the moſt intereſting, and ſometimes alſo, the moſt diſtreſſing moments of life, has no exiſtence in China. The man takes a wife becauſe the laws of the country direct him to do ſo, and cuſtom has made it indiſpenſable; and the woman, after marriage, continues to be the ſame piece of inanimate furniture ſhe always was in her father's houſe. She ſuffers no indignity, nor does ſhe feel any jealouſy or diſturbance (at leaſt it is prudent not to ſhew it) when her huſband brings into the ſame houſe a ſecond, or a third woman. The firſt is contented with the honour of

preſiding over, and directing the concerns of, the family within doors, and in hearing the children of the others calling her mother.

It might be urged, perhaps, on the part of the huſband, that it would be highly unreaſonable for the woman to complain. The man who purchaſed her ought to have an equal right in the ſame manner to purchaſe others. The caſe is materially different where parties are united by ſentiments of love and eſteem, or bound by promiſes or engagements; under ſuch circumſtances the introduction of a ſecond wife, under the ſame roof, could not fail to diſturb the harmony of the family, and occaſion the moſt poignant feelings of diſtreſs to the firſt. But a Chineſe wife has no ſuch feelings, nor does the huſband make any ſuch engagements.

Although polygamy be allowed by the government, as indeed it could not well happen otherwiſe where women are articles of purchaſe, yet it is an evil that, in a great degree, corrects itſelf. Nine-tenths of the community find it difficult to rear the offspring of one woman by the labour of their hands; ſuch, therefore, are neither in circumſtances, nor probably feel much inclination, to purchaſe a ſecond. The general practice would, beſides, be morally impoſſible. In a country where ſo many female infants are expoſed, and where the laws or cuſtom oblige every man to marry, any perſon taking to himſelf two wives muſt leave ſome other without one, unleſs indeed it be ſuppoſed with the author of *L'Eſprit des Loix*, what there ſeems to be no grounds for ſuppoſing, that a much greater

number of females are born than of males. But all the obſervations of this lively and ingenious author with regard to China, and particularly the inferences he draws with reſpect to climate, fall to the ground. It is not the vigour of natural propenſities, as he has ſuppoſed, that deſtroys the moral ones; it is not the effect of climate that makes it to be conſidered among theſe people "as a prodigy of virtue for a man to meet a fine woman in a retired chamber without offering violence to her,"— it is the effect of ſtudiouſly pampering the appetite, nurturing vicious notions, conſidering women as entirely ſubſervient to the pleaſures of man; and, in ſhort, by fancying thoſe pleaſures in the head, rather than feeling them in the heart, that have led them to adopt a ſentiment which does the nation ſo little credit. The climate being every where temperate, and the diet of the majority of the people moderate, I might ſay ſcanty, theſe have little influence in promoting a vehement deſire for ſexual intercourſe. It is indeed among the upper ranks only and a few wealthy merchants (whom the ſumptuary laws, prohibiting fine houſes, gardens, carriages, and every kind of external ſhew and grandeur, have encouraged ſecretly to indulge and pamper their appetite in every ſpecies of luxury and voluptuouſneſs) where a plurality of wives are to be found. Every great officer of ſtate has his haram conſiſting of ſix, eight, or ten women, according to his circumſtances and his inclination for the ſex. Every merchant alſo of Canton has his ſeraglio; but a poor man finds one wife quite ſufficient for all his wants, and the children of one woman as many, and ſometimes more, than he is able to ſupport.

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The unſociable diſtance which the law (or cuſtom, ſtronger than law) preſcribes to be obſerved between the ſexes, and the cool and indifferent manner of bargaining for a wife, are not calculated to produce numerous inſtances of criminal intercourſe. Theſe, however, ſometimes happen, and the weight of puniſhment always fall heavieſt on the woman. The huſband finds no difficulty in obtaining a ſentence of divorce, after which he may ſell her for a ſlave and thus redeem a part at leaſt of his purchaſe-money. The ſame thing happens in caſe a wife ſhould elope, inſtances of which I fancy are ſtill more rare; as if ſhe be of any faſhion, her feet are ill calculated to carry her off with ſpeed; and if a young girl ſhould chance to loſe what is uſually held to be the moſt valuable part of female reputation, ſhe is ſent to market by her parents and publicly ſold for a ſlave. In caſes of mutual diſlike, or incompatibility of temper, the woman is generally ſent back to her parents. A woman can inherit no property, but it may be left to her by will. If a widow has no children, or females only, the property deſcends to the neareſt male relation on the deceaſed huſband's ſide, but he muſt maintain the daughters until he can provide them with huſbands.

The prohibition againſt the frequent intercourſe with modeſt females, for there are public women in every great city, is not attended here with the effect of rendering the purſuit more eager; nor does it increaſe the ardour, as among the ancient Spartans who were obliged to ſteal, as it were, the embraces of their lawful wives. In China it ſeems to have the contrary effect of promoting that ſort of connexion which, being one of the

the greateſt violations of the laws of nature, ought to be conſidered among the firſt of moral crimes—a connexion that ſinks the man many degrees below the brute. The commiſſion of this deteſtable and unnatural act is attended with ſo little ſenſe of ſhame, or feelings of delicacy, that many of the firſt officers of ſtate ſeemed to make no heſitation in publicly avowing it. Each of theſe officers is conſtantly attended by his pipe-bearer, who is generally a handſome boy from fourteen to eighteen years of age, and is always well dreſſed. In pointing out to our notice the boys of each other, they made uſe of ſigns and motions, the meaning of which was too obvious to be miſinterpreted. The two Mahomedans, I obſerve, who were in China in the ninth century, have alſo taken notice of this circumſtance: and I find in the journal of Mr. Hittner, a gentleman who was in that part of the ſuite who accompanied the Britiſh Embaſſador into Tartary, in ſpeaking of the palaces of Gehol, the following remark: "Dans l'un de ces palais, parmi d'autres "chefs-d'œuvres de l'art, on voyait deux ſtatues de garçons, en "marbre, d'un excellent travail; ils avaient les pieds et les "mains liés, et leur poſition ne laiſſait point de doute que le "vice des Grecs n'eût perdu ſon horreur pour les Chinois. Un "vieil eunuque nous les fit remarquer avec un ſourire impu-"dent."

It has been remarked that this unnatural crime prevails moſt in thoſe countries where polygamy is allowed, that is to ſay, in thoſe countries where the affections of women are not conſulted, but their perſons purchaſed for gold—a remark which may lead to this concluſion, that it is rather a moral turpitude than

than a propenſity ariſing from phyſical or local cauſes. The appetite for female intercourſe ſoon becomes glutted by the facility of enjoyment; and where women, ſo circumſtanced, can only receive the embraces of their proprietors from a ſenſe of duty, their coldneſs and indifference, the neceſſary conſequence of ſuch connections, muſt alſo increaſe in the men the tendency to produce ſatiety. I think it has been obſerved that, even in Europe, where females in general have the ſuperior advantage of fixing their own value upon themſelves, it is the greateſt rakes and debauchees, who,

> " —— bred at home in idleneſs and riot,
> " Ranſack for miſtreſſes th' unwholeſome ſtews,
> " And never know the worth of virtuous love."

fly ſometimes in ſearch of freſh enjoyment in the deteſtable way here alluded to*.

I have already obſerved that the ſtate of domeſtic ſociety in China was ill calculated to promote the affection and kindneſs which children not only owe to, but really feel for, their parents in many countries of Europe. A tyrant, in fact, to command, and a ſlave to obey, are found in every family; for, where the father is a deſpot, the ſon will naturally be a ſlave; and if all the little acts of kindneſs and ſilent attentions, that create

* I ſhould not have taken notice of this odious vice, had not the truth of its exiſtence in China been doubted by ſome, and attributed by others to a wrong cauſe. Profeſſing to deſcribe the people as I found them, I muſt endeavour to draw a faithful picture, neither attempting to palliate their vices, nor to exaggerate their virtues.

mutual

mutual endearments, be wanting among the members of the ſame family, living under the ſame roof, it will be in vain to expect to find them in the enlarged ſphere of public life. In fact, they have no kind of friendly ſocieties nor meetings to talk over the tranſactions and the news of the day. Theſe can only take place in a free government. A Chineſe having finiſhed his daily employment retires to his ſolitary apartment. There are, it is true, a ſort of public houſes where the lower orders of people ſometimes reſort for their cup of tea or of *ſeau-tchoo* (a kind of ardent ſpirit diſtilled from a mixture of rice and other grain) but ſuch houſes are ſeldom, if at all, frequented for the ſake of company. They are no incitement, as thoſe are of a ſimilar kind in Europe, to jovial pleaſures or to vulgar ebriety. From this odious vice the bulk of the people are entirely free. Among the multitudes which we daily ſaw, in paſſing from one extremity of the country to the other, I do not recollect having ever met with a ſingle inſtance of a man being diſguiſed in liquor. In Canton, where the lower orders of people are employed by Europeans and neceſſarily mix with European ſeamen, intoxication is not unfrequent among the natives, but this vice forms no part of the general character of the people. Whenever a few Chineſe happen to meet together, it is generally for the purpoſe of gaming, or to eat a kettle of boiled rice, or drink a pot of tea, or ſmoke a pipe of tobacco.

The upper ranks indulge at home in the uſe of opium. Great quantities of this intoxicating drug are ſmuggled into the country, notwithſtanding all the precautions taken by the government to prohibit the importation of it; but it is too expenſive to

to be uſed by the common people. The officers of the cuſtoms are not beyond a bribe. After receiving the ſum agreed upon between the importer and themſelves they frequently become the purchaſers of the prohibited article. Moſt of the country ſhips from Bengal carry opium to China; but that of Turkey ſent from London in the China ſhips is preferred, and ſells at near double the price of the other. The governor of Canton, after deſcribing in one of his late proclamations on the ſubject the pernicious and fatal effects ariſing from the uſe of opium, obſerves, "Thus it is that foreigners by the means of a vile ex-"crementitious ſubſtance derive from this empire the moſt "ſolid profits and advantages; but that our countrymen ſhould "blindly purſue this deſtructive and enſnaring vice, even till "death is the conſequence, without being undeceived, is indeed "a fact odious and deplorable in the higheſt degree." Yet the governor of Canton very compoſedly takes his daily doſe of opium.

The young people have no occaſional aſſemblies for the purpoſe of dancing and of exerciſing themſelves in feats of activity which, in Europe, are attended with the happy effects of ſhaking off the gloom and melancholy that a life of conſtant labour or ſecluſion from ſociety is apt to promote. They have not even a fixed day of reſt ſet apart for religious worſhip. Their acts of devotion partake of the ſame ſolitary caſt that prevails in their domeſtic life. In none of the different ſects of religion, which at various times have been imported into, and adopted in China, has congregational worſhip been

inculcated, which, to that country in particular, may be conſidered as a great misfortune. For, independent of religious conſiderations, the ſabbatical inſtitution is attended with advantages of a phyſical as well as of a moral nature; and humanity is not leſs concerned than policy in conſecrating one day out of ſeven, or ſome other given number, to the ſervice of the great Creator, and to reſt from bodily labour. When the government of France, in the height of her rage for innovation, fell into the hands of atheiſtical demagogues, when her temples were polluted and every thing ſacred was invaded and profaned, the ſeventh day was conſidered as a relic of ancient ſuperſtition and the obſervance of it accordingly aboliſhed; and, about the ſame time, it became the faſhion among a certain deſcription of people to uſe ſpecious arguments againſt its continuance in our own country; as being, for example, a day for the encouragement of idleneſs, drunkenneſs, and diſſipation. Such a remark could only be applied to large cities and towns; and in crowded manufacturing towns the mechanic, who can ſubſiſt by working three days in the week, would be at no loſs in finding opportunities, were there no ſabbath day, in the courſe of the other four to commit irregularities. And who, even for the ſake of the mechanic and artificer, would wiſh to ſee the labouring peaſant deprived of one day's reſt, out of ſeven, which to him is more precious than the wages he has hardly earned the other ſix? What man, poſſeſſed of common feelings of humanity, in beholding the decent and modeſt huſbandman, accompanied by his family in their beſt attire attending the pariſh-church, does not participate in the ſmile of content which on this day particularly beams on his countenance, and

and beſpeaks the ſerenity of his mind? Having on this day diſcharged his duty to God, refreſhed his body with reſt, enjoyed the comfort of clean clothing, and exerciſed his mind in converſing with his neighbours, he returns with double vigour to his daily labour; having, as Mr. Addiſon obſerves in one of his Spectators, rubbed off the ruſt of the week.

The firſt of the new year in China, and a few ſucceeding days, are the only holidays, properly ſpeaking, that are obſerved by the working part of the community. On theſe days the pooreſt peaſant makes a point of procuring new clothing for himſelf and his family; they pay their viſits to friends and relations, interchange civilities and compliments, make and receive preſents; and the officers of government and the higher ranks give feaſts and entertainments. But even in thoſe feaſts there is nothing that bears the reſemblance of conviviality. The gueſts never partake together of the ſame ſervice of diſhes, but each has frequently his ſeparate table; ſometimes two, but never more than four, ſit at the ſame table; and their eyes muſt conſtantly be kept upon the maſter of the feaſt, to watch all his motions, and to obſerve every morſel he puts into his mouth, and every time he lifts the cup to his lips; for a Chineſe of good-breeding can neither eat nor drink without a particular ceremony, to which the gueſts muſt pay attention. If a perſon invited ſhould, from ſickneſs or any accident, be prevented from fulfilling his engagement, the portion of the dinner that was intended to be placed on his table is ſent in proceſſion to his own houſe; a cuſtom that ſtrongly points out the very little notion

they entertain of the *ſocial* pleaſures of the table. It is cuſtomary to ſend after each gueſt the remains even of his dinner. Whenever in the courſe of our journey we viſited a governor or viceroy of a province, we generally found him at the head of a range of tables, covered with a multitude of diſhes, which invariably were marched after us to the yachts. Martial, if I miſtake not, has ſome alluſion to a ſimilar cuſtom among the Romans. Each carried his own napkin to a feaſt, which being filled with the remains of the entertainment was ſent home by a ſlave; but this appears to have been done more out of compliment to the hoſt, to ſhew the great eſteem in which they held his cheer, than for the ſake of the viands; for the Romans loved conviviality.

The Chineſe alſo, like the ancient Egyptians as exemplified in the enormous meſs which Joſeph gave to little Benjamin above the reſt of his brothers, teſtify, on all occaſions, that they conſider the meaſure of a man's ſtomach to depend more upon the rank of its owner than either his bulk or appetite. The Embaſſador's allowance was at leaſt five times as great as that of any perſon in his ſuite. In this particular, however, theſe nations are not ſingular, neither in ancient nor in modern times. The kings of Sparta, and indeed every Grecian hero, were always ſuppoſed to eat twice the quantity of a common ſoldier; and the only difference with regard to our heroes of the preſent day conſiſts in their being enabled to convert quantity into quality, an advantage for which they are not a little indebted to the invention of money, into which all other articles can be commuted.

What-

Whatever may be the occaſion of bringing together a few idlers, they ſeldom part without trying their luck at ſome game of chance for which a Chineſe is never unprepared. He rarely goes abroad without a pack of cards in his pocket or a pair of dice. Both of theſe, like almoſt every thing elſe in the country, are different from ſimilar articles elſewhere. Their cards are much more numerous than ours, and their games much more complicated. Nor are they at any loſs, even if none of the party ſhould happen to be furniſhed with cards or dice; on ſuch an emergency their fingers are employed to anſwer the purpoſe, which are all that is required to play the game of *Tſoi-moi*, a game of which the lower claſs of people is particularly fond. Two perſons, ſitting directly oppoſite to each other, raiſe their hands at the ſame moment, when each calls out the number he gueſſes to be the ſum of the fingers expanded by himſelf and his adverſary. The cloſed fiſt is none, the thumb one, the thumb and forefinger two, &c. ſo that the chances lie between 0 and 5, as each muſt know the number held out by himſelf. The middling claſs of people likewiſe play at this game when they give entertainments where wine is ſerved, and the loſer is always obliged to drink off a cup of wine. At this childiſh game two perſons will ſometimes play to a very late hour, till he who has had the worſt of the game has been obliged to drink ſo much wine that he can no longer ſee either to count his own or his adverſary's fingers. I have thus particularly noticed the Chineſe *Tſoi-moi*, on account of the extraordinary coincidence between it and a game in uſe among the Romans, to which frequent alluſion is made by Cicero. In a note by Melancthon on Cicero's Offices it is thus deſcribed. "*Micare*

" *digitis*, ludi genus eſt. Sic ludentes, ſimul digitos alterius " manus quot volunt citiſſime erigunt, et ſimul ambo divinant " quot ſimul erecti ſint ; quod qui definivit, lucratus eſt : unde " acri viſu opus, et multa fide, ut cum aliquo in tenebris mices."
" *Micare digitis*, is a kind of game. Thoſe who play at it " ſtretch out, with great quickneſs, as many fingers of one hand " each, as they pleaſe, and at the ſame inſtant both gueſs how " many are held up by the two together ; and he who gueſſes " right wins the game : hence a ſharp ſight is neceſſary, and " alſo great confidence when it is played in the dark."

The Chineſe have certainly the *acer viſus*, but I doubt much whether they have faith enough in each other's integrity to play at the game of fingers in the dark, which, in the opinion of Cicero, was a ſtrong teſt of a truly honeſt man. The ſame game is ſaid to be ſtill played in Italy under the name of *Morra* *.

The officers about Yuen-min-yuen uſed to play a kind of cheſs, which appeared to me to be eſſentially different from that game as played by the Perſians, the Indians, and other oriental nations, both with regard to the lines drawn on the board, the form of the cheſs-men, and the moves, from which I ſhould rather conclude it to be a game of their own invention, than an introduction either from India or by the army of *Gengis-khan*, as ſome authors have conjectured.

* Adam's Roman Antiquities.

The

The ſpirit of gaming is ſo univerſal in moſt of the towns and cities, that in almoſt every bye-corner, groupes are to be found playing at cards or throwing dice. They are accuſed even of frequently ſtaking their wives and children on the hazard of a die. It may eaſily be conceived that where a man can ſell his children into ſlavery, there can be little remorſe, in the breaſt of a gameſter reduced to his laſt ſtake, to riſk the loſs of what the law has ſanctioned him to diſpoſe of. Yet we are very gravely aſſured by ſome of the reverend miſſionaries, that "the Chineſe are entirely ignorant of all games of "chance;" that "they can enjoy no amuſements but ſuch as are "authorized by the laws." Theſe gentlemen ſurely could not be ignorant that one of their moſt favourite ſports is cock-fighting, and that this cruel and unmanly *amuſement*, as they are pleaſed to conſider it, is full as eagerly purſued by the upper claſſes in China as, to their ſhame and diſgrace be it ſpoken, it continues to be by thoſe in a ſimilar ſituation in ſome parts of Europe. The training of quails for the ſame cruel purpoſe of butchering each other furniſhes abundance of employment for the idle and diſſipated. They have even extended their enquiries after fighting animals into the inſect tribe, in which they have diſcovered a ſpecies of *gryllus*, or locuſt, that will attack each other with ſuch ferocity as ſeldom to quit their hold without bringing away at the ſame time a limb of their antagoniſt. Theſe little creatures are fed and kept apart in bamboo cages; and the cuſtom of making them devour each other is ſo common that, during the ſummer months, ſcarcely a boy is ſeen without his cage and his graſshoppers.

I have

I have already had occaſion to obſerve that the natural diſpoſition of the Chineſe ſhould ſeem to have ſuffered almoſt a total change by the influence of the laws and maxims of government, an influence which, in this country more than elſewhere, has given a bias to the manners, ſentiments, and moral character of the people; for here every ancient proverb carries with it the force of a law. While they are by nature quiet, paſſive, and timid, the ſtate of ſociety and the abuſe of the laws by which they are governed, have rendered them indifferent, unfeeling, and even cruel, as a few examples, which among many others occurred, will but too clearly bear evidence; and as the particular inſtances, from which I have ſometimes drawn an inference, accorded with the common actions and occurrences of life, I have not heſitated to conſider them as ſo many general features in their moral character; at the ſame time I am aware that allowances ought to be made for particular ways of thinking, and for cuſtoms entirely diſſimilar from our own, which are, therefore, not exactly to be appreciated by the ſame rule as if they had occurred in our own country. The public feaſts of Sparta, in which the girls danced naked in preſence of young men, had not the ſame effect on the Lacedemonian youth, as they might be ſuppoſed to produce in Europe; nor is the delicacy of the Hindoo women offended by looking on the Lingam. Thus the Chineſe are entitled to our indulgence by the peculiar circumſtances under which they are placed, but I leave it in the breaſt of the reader to make what allowance he may think they deſerve.

The

The common practice of flogging with the bamboo has generally been conſidered by the miſſionaries in the light of a gentle correction, exerciſed by men in power over their inferiors, juſt as a father would chaſtiſe his ſon, but not as a puniſhment to which diſgrace is attached. However lightly theſe gentlemen may chuſe to treat this humiliating chaſtiſement, to which all are liable from the prime miniſter to the peaſant, it is but too often inflicted in the anger and by the caprice of a man in office, and frequently with circumſtances of unwarrantable cruelty and injuſtice. Of the truth of this remark we had ſeveral inſtances. In our return down the *Pei-ho*, the water being conſiderably ſhallower than when we firſt ſailed up this river, one of our accommodation barges got aground in the middle of the night. The air was piercing cold, and the poor creatures belonging to the veſſel were buſy until ſunriſe in the midſt of the river, uſing their endeavours to get her off. The reſt of the fleet had proceeded, and the patience of the ſuperintending officer at length being exhauſted, he ordered his ſoldiers to flog the captain and the whole crew; which was accordingly done in a moſt unmerciful manner: and this was their only reward for the uſe of the yacht, their time and labour for two days. The inſtance of degrading an officer and flogging all his people, becauſe the meat brought for our uſe was a little tainted when the temperature was at 88° in the ſhade, I have already had occaſion to notice.

Whenever the wind was contrary, or it was found neceſſary to track the veſſels againſt the ſtream, a number of men were employed for this purpoſe. The poor creatures were always

preſſed into this diſagreeable and laborious ſervice, for which they were to receive about ſixpence a day ſo long as they tracked, without any allowance being made to them for returning to the place from whence they were forced. Theſe people knowing the difficulty there was of getting others to ſupply their places, and that their ſervices would be required until ſuch ſhould be procured, generally deſerted by night, diſregarding their pay. In order to procure others, the officers diſpatched their ſoldiers to the neareſt village, taking the inhabitants by ſurprize and forcing them out of their beds to join the yachts. Scarcely a night occurred in which ſome poor wretches did not ſuffer the laſhes of the ſoldiers for attempting to eſcape, or for pleading the excuſe of old age, or infirmity. It was painful to behold the deplorable condition of ſome of theſe creatures. Several were half naked and appeared to be waſting and languiſhing for want of food. Yet the taſk of dragging along the veſſels was far from being light. Sometimes they were under the neceſſity of wading to the middle in mud; ſometimes to ſwim acroſs creeks, and immediately afterwards to expoſe their naked bodies to a ſcorching ſun; and they were always driven by a ſoldier or the lictor of ſome petty police officer carrying in his hand an enormous whip, with which he laſhed them with as little reluctance as if they had been a team of horſes.

The Dutch Embaſſy proceeded by land to the capital, in the middle of winter, when the rivers and canals were frozen. The thermometer was frequently from 8 to 16 degrees below the freezing point, and the face of the country was moſtly covered with ice and ſnow; yet they were often under the neceſ-

ſity of travelling all night; and the peaſantry, who were preſſed to carry the preſents and their baggage, notwithſtanding their heavy loads, were obliged to keep up with them as long as they could. In the courſe of two nights, Mr. Van Braam obſerves, not leſs than eight of theſe poor wretches actually expired under their burdens, through cold, hunger, fatigue, and the cruel treatment of their drivers.

It had been the practice of ſome of the gentlemen of the Britiſh embaſſy, in their return through the country, to walk during a part of the day, and to join the barges towards the hour of dinner. One day an officer of high rank took it into his head to interrupt them in their uſual walk, and for this purpoſe diſpatched after them nine or ten of his ſoldiers, who forced them in a rude manner to return to the veſſels. Our two conductors *Van* and *Chou*, coming up at the time, and being made acquainted with the circumſtance, gave to each of the ſoldiers a moſt ſevere flogging. One of theſe, who had been particularly inſolent, had his ears bored through with iron wire, and his hands bound to them for ſeveral days. The viceroy of Canton was at this time with the embaſſy, and being in rank ſuperior to the offending officer, he ordered the latter to appear before him, gave him a ſevere reprimand, and ſentenced him to receive forty ſtrokes of the bamboo as a *gentle correction*. Our two Chineſe friends were particularly preſſing that the gentlemen inſulted ſhould be preſent at the puniſhment of the officer, and it was not without difficulty they could be perſuaded that ſuch a ſcene would not afford them any gratification. It happened alſo, in the Dutch embaſſy, that an inferior officer was flogged and

diſgraced by their conductors for not having in readineſs a ſufficient number of coolies or porters to proceed with the baggage, and to carry the ſedan chairs in which they travelled.

The tyranny that men in office exerciſe over the multitude, and each other, is perfectly agreeable to the ſyſtematic ſubordination which the law has ſanctioned. But as authority is a dangerous depoſit in the hands of the wiſeſt, and leads ſometimes the moſt wary to

> " Play ſuch fantaſtic tricks before high heaven
> " As make the angels weep,"

what muſt the effects of it be when veſted in an illiterate Chineſe or rude Tartar who has no other talent or recommendation for his authority than the power alone which his office allows him to exerciſe?

Several inſtances however occurred in the courſe of our journey through the country, which ſeemed to mark the ſame unfeeling and hard-hearted diſpoſition to exiſt between perſons of equal condition in life, as in men in office over their inferiors. One of theſe afforded an extraordinary trait of inhumanity. A poor fellow at Macao, in the employ of the Britiſh factory there, fell by accident from a wall and pitched upon his ſkull. His companions took him up with very little appearance of life and, in this ſtate, were carrying him away towards the ſkirts of the town, where they were met by one of the medical gentlemen belonging to the embaſſy. He interrogated them what they meant to do with the unfortunate man, and was very coolly

coolly anſwered, they were going to bury him. Having expreſſed his aſtoniſhment that they ſhould think of putting a man into the grave before the breath was out of his body, they replied that they were of opinion he never could recover, and that if they carried him home he would only be a trouble and expence to his friends ſo long as he remained in a ſituation which rendered him unable to aſſiſt himſelf. The man, however, by the humanity and attention of Doctor Scott, was reſtored again to his family and to thoſe friends who knew ſo well to appreciate the value of his life.

The doctor however was not aware of the riſk he ran in thus exerciſing his humanity, as by a law of the country, which appears to us extraordinary, if a wounded man be taken into the protection and charge of any perſon with a view to effect his recovery, and he ſhould happen to die under his hands, the perſon into whoſe care he was laſt taken is liable to be puniſhed with death, unleſs he can produce undeniable evidence to prove how the wound was made, or that he ſurvived it forty days. The conſequence of ſuch a law is, that if a perſon ſhould happen to be mortally wounded in an affray, he is ſuffered to die in the ſtreets, from the fear (ſhould any one take charge of him) of being made reſponſible for his life.

A ſtriking inſtance of the fatal effects of ſuch a law happened at Canton lately. A fire broke out in the ſuburbs and three Chineſe, in aſſiſting to extinguiſh it, had their limbs fractured and were otherwiſe dreadfully wounded by the falling of a wall. The ſurgeon of the Engliſh factory, with all the alacrity to adminiſter

miniſter relief to ſuffering humanity, which characterizes the profeſſion in Britain, directed them to be carried to the factory, and was preparing to perform amputation, as the only poſſible means of ſaving their lives, when one of the Hong merchants having heard what was going on ran with great haſte to the place, and entreated the ſurgeon by no means to think of performing any operation upon them, but rather to ſuffer them to be taken away from the factory as ſpeedily as poſſible ; adding that, however good his intentions might be, if any one of the patients ſhould die under his hands, he would inevitably be tried for murder, and the moſt mitigated puniſhment would be that of baniſhment for life into the wilds of Tartary. The wounded Chineſe were accordingly removed privately, and, no doubt, abandoned to their fate.

The operation of ſuch a barbarous law (for ſo it appears to us) will ſerve to explain the conduct of the Chineſe in the following inſtance. In the courſe of our journey down the grand canal we had occaſion to witneſs a ſcene, which was conſidered as a remarkable example of a want of fellow-feeling. Of the number of perſons who had crowded down to the banks of the canal ſeveral had poſted themſelves upon the high projecting ſtern of an old veſſel which, unfortunately, breaking down with the weight, the whole groupe tumbled with the wreck into the canal, juſt at the moment when the yachts of the embaſſy were paſſing. Although numbers of boats were ſailing about the place, none were perceived to go to the aſſiſtance of thoſe that were ſtruggling in the water. They even ſeemed not to know that ſuch an accident had happened, nor could the ſhrieks of the boys, float-

floating on pieces of the wreck, attract their attention. One fellow was obſerved very buſily employed in picking up, with his boat-hook, the hat of a drowning man. It was in vain we endeavoured to prevail on the people of our veſſel to heave to and ſend the boat to their aſſiſtance. It is true, we were then going at the rate of ſeven miles an hour, which was the plea they made for not ſtopping. I have no doubt that ſeveral of theſe unfortunate people muſt inevitably have periſhed.

Being thus inſenſible to the ſufferings of their companions and countrymen, little compaſſion is to be expected from them towards ſtrangers. From a manuſcript journal, kept by a gentleman in the ſuite of the Dutch Embaſſador, it appears that, on their route to the capital, the writer felt an inclination to try his ſkaits on a ſheet of ice that they paſſed by the road-ſide; he was alſo urged to it by the conducting officers. Having proceeded to ſome diſtance from the ſhore, the ice gave way and he fell in up to the neck. The Chineſe, inſtead of rendering him any aſſiſtance, in the abſence of his own countrymen who had gone forwards, ran away laughing at this accident and left him to ſcramble out as well as he could, which was not effected without very great difficulty.

But, if further proofs were wanting to eſtabliſh the inſenſible and incompaſſionate character of the Chineſe, the horrid practice of infanticide, tolerated by cuſtom and encouraged by the government, can leave no doubt on this ſubject.—I venture to ſay encouraged, becauſe where the legiſlature does not interfere to prevent crimes, it certainly may be ſaid to lend them its countenance.

countenance. No law, however, allows, as I obſerve it noticed in a modern author of reputation, a father to expoſe all the daughters and the third ſon. I believe the laws of China do not ſuppoſe ſuch an unnatural crime to exiſt, and have therefore provided no puniſhment for it. It is true, they have left a child to the entire diſpoſal of the father, concluding, perhaps, that if his feelings will not prevent him from doing it an injury, no other conſideration will. Thus, though the commiſſion of infanticide be frequent in China, it is conſidered as more prudent to wink at it as an inevitable evil which natural affection will better correct than penal ſtatutes; an evil that, on the other hand, if publicly tolerated, would directly contradict the grand principle of filial piety, upon which their ſyſtem of obedience reſts, and their patriarchal form of government is founded.

It is, however, tacitly conſidered as a part of the duty of the police of Pekin to employ certain perſons to go their rounds, at an early hour in the morning, with carts, in order to pick up ſuch bodies of infants as may have been thrown out into the ſtreets in the courſe of the night. No inquiries are made, but the bodies are carried to a common pit without the city walls, into which all thoſe that may be living, as well as thoſe that are dead, are ſaid to be thrown promiſcuouſly. At this horrible pit of deſtruction the Roman Catholic miſſionaries, eſtabliſhed in Pekin, attend by turns as a part of the duties of their office, in order, as one of them expreſſed himſelf to me on this ſubject, to chuſe among them thoſe that are the moſt *lively*, to make future proſelytes, and by the adminiſtration of baptiſm to ſuch of the reſt

reſt as might be ſtill alive, *pour leur ſauver l'ame.* The Mahomedans who, at the time that their ſervices were uſeful in aſſiſting to prepare the national calendar, had a powerful influence at Court, did much better: theſe zealous bigots to a religion, whoſe leaſt diſtinguiſhing feature is that of humanity, were, however, on theſe occaſions, the means of ſaving the *lives* of all the little innocents they poſſibly could ſave from this maw of death, which was an humane act, although it might be for the purpoſe of bringing them up in the principles of their own faith. I was aſſured by one of the Chriſtian miſſionaries, with whom I had daily converſation during a reſidence of five weeks within the walls of the Emperor's palace at *Yuen-min-yuen*, and who took his turn in attending, *pour leur ſauver l'ame*, that ſuch ſcenes were ſometimes exhibited on theſe occaſions as to make the feeling mind ſhudder with horror. When I mention that dogs and ſwine are let looſe in all the narrow ſtreets of the capital, the reader may conceive what will ſometimes neceſſarily happen to the expoſed infants, before the police-carts can pick them up.

The number of children thus unnaturally and inhumanly ſlaughtered, or interred alive, in the courſe of a year, is differently ſtated by different authors, ſome making it about ten and others thirty thouſand in the whole empire. The truth, as generally happens, may probably lie about the middle. The miſſionaries, who alone poſſeſs the means of aſcertaining nearly the number that is thus ſacrificed in the capital, differ very materially in their ſtatements: taking the mean, as given by thoſe with whom we converſed on the ſubject, I ſhould conclude that

about twenty-four infants were, on an average, in Pekin, daily carried to the pit of death where the little innocents that have not yet breathed their laſt are condemned without remorſe,

> " ——— to be ſtifled in the vault,
> " To whoſe foul mouth no healthſome air breathes in,
> " And there die."

This calculation gives nine thouſand nearly for the capital alone, where it is ſuppoſed about an equal number are expoſed to that of all the other parts of the empire. Thoſe, whoſe conſtant reſidence is upon the water, and whoſe poverty, or ſuperſtition, or total inſenſibility, or whatever the cauſe may be that leads them to the perpetration of an act againſt which nature revolts, ſometimes, it is ſaid, expoſe their infants by throwing them into the canal or river with a gourd tied round their necks, to keep the head above water, and preſerve them alive until ſome humane perſon may be induced to pick them up. This hazardous experiment, in a country where humanity appears to be reduced to ſo low an ebb, can only be conſidered as an aggravation of cruelty. I have ſeen the dead body of an infant, but without any gourd, floating down the river of Canton among the boats, and the people ſeemed to take no more notice of it than if it had been the carcaſe of a dog: this, indeed, would in all probability have attracted their attention, dogs being an article of food commonly uſed by them; the miſerable half-famiſhed Chineſe, living upon the water, are glad to get any thing in the ſhape of animal food, which they will even eat in a ſtate of putrefaction. Yet, little ſcrupulous as they are with

regard to diet, I am not credulous enough to believe the information of a Swediſh author* to be correct in his ſtatement of a cure for a certain diſeaſe, though " he has no reaſon to doubt of the fact," *per τεκνοφαγιαν alternis diebus, alternis jejunio—by eating children every other day!*

A picture ſo horrid in its nature as the expoſing of infants preſents to the imagination is not to be ſurpaſſed among the moſt ſavage nations. The celebrated legiſlator of Athens made no law to puniſh parricide, becauſe he conſidered it as a crime againſt nature, too heinous ever to be committed, and that the bare ſuppoſition of ſuch a crime would have diſgraced the country. The Chineſe, in like manner, have no poſitive law againſt infanticide. The laws of the rude and warlike Spartans allowed infanticide, of which, however, the parents were not the perpetrators, nor the abettors. Nor, among theſe people, were the weak and ſickly children, deemed by the magiſtrates unlikely ever to become of uſe to themſelves, or to the public, thrown into the *αποθηκη*, or common repoſitory of the dead bodies of children, until life had been previouſly extinguiſhed, we will charitably ſuppoſe, by gentle and the leaſt painful means.

The expoſing of children, however, it muſt be allowed, was very common among the ancients. The ſtern and rigid virtues of the Romans allowed this among many other cuſtoms, that were more unnatural than amiable, and ſuch as in civilized ſocieties of the preſent day would have been conſidered among the moſt atrocious of moral crimes. A Roman father, if his in-

* Mr. Torreen.

fant was meant to be preſerved, lifted it from the ground in hi arms; if he neglected that ceremony, the child, it would ſeem, was conſidered as doomed to expoſure in the highway. Thus, in the Andrian of Terence, where, though the ſcene is not laid in Rome, Roman cuſtoms are deſcribed, " quidquid peperiſſet, " decreverunt tollere." " Let it be boy or girl they have re- " ſolved to lift it from the ground." Nor indeed is ſecret infanticide unknown in modern Europe, although it may be owing to a different principle. In ſuch caſes, the ſenſe of ſhame and the fear of encountering the ſcorn and obloquy of the world have determined the conduct of the unhappy mother, before the feelings of nature could have time to operate. For I am willing to hope that none who had ever experienced a mother's feelings and a mother's joy would conſent by any means, direct or indirect, or under any impreſſion of fear of ſhame, of ſcorn, or biting penury, to the deſtruction of a new-born babe. And I may venture to ſay with confidence, that a Britiſh cottager, however indigent, would divide his ſcanty pittance among a dozen children rather than conſent to let ſome of them periſh, that he and the reſt might fare the better, were even our laws as tacit on this ſubject as thoſe of China.

Some of the Chriſtian miſſionaries, in their accounts of this country, have attempted to palliate the unnatural act of expoſing infants, by attributing it to the midwife, who they pretend to ſay, from knowing the circumſtances of the parents, ſtrangle the child without the knowledge of the mother, telling her that the infant was ſtill-born. Others have aſcribed the practice to a belief in the metempſycoſis, or tranſmigration of ſouls into other

other bodies; that the parents, ſeeing their children muſt be doomed to poverty, think it is better at once to let the ſoul eſcape in ſearch of a more happy aſylum, than to linger in one condemned to want and wretchedneſs. No degree of ſuperſtition, one would imagine, could prevail upon a parent to reaſon thus, in that moſt anxious and critical moment when the combined efforts of hope and fear, of exquiſite joy and ſevere pain, agitate by turns the mother's breaſt. Beſides, the Chineſe trouble themſelves very little with ſuperſtitious notions, unleſs where they apprehend ſome perſonal danger. Nor is it more probable that the midwife ſhould take upon herſelf the commiſſion of a concealed and voluntary murder of an innocent and helpleſs infant, for the ſake of ſparing thoſe feelings in another, of which the ſuppoſition implies ſhe could not poſſibly partake; and if ſhe ſhould be encouraged by the father, whoſe affections for an infant child may be more gradually unfolded than the mother's, to perpetrate ſo horrid an act, we muſt allow that to the exiſtence of unnatural and murtherous parents muſt be added that of hired ruffians; ſo that Chineſe virtue would gain little by ſuch a ſuppoſition.

It is much more probable that extreme poverty, and hopeleſs indigence, the frequent experience of direful famines, and the ſcenes of miſery and calamity occaſioned by them, acting on minds whoſe affections are not very powerful, induce this unnatural crime which common cuſtom has encouraged, and which is not prohibited by poſitive law. That this is the caſe, and that future advantages are not overlooked, will appear from the circumſtance of almoſt all the infants that are expoſed being females,

males, who are the leaſt able to provide for themſelves, and the leaſt profitable to their parents; and the practice is moſt frequent in crowded cities, where not only poverty more commonly prevails, but ſo many examples daily occur of inhumanity, of ſummary puniſhments, acts of violence and cruelty, that the mind becomes callous and habituated to ſcenes that once would have ſhocked, and is at length ſcarcely ſuſceptible of the enormity of crimes.

I am afraid, however, it is but too common a practice even in the remoteſt corners of the provinces. A reſpectable French miſſionary, now in London, who was many years in *Fo-kien*, told me that he once happened to call on one of his converts juſt at the moment his wife was brought to-bed. The devoted infant was delivered to the father in order to be plunged into a jar of water that was prepared for the purpoſe. The miſſionary expoſtulated with the man on the heinouſneſs of an act that was a crime againſt God and nature. The man perſiſted that, having already more than he could ſupport, it would be a greater crime to preſerve a life condemned to want and miſery, than to take it away without pain. The miſſionary, finding that no argument of his was likely to divert him from his purpoſe, obſerved "that, as a Chriſtian, he could not refuſe him the ſatisfaction of "ſaving the infant's ſoul by baptiſm." During the ceremony, as the father held the infant in his arms he happened to fix his eyes on its face, when the miſſionary thought he perceived the feelings of nature begin to work; and he protracted the ceremony to give time for the latent ſpark of parental affection to kindle into flame. When the ceremony was ended; "Now," ſays

ſays the miſſionary, " I have done my duty in ſaving a ſoul " from periſhing." " And I," rejoined the man, " will do " mine, by ſaving its life," and hurried away with the infant to depoſit it in the boſom of its mother.

How very weak then, in reality, muſt be the boaſted filial affection of the Chineſe for their parents, when they ſcruple not to become the murderers of their own children, towards whom, according to the immutable laws of nature, the force of affection will ever be ſtronger than for thoſe whom the laws of China, in preference, have commanded to be protected and ſupported when rendered incapable of aſſiſting themſelves. The truth of this obſervation, which I believe few will call in queſtion, is a ſtrong proof that, as I have already remarked, filial piety among the Chineſe may rather be conſidered in the light of an ancient precept, carrying with it the weight of a poſitive law, than the effect of ſentiment.

It is right to mention here (what however is no palliation of the crime, though a diminution of the extent of it) a circumſtance which I do not recollect to have ſeen noticed by any author, and the truth of which I have too good authority to call in queſtion. As every corpſe great and ſmall muſt be carried to a place of burial at a conſiderable diſtance without the city, and as cuſtom requires that all funerals ſhould be conducted with very heavy expences, people in Pekin, even thoſe in comfortable circumſtances, make no heſitation in laying in baſkets ſtill-born children, or infants who may die the firſt month, knowing that they will be taken up by the police.

This

This being the caſe, we may eaſily conceive that, in a city ſaid to contain three millions of people, a great proportion of the nine thouſand, which we have ſuppoſed to be annually expoſed, may be of the above deſcription. According to the rules of political arithmetic, and ſuppoſing half of thoſe who died to be expoſed, the number would be diminiſhed to about 4000. The expence attending a Chineſe funeral is more extravagant than an European can well conceive. A rich Hong merchant at Canton is known to have kept his mother near twelve months above ground, becauſe it was not convenient for him to bury her in a manner ſuitable to his ſuppoſed wealth and ſtation.

I am informed alſo that foundling hoſpitals do exiſt in China, but that they are on a ſmall ſcale, being raiſed and ſupported by donations of individuals, and their continuance is therefore as precarious as the wealth of their charitable founders.

Theſe unfavourable features in the character of a people, whoſe natural diſpoſition is neither ferocious nor moroſe; but, on the contrary, mild, obliging, and cheerful, can be attributed only to the habits in which they have been trained, and to the heavy hand of power perpetually hanging over them. That this is actually the caſe may be inferred from the general conduct and character of thoſe vaſt multitudes who, from time to time, have emigrated to the Phillipine iſlands, Batavia, Pulo Pinang and other parts of our Eaſt Indian ſettlements. In thoſe places they are not leſs remarkable for their honeſty, than for their peaceable and induſtrious habits. To the Dutch in Batavia they are maſons,

maſons, carpenters, tailors, ſhoemakers, ſhopkeepers, bankers, and, in ſhort, every thing. Indolence and luxury are there arrived to ſuch a height that, without the aſſiſtance of the Chineſe, the Dutch would literally be in danger of ſtarving. Yet the infamous government of that place, in the year 1741, cauſed to be maſſacred, in cold blood, many thouſands of theſe harmleſs people who offered no reſiſtance; neither women nor children eſcaped the fury of theſe blood-hounds.

In theſe places it appears alſo, that their quickneſs at invention is not ſurpaſſed by accuracy of imitation, for which they have always been accounted remarkably expert in their own country. Man is, by nature, a hoarding animal; and his endeavours to accumulate property will be proportioned to the ſecurity and ſtability which the laws afford for the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of that property. In China, the laws regarding property are inſufficient to give it that ſecurity: hence the talent of invention is there ſeldom exerciſed beyond ſuggeſting the means of providing for the firſt neceſſities and the moſt preſſing wants. A man, indeed, is afraid here to be conſidered as wealthy, well knowing that ſome of the rapacious officers of the ſtate would find legal reaſons to extort his riches from him.

The exterior deportment of every claſs in China is uncommonly decent, and all their manners mild and engaging; but even theſe among perſons of any rank are conſidered as objects worthy the interference of the legiſlature; hence it follows that they are ceremonious without ſincerity, ſtudious of the forms only of politeneſs

without either the eaſe or elegance of good-breeding. An inferior makes a ſham attempt to fall on his knees before his ſuperior, and the latter affects a ſlight motion to raiſe him. A common ſalutation has its mode preſcribed by the court of ceremonies; and any neglect or default in a plebean towards his ſuperior is puniſhable by corporal chaſtiſement, and in men in office by degradation or ſuſpenſion. In making thus the exterior and public manners of the people a concern of the legiſlature, ſociety in many reſpects was conſiderably benefited. Between equals, and among the lower orders of people, abuſive language is very unuſual, and they ſeldom proceed to blows. If a quarrel ſhould be carried to this extremity, the conteſt is rarely attended with more ſerious conſequences than the loſs of the long lock of hair growing from the crown of the head, or the rent of their clothes. The act of drawing a ſword, or preſenting a piſtol, is ſufficient to frighten a common Chineſe into convulſions; and their warriors ſhew but few ſymptoms of bravery. The Chineſe may certainly be conſidered among the moſt timid people on the face of the earth; they ſeem to poſſeſs neither perſonal courage, nor the leaſt preſence of mind in dangers or difficulties; conſequences that are derived probably from the influence of the moral over the phyſical character. Yet there is perhaps no country where acts of ſuicide occur more frequently than in China, among the women as well as the men: ſuch acts being marked with no diſgrace, are not held in any abhorrence. The government, indeed, ſhould ſeem to hold out encouragement to ſuicide, by a very common practice of mitigating the ſentence of death, in allowing the criminal to be his own executioner.

The

The late viceroy of Canton, about two years ago, put an end to his life by ſwallowing his ſtone ſnuff-bottle, which ſtuck in the oeſophagus; and he died in excruciating agonies.

In a government, where every man is liable to be made a ſlave, where every man is ſubject to be flogged with the bamboo at the nod of one of the loweſt rank of thoſe in office, and where he is compelled to kiſs the rod that beats him or, which amounts to the ſame thing, to thank the tyrant on his knees for the trouble he has taken to correct his morals, high notions of honour and dignified ſentiments are not to be expected. Where the maxims of the government commanding, and the opinions of the people agreeing, that corporal puniſhment may be inflicted, on the ground of a favour conferred upon the perſon puniſhed, a principle of humiliation is admitted that is well calculated to exclude and obliterate every notion of the dignity of human nature.

A ſlave, in fact, cannot be diſhonoured. The condition itſelf of being dependent upon and ſubject to the caprice of another, without the privilege of appeal, is ſuch a degraded ſtate of the human ſpecies, that thoſe who are unfortunately reduced to it have no further ignominy or ſenſe of ſhame to undergo. The vices of ſuch a condition are innumerable, and they appear on all occaſions among this people celebrated (rather undeſervedly I think) for their poliſhed manners and civilized government. A Chineſe merchant will cheat, whenever an opportunity offers him the means, becauſe he is conſidered to be

incapable of acting honeſtly; a Chineſe peaſant will ſteal whenever he can do it without danger of being detected, becauſe the puniſhment is only the bamboo, to which he is daily liable; and a Chineſe prince, or a prime miniſter, will extort the property of the ſubject, and apply it to his private uſe, whenever he thinks he can do it with impunity. The only check upon the rapacity of men in power is the influence of fear, ariſing from the poſſibility of detection: the love of honour, the dread of ſhame, and a ſenſe of juſtice, ſeem to be equally unfelt by the majority of men in office.

It would be needleſs to multiply inſtances to thoſe already on record of the refined knavery diſplayed by Chineſe merchants in their dealings with Europeans, or the tricks that they play off in their tranſactions with one another. They are well known to moſt nations, and are proverbial in their own. A merchant with them is conſidered as the loweſt character in the country, as a man that will cheat if he can, and whoſe trade it is to create and then ſupply artificial wants. To this general character, which public opinion has moſt probably made to be what it is, an exception is due to thoſe merchants who, acting under the immediate ſanction of the government, have always been remarked for their liberality and accuracy in their dealings with Europeans trading to Canton. Theſe men who are ſtyled the *Hong* merchants, in diſtinction to a common merchant whom they call *mai-mai-gin*, *a buying and ſelling man*, might not unjuſtly be compared with the moſt eminent of the mercantile claſs in England.

But

But as traders in general are degraded in all the ſtate maxims, and conſequently in public opinion, it is not ſurpriſing they ſhould attach ſo little reſpect to the character of foreign merchants trading to their ports, eſpecially as ſeveral knaviſh tricks have been practiſed upon them, in ſpite of all their acuteneſs and precaution. The gaudy watches of indifferent workmanſhip, fabricated purpoſely for the China market and once in univerſal demand, are now ſcarcely aſked for. One gentleman in the Honourable Eaſt India Company's employ took it into his head that cuckoo clocks might prove a ſaleable article in China, and accordingly laid in a large aſſortment, which more than anſwered his moſt ſanguine expectations. But as theſe wooden machines were conſtructed for ſale only, and not for uſe, the cuckoo clocks became all mute long before the ſecond arrival of this gentleman with another cargo. His clocks were now not only unſaleable, but the former purchaſers threatened to return theirs upon his hands, which would certainly have been done, had not a thought entered his head, that not only pacified his former cuſtomers but procured him alſo other purchaſers for his ſecond cargo: he convinced them by undeniable authorities, that the cuckoo was a very odd kind of bird which ſung only at certain ſeaſons of the year, and aſſured them that whenever the proper time arrived, all the cuckoos they had purchaſed would once again "tune their melodious throats." After this it would only be fair to allow the Chineſe ſometimes to trick the European purchaſer with a wooden ham inſtead of a real one.

But as ſomething more honourable might be expected in a prince of the blood, a grandſon of the Emperor, I ſhall juſt mention

mention one anecdote that happened during my abode in the palace of *Yuén-min-yuen*. This gentleman, then about five-and-twenty years of age, having no oſtenſible employment, came almoſt daily to the hall of audience, where we were arranging the preſents for the Emperor. He had frequently deſired to look at a gold time-piece which I wore in my pocket: one morning I received a meſſage from him, by one of the miſſionaries, to know if I would ſell it and for what price. I explained to the miſſionary that, being a preſent from a friend and a token of remembrance, I could not willingly part with it, but that I would endeavour to procure him one equally good from our artificers who I thought had ſuch articles for ſale. I ſoon diſcovered, however, that his Royal Highneſs had already been with theſe people, but did not like their prices. The following morning a ſecond miſſionary came to me, bringing a preſent from the prince conſiſting of about half a pound of common tea, a ſilk purſe, and a few trumpery trinkets, hinting at the ſame time, that he was expected to carry back the watch in return as an equivalent. I requeſted the miſſionary immediately to take back the princely preſent, which he did with conſiderable reluctance, dreading his Highneſs's diſpleaſure. The poor fellow happened to have a gold watch about him, which he was deſired to ſhew; and the ſame day he had a viſit from one of the prince's domeſtics to ſay, that his maſter would do him the honour to accept his watch; which he was not only under the neceſſity of ſending, but was obliged to thank him, on his knees, for this extraordinary mark of diſtinction. He told me, moreover, that this ſame gentleman had at leaſt a dozen watches which had been procured in the ſame honourable way.

In

In the liſt of preſents carried by the late Dutch Embaſſador were two grand pieces of machinery, that formerly were a part of the curious muſeum of the ingenious Mr. Coxe. In the courſe of the long journey from Canton to Pekin they had ſuffered ſome ſlight damage. On leaving the capital they diſcovered, through one of the miſſionaries, that while theſe pieces were under repair, the prime miniſter *Ho-tchang-tong* had ſubſtituted two others of a very inferior and common ſort to complete the liſt, reſerving the two grand pieces of clockwork for himſelf, which, at ſome future period, he would, perhaps, take the merit of preſenting to the Emperor in his own name.

Theſe examples but too clearly illuſtrate the great defect in the boaſted moral character of the Chineſe. But the fault, as I before obſerved, ſeems to be more in the ſyſtem of government than in the nature and diſpoſition of the people. The acceſſion of a foreign power to the throne, by adopting the language, the laws, and the cuſtoms of the conquered, has preſerved with the forms all the abuſes of the ancient government. The character of the governors may differ a little, but that of the governed remains unchanged. The Tartars, by aſſuming the dreſs, the manners, and the habits of the Chineſe, by being originally deſcended from the ſame ſtock, and by a great reſemblance of features, are ſcarcely diſtinguiſhable from them in their external appearance. And if any phyſical difference exiſt, it ſeems to be in ſtature only, which may have ariſen from local cauſes. The Chineſe are rather taller, and of a more ſlender and delicate form than the Tartars, who are in general

ſhort, thick, and robuſt. The ſmall eye, elliptical at the end next to the noſe, is a predominating feature in the caſt of both the Tartar and the Chineſe countenance, and they have both the ſame high cheek bones and pointed chins, which, with the cuſtom of ſhaving off the hair, gives to the head the ſhape of an inverted cone, remarkable enough in ſome ſubjects, but neither ſo general, nor ſo ſingular, as to warrant their being conſidered among the *monſters* in nature, *Homo monſtroſus*, *macrocephalus*, *capite conico*, *Chinenſis* *. The head of our worthy conductor *Van-ta-gin*, who was a real Chineſe, had nothing in its ſhape different from that of an European, except the eye. The portrait of this gentleman, drawn by Mr. Hickey, is ſo ſtrong a likeneſs, and he was deſervedly ſo great a favourite of every Engliſhman in the train of the Britiſh Embaſſador, that I am happy in having an opportunity of placing it at the head of this work.

The natural colour both of the Chineſe and Tartars ſeems to be that tint between a fair and dark complexion, which we diſtinguiſh by the word *brunet* or *brunette*; and the ſhades of this complexion are deeper, or lighter, according as they have been more or leſs expoſed to the influence of the climate. The women of the lower claſs, who labour in the fields or who dwell in veſſels, are almoſt invariably coarſe, ill-featured, and of a deep brown complexion, like that of the Hottentot. But this we find to be the caſe among the poor of almoſt every nation. Hard labour, ſcanty fare, and early and frequent parturi-

* Linn. Syſtema Naturæ.

tion,

tion, ſoon wither the delicate buds of beauty. The ſprightlineſs and expreſſion of the features, as well as the colour of the ſkin, which diſtinguiſh the higher ranks from the vulgar, are the effects of eaſe and education. We ſaw women in China, though very few, that might paſs for beauties even in Europe. The Malay features however prevail in moſt; a ſmall black or dark brown eye, a ſhort rounded noſe, generally a little flattened, lips conſiderably thicker than in Europeans, and black hair, are univerſal.

The Man-tchoo Tartars would appear to be compoſed of a mixed race: among theſe we obſerved ſeveral, both men and women, that were extremely fair and of florid complexions: ſome had light blue eyes, ſtreight or aquiline noſes, brown hair, immenſe buſhy beards, and had much more the appearance of Greeks than of Tartars. It is certainly not improbable that the Greeks of Sogdiana, whoſe deſcendants muſt have blended with the weſtern Tartars and with whom the Man-tchoos were connected, may have communicated this caſt of countenance. *Tchien-Lung*, whoſe noſe was ſomewhat aquiline and complexion florid, uſed to boaſt of his deſcent from *Gengis-khan*: theſe, however, are exceptions to the general character, which is evidently the ſame as that of the Chineſe.

But although their appearance and manners are externally the ſame, a cloſer acquaintance ſoon diſcovers that in diſpoſition they are widely different. Thoſe who are better pleaſed with a blunt ſincerity bordering on rudeneſs than a ſtudied complaiſance approaching to ſervility; who may think it better to be

robbed openly than cheated civilly, will be apt to give the preference to the Tartar character. Yet thoſe Tartars of diſtinction, who fill ſome of the higher ſituations in the ſtate, ſoon looſe their native roughneſs and are ſcarcely diſtinguiſhable in their manners and demeanour from the Chineſe.

The eaſe, politeneſs, and dignified carriage of the old viceroy of *Pe-tche-lee*, who was a Man-tchoo, could not be exceeded by the moſt practiſed courtier in modern Europe: the attention he ſhewed to every thing that concerned the embaſſy, the unaffected manner in which he received and entertained us at *Tien-ſing*; the kindneſs and condeſcenſion with which he gave his orders to the inferior officers and to his domeſtics, placed him in a very amiable point of view. He was a very fine old man of ſeventy-eight years of age, of low ſtature, with ſmall ſparkling eyes, a benign aſpect, a long ſilver beard, and the whole of his appearance calm, venerable, and dignified. The manners of *Sun-ta-gin*, a relation of the Emperor and one of the ſix miniſters of ſtate, were no leſs dignified, eaſy, and engaging; and *Chung-ta-gin*, the new viceroy of Canton, was a plain, unaſſuming, and good-natured man. The prime miniſter *Ho-chang-tong*, the little Tartar legate, and the ex-viceroy of Canton, were the only perſons of rank among the many we had occaſion to converſe with that diſcovered the leaſt ill-humour, diſtant hauteur, and want of complaiſance. All the reſt with whom we had any concern, whether Tartars or Chineſe, when in our private ſociety, were eaſy, affable, and familiar, extremely good-humoured, loquacious, communicative. It was in public only, and towards each other, that they aſſumed their ceremonious gravity,

gravity, and practiſed all the tricks of demeanour which cuſtom requires of them.

The general character, however, of the nation is a ſtrange compound of pride and meanneſs, of affected gravity and real frivolouſneſs, of refined civility and groſs indelicacy. With an appearance of great ſimplicity and openneſs in converſation, they practiſe a degree of art and cunning againſt which an European is but ill prepared. Their manner of introducing the ſubject of the court ceremonies in converſation with the Embaſſador is no bad ſpecimen of their ſly addreſs in managing matters of this ſort. Some of them obſerved, by mere accident as it were, how curious it was to ſee the different modes of dreſs that prevailed among different nations: this naturally brought on a compariſon between theirs and ours, the latter of which they pretended to examine with critical attention. After a good deal of circumlocutory obſervations, they thought their own entitled to the preference, being more convenient, on account of its being made wide and looſe and free from tight ligatures; whereas ours muſt be exceedingly uneaſy and troubleſome in any other poſture than that of ſtanding upright; and particularly ſo in making the genuflections and proſtrations which were cuſtomary and indeed neceſſary to be performed by all perſons whenever the Emperor appeared in public. No notice being taken of this broad hint, ſo artfully introduced, they proceeded to compare their wide petticoats with our breeches, and to contraſt the play and freedom of their knee-joints with the obſtruction that our knee-buckles and garters muſt neceſſarily occaſion. This brought them directly to the point, and they finiſhed by

recommending, in the warmth of their friendſhip, that we ſhould diſencumber ourſelves of our breeches, as they would certainly be inconvenient to appear in at court.

Of perſeverance in negociation, or more properly ſpeaking, *in driving a bargain*, the Tartar legate gave no bad ſpecimen of his talent. Having in vain practiſed every art to obtain from the Embaſſador an unconditional compliance with the court ceremony, he was ſent at length by the Prime Miniſter to inform him, that the important point was finally decided and that the Engliſh mode was to be adopted; but, he obſerved, that as it was not the cuſtom of China to kiſs the Emperor's hand, he had ſomething to propoſe to which there could be no objection, and which was that, in lieu of that part of the Engliſh ceremony, he ſhould put the ſecond knee upon the ground and, inſtead of bending one knee, to kneel on both. In fact, they negociate on the moſt trifling point with as much caution and preciſeneſs, as if they were forming a treaty of peace, and with more addreſs than ſome treaties of peace have been negociated.

As a direct refuſal to any requeſt would betray a want of good breeding, every propoſal finds their immediate acquieſcence; they promiſe without heſitation, but generally diſappoint by the invention of ſome ſly pretence or plauſible objection. They have no proper ſenſe of the obligations of truth. So little ſcrupulous indeed are they with regard to veracity, that they will aſſert and contradict without bluſhing, as it may beſt ſuit the purpoſe of the moment.

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The vanity of an uſurped national ſuperiority and a high notion of ſelf-importance never forſake them on any occaſion. Thoſe advantages in others which they cannot avoid feeling, they will affect not to ſee. And although they are reduced to the neceſſity of employing foreigners to regulate their calendar and keep their clocks in order, although they are in the habit of receiving yearly various ſpecimens of art and ingenuity from Europe, yet they pertinaciouſly affect to conſider all the nations of the earth as barbarians in compariſon of themſelves. A Chineſe merchant of Canton, who, from the frequent opportunities of ſeeing Engliſh ſhips, was not inſenſible of their advantages over thoſe of his own nation which traded to Batavia and other diſtant ports, reſolved, and actually began, to conſtruct a veſſel according to an Engliſh model; but the *Hoopoo* or collector of the cuſtoms being apprized of it, not only obliged him to relinquiſh his project but fined him in a heavy penalty for preſuming to adopt the modes of a barbarous nation. So great is their national conceit that not a ſingle article imported into the country, as I have elſewhere obſerved, retains its name. Not a nation, nor perſon, nor object, that does not receive a Chineſe appellation: ſo that their language, though poor, is pure.

The expreſſions made uſe of in ſalutation, by different nations, may perhaps be conſidered as deriving their origin from features of national character. *Lau-ye*, *Old ſir*, is a title of reſpect, with which the firſt officers of ſtate may be addreſſed, becauſe the maxims of government have inculcated the doctrine of obedience, reſpect, and protection to old age. The common ſalutation among the lower orders of people in ſome of the

ſouthern provinces is *Ya fan, Have you eaten your rice?* the greateſt happineſs that the common claſs of people in China can hope to enjoy conſiſting in their having a ſufficiency of rice. Thus alſo the Dutch, who are conſidered as great eaters, have a morning ſalutation which is common among all ranks, *Smaakelyk eeten! May you eat a hearty dinner!* Another univerſal ſalutation among this people is, *Hoe vaart uwe? How do you ſail?* adopted no doubt in the early periods of the Republic, when they were all navigators and fiſhermen. The uſual ſalutation at Cairo is, How do you ſweat? a dry hot ſkin being a ſure indication of a deſtructive ephemeral fever. I think ſome author has obſerved, in contraſting the haughty Spaniard with the frivolous Frenchman, that the proud ſteady gait and inflexible ſolemnity of the former were expreſſed in his mode of ſalutation, *Come eſta? How do you ſtand?* whilſt the *Comment vous portez vous? How do you carry yourſelf?* was equally expreſſive of the gay motion and inceſſant action of the latter.

The Chineſe are ſo ceremonious among themſelves, and ſo punctilious with regard to etiquette, that the omiſſion of the moſt minute point eſtabliſhed by the court of ceremonies is conſidered as a criminal offence. Viſiting by tickets, which with us is a faſhion of modern refinement, has been a common practice in China ſome thouſand years; but the rank of a Chineſe viſitor is immediately aſcertained by the ſize, colour, and ornaments of his ticket, which alſo varies in all theſe points according to the rank of the perſon viſited. The old Viceroy of *Pe-tche-lee's* ticket to the Embaſſador contained as much crimſon-coloured paper as would be ſufficient to cover the walls of a moderate-ſized room.

CHAP. VII.

Government—Laws—Tenures of Land and Taxes—Revenues —Civil and Military Ranks, and Eſtabliſhments.

Opinions on which the Executive Authority is grounded.—Principle on which an Emperor of China ſeldom appears in public.—The Cenſorate.—Public Departments.—Laws.—Scale of Crimes and Puniſhments.—Laws regarding Homicide.—Curious Law Caſe.—No Appeal from Civil Suits.—Defects in the Executive Government.—Duty of Obedience and Power of perſonal Correction.—Ruſſia and China compared.—Fate of the Prime Miniſter Ho-chang-tong.*—Yearly Calendar and Pekin Gazette, engines of Government.—Freedom of the Preſs.—Duration of the Government attempted to be explained.—Precautions of Government to prevent Inſurrections.—Taxes and Revenues.—Civil and Military Eſtabliſhments.—Chineſe Army, its Numbers and Appointments.—Conduct of the Tartar Government at the Conqueſt.—Impolitic Change of late Years, and the probable Conſequences of it.*

THE late period at which the nations of Europe became firſt acquainted with the exiſtence even of that vaſt extent of country comprehended under the name of China, the difficulties of acceſs to any part of it when known, the peculiar nature of the language which, as I have endeavoured to prove, has no relation with any other either ancient or modern, the extreme jealouſy of the government towards foreigners, and the contempt in which they were held by the loweſt of the people, may

ſerve,

ſerve, among other cauſes, to account for the very limited and imperfect knowledge we have hitherto obtained of the real hiſtory of this extraordinary empire: for their records, it ſeems, are by no means deficient. For two centuries at leaſt before the Chriſtian era, down to the preſent time, the tranſactions of each reign are amply detailed without any interruption. They have even preſerved collections of copper coins, forming a regular ſeries of the different Emperors that have filled the throne of China for the laſt two thouſand years. Such a collection, though not quite complete, Sir George Staunton brought with him to England.

Before this time, when China conſiſted of a number of petty ſtates or principalities, the annals of the country are ſaid to abound with recitals of wars and battles and bloodſhed, like thoſe of every other part of the world But, in proportion as the number of theſe diſtinct kingdoms diminiſhed, till at length they were all melted and amalgamated into one great empire, the deſtruction of the human race by human means abated, and the government, ſince that time, has been leſs interrupted by foreign war, or domeſtic commotion, than any other that hiſtory has made known. But whether this deſirable ſtate of public tranquillity may have been brought about by the peculiar nature of the government being adapted to the genius and habits of the people, which in the opinion of Ariſtotle is the beſt of all poſſible governments, or rather by conſtraining and ſubduing the genius and habits of the people to the views and maxims of the government, is a queſtion that may admit of ſome diſpute. At the preſent day, however, it is ſufficiently evident, that the

the heavy hand of power has completely overcome and moulded to its own ſhape the phyſical character of the people, and that their moral ſentiments and actions are ſwayed by the opinions, and almoſt under the entire dominion, of the government.

Theſe opinions, to which it owes ſo much of its ſtability, are grounded on a principle of authority which, according to maxims induſtriouſly inculcated and now completely eſtabliſhed in the minds of the people, is conſidered as the natural and unalienable right of the parent over his children; an authority that is not ſuppoſed to ceaſe at any given period of life or years, but to extend, and to be maintained with undiminiſhed and uncontrouled ſway, until the death of one of the parties diſſolves the obligation. The Emperor being conſidered as the common father of his people is accordingly inveſted with the exerciſe of the ſame authority over them, as the father of a family exerts on thoſe of his particular houſehold. In this ſenſe he takes the title of the *Great Father;* and by his being thus placed above any earthly controul, he is ſuppoſed to be alſo above earthly deſcent, and therefore, as a natural conſequence, he ſometimes ſtyles himſelf the *ſole ruler of the world* and the *Son of Heaven.* But that no inconſiſtency might appear in the grand fabric of filial obedience the Emperor, with ſolemn ceremony at the commencement of every new year, makes his proſtrations before the Empreſs Dowager, and on the ſame day he demands a repetition of the ſame homage from all his great officers of ſtate. Conformable to this ſyſtem, founded entirely on parental authority, the governor of a province is conſidered as the father of that province; of a city, the father of that city; and the head of

of any office or department is ſuppoſed to preſide over it with the ſame authority, intereſt, and affection, as the father of a family ſuperintends and manages the concerns of domeſtic life.

It is greatly to be lamented that a ſyſtem of government, ſo plauſible in theory, ſhould be liable to ſo many abuſes in practice; and that this fatherly care and affection in the governors, and filial duty and reverence in the governed would, with much more propriety, be expreſſed by the terms of tyranny, oppreſſion, and injuſtice in the one, and by fear, deceit, and diſobedience in the other.

The firſt grand maxim on which the Emperor acts is, ſeldom to appear before the public, a maxim whoſe origin would be difficultly traced to any principle of affection or ſolicitude for his children; much more eaſily explained as the offspring of ſuſpicion. The tyrant who may be conſcious of having committed, or aſſented to, acts of cruelty and oppreſſion, muſt feel a reluctance to mix with thoſe who may have ſmarted under the laſh of his power, naturally concluding that ſome ſecret hand may be led, by a ſingle blow, to avenge his own wrongs, or thoſe of his fellow ſubjects. The principle, however, upon which the Emperor of China ſeldom ſhews himſelf in public, and then only in the height of ſplendor and magnificence, ſeems to be eſtabliſhed on a policy of a very different kind to that of ſelf-preſervation. A power that acts in ſecret, and whoſe influence is felt near and remote at the ſame moment, makes a ſtronger impreſſion on the mind, and is regarded with more dread

dread and awful reſpect, than if the agent was always viſible and familiar to the eye of every one. The prieſts of the Eleuſinian myſteries were well acquainted with this feature of the human character, which is ſtronger in proportion as the reaſoning faculties are leſs improved, and which required the enlightened mind of a Socrates to be able to diſregard the terror they inſpired among the vulgar. Thus alſo *Deiŏces*, as Heredotus informs us, when once eſtabliſhed as king in Ecbatana, would ſuffer none of the people, for whom before he was the common advocate, to be now admitted to his preſence, concluding that all thoſe who were debarred from ſeeing him, would eaſily be perſuaded that his nature, by being created king, was transformed into ſomething much ſuperior to theirs. A frequent acceſs indeed to men of rank and power and talents, a familiar and unreſtrained intercourſe with them, and a daily obſervance of their ordinary actions and engagements in the concerns of life, have a tendency very much to diminiſh that reverence and reſpect which public opinion had been willing to allow them. It was juſtly obſerved by the great Condé, that no man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre.

Conſiderations of this kind, rather than any dread of his ſubjects, may probably have ſuggeſted the cuſtom which prohibits an Emperor of China from making his perſon too familiar to the multitude, and which requires that he ſhould exhibit himſelf only on particular occaſions, arrayed in pomp and magnificence, and at the head of his whole court, conſiſting of an aſſemblage of many thouſand officers of ſtate, the agents of his

will, all ready, at the word of command, to proſtrate themſelves at his feet.

The power of the ſovereign is abſolute; but the patriarchal ſyſtem, making it a point of indiſpenſable duty for a ſon to bring offerings to the ſpirit of his deceaſed parent in the moſt public manner, operates as ſome check upon the exerciſe of this power. By this civil inſtitution, the duties of which are obſerved with more than a religious ſtrictneſs, he is conſtantly put in mind that the memory of his private conduct, as well as of his public acts, will long ſurvive his natural life; that his name will, at certain times in every year, be pronounced with a kind of ſacred and reverential awe, from one extremity of the extenſive empire to the other, provided he may have filled his ſtation to the ſatisfaction of his ſubjects; and that, on the contrary, public execrations will reſcue from oblivion any arbitrary act of injuſtice and oppreſſion, of which he may have been guilty. It may alſo operate as a motive for being nice and circumſpect in the nomination of a ſucceſſor, which the law has left entirely to his choice.

The conſideration, however, of poſthumous fame, would operate only as a ſlender reſtraint on the caprices of a tyrant, as the hiſtory of this, as well as other countries, furniſhes abundant examples. It has, therefore, been thought neceſſary to add another, and perhaps a more effectual check, to curb any diſpoſition to licentiouſneſs or tyranny that might ariſe in the breaſt of the monarch. This is the appointment of the cenſorate,

rate, an office filled by two perſons, who have the power of remonſtrating freely againſt any illegal or unconſtitutional act about to be committed, or ſanctioned by the Emperor. And although it may well be ſuppoſed, that theſe men are extremely cautious in the exerciſe of the power delegated to them, by virtue of their office, and in the diſcharge of this diſagreeable part of their duty, yet they have another taſk to perform, on which their own poſthumous fame is not leſs involved than that of their maſter, and in the execution of which they run leſs riſk of giving offence. They are the hiſtoriographers of the empire; or, more correctly ſpeaking, the biographers of the Emperor. Their employment, in this capacity, conſiſts chiefly in collecting the ſentiments of the monarch, in recording his ſpeeches and memorable ſayings, and in noting down the moſt prominent of his private actions, and the remarkable occurrences of his reign. Theſe records are lodged in a large cheſt, which is kept in that part of the palace where the tribunals of government are held, and which is ſuppoſed not to be opened until the deceaſe of the Emperor; and, if any thing material to the injury of his character and reputation is found to be recorded, the publication of it is delayed, out of delicacy to his family, till two or three generations have paſſed away, and ſometimes till the expiration of the dynaſty; by this indulgence they pretend, that a more faithful relation is likely to be obtained, in which neither fear nor flattery could have operated to diſguiſe the truth.

An inſtitution, ſo remarkable and ſingular in its kind in an arbitrary government, could not fail to carry with it a very

powerful influence upon the deciſions of the monarch, and to make him ſolicitous to act, on all occaſions, in ſuch a manner, as would be moſt likely to ſecure a good name, and to tranſmit his character unſullied and ſacred to poſterity. The records of their hiſtory are ſaid to mention a ſtory of an Emperor, of the dynaſty or family of *Tang*, who, from a conſciouſneſs of having, in ſeveral inſtances, tranſgreſſed the bounds of his authority, was determined to take a peep into the hiſtorical cheſt, where he knew he ſhould find all his actions recorded. Having made uſe of a variety of arguments, in order to convince the two cenſors that there could be nothing improper in the ſtep he was about to take, as, among other things, he aſſured them, he was actuated with the deſire only of being made acquainted with his greateſt faults, as the firſt ſtep to amendment, one of theſe gentlemen is ſaid to have anſwered him very nobly, to this effect: "It is true your Majeſty has committed a "number of errors, and it has been the painful duty of our "employment to take notice of them; a duty," continued he, "which further obliges us to inform poſterity of the converſation which your Majeſty has this day, very improperly, "held with us."

To aſſiſt the Emperor in the weighty affairs of ſtate, and in the arduous taſk of governing an empire of ſo great an extent, and ſuch immenſe population, the conſtitution has aſſigned him two councils, one ordinary, and the other extraordinary; the ordinary council is compoſed of his principal miniſters, under the name of Collao, of which there are ſix. The extraordinary council conſiſts entirely of the princes of the blood.

For

For the adminiſtration of the affairs of government, there are ſix boards or departments, conſiſting of,

1. The Court of Appointments to vacancies in the offices of government, being compoſed of the miniſter and learned men, qualified to judge of the merits of candidates.

2. The Court of Finance.

3. The Court of Ceremonies, preſiding over the direction of ancient cuſtoms, and treating with foreign Embaſſadors.

4. The Court for regulating military affairs.

5. The Tribunal of Juſtice.

6. The Board of Works.

Theſe public functionaries reſolve upon, recommend, and report to the Emperor, all matters belonging to their ſeparate juriſdictions, who, with the advice of his ordinary and, if conſidered to be neceſſary, of his extraordinary council, affirms, amends, or rejects their decrees. For this purpoſe, the late Emperor never omitted to give regular audience in the great hall of the palace every morning at the hours of four or five o'clock. Subordinate to theſe ſupreme courts held in the capital, are others of ſimilar conſtitution eſtabliſhed in the different provinces

vinces and great cities of the empire, each of which correſponds with its principal in Pekin.

It would far exceed the limits of the preſent work, were I to enter into a detail of their code of laws, which indeed I am not ſufficiently prepared to do. They are publiſhed for the uſe of the ſubject, in the plaineſt characters that the language will admit, making ſixteen ſmall volumes, a copy of which is now in England; and I am encouraged to hold out a reaſonable hope, that this compendium of the laws of China may, ere long, appear in an able and faithful Engliſh tranſlation, which will explain, more than all the volumes that have hitherto been written on the ſubject of China, in what manner a maſs of people, more than the double of that which is found in all Europe, has been kept together through ſo many ages in one bond of union. This work * on the laws of China, for perſpicuity and method, may juſtly be compared with Blackſtone's Commentaries on the Laws of England. It not only contains the laws arranged under their reſpective heads, but to every law is added a ſhort commentary and a caſe.

I have been aſſured, on the beſt authority, that the laws of China define, in the moſt diſtinct and perſpicuous manner, almoſt every ſhade of criminal offences, and the puniſhment awarded to each crime: that the greateſt care appears to have been taken in conſtructing this ſcale of crimes and puniſhments; that they are very far from being ſanguinary: and that if

* It is called the *Ta tchin Leu-Lee*, the laws and inſtitutes under the dynaſty *Ta-tchin*, which is the name aſſumed by the preſent family on the throne.

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the practice was equal to the theory, few nations could boaſt of a more mild, and, at the ſame time, a more efficacious diſpenſation of juſtice. Of all the deſpotic governments exiſting, there is certainly none where the life of man is held ſo ſacred as in the laws of China. A murder is never overlooked, except in the horrid practice of expoſing infants: nor dares the Emperor himſelf, all-powerful as he is, to take away the life of the meaneſt ſubject, without the formality at leaſt of a regular proceſs, though, as will be ſeen in the caſe of the late prime miniſter of *Kien-Long*, the chance of eſcaping muſt be very ſlender, where he himſelf becomes the accuſer. So tenaciouſly however do they adhere to that ſolemn declaration of God delivered to Noah—" At the hand of every man's brother will I " require the life of man. Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by " man ſhall his blood be ſhed,"—that the good intention is oftentimes defeated by requiring, as I have elſewhere obſerved, from the perſon laſt ſeen in company with one who may have received a mortal wound, or who may have died ſuddenly, a circumſtantial account, ſupported by evidence, in what manner his death was occaſioned.

In attempting to proportion puniſhments to the degrees of crimes, inſtead of awarding the ſame puniſhment for ſtealing a loaf of bread and taking away the life of man, the Chineſe legiſlators, according to our notions, ſeem to have made too little diſtinction between accidental manſlaughter and premeditated murder. To conſtitute the crime, it is not neceſſary to prove the intention or malice aforethought; for though want of intention palliates the offence, and conſequently mitigates the

puniſhment, yet it never entirely excuſes the offender. If a man ſhould kill another by an unforeſeen and unavoidable accident, his life is forfeited by the law, and however favourable the circumſtances may appear in behalf of the criminal, the Emperor alone is inveſted with the power of remitting the ſentence, a power which he very rarely if ever exerciſes to the extent of a full pardon but, on many occaſions, to a mitigation of the puniſhment awarded by law. Strictly ſpeaking, no ſentence of death can be carried into execution until it has been ratified by the monarch. Yet in ſtate crimes, or in acts of great atrocity, the viceroy of a province ſometimes takes upon himſelf to order ſummary puniſhment, and prompt execution has been inflicted on foreign criminals at Canton when guilty only of homicide. Thus, about the beginning of the laſt century, a man belonging to Captain Shelvocke had the miſfortune to kill a Chineſe on the river. The corpſe was laid before the door of the Engliſh factory, and the firſt perſon that came out, who happened to be one of the ſupercargoes, was ſeized and carried as a priſoner into the city, nor would they conſent to his releaſe till the criminal was given up, whom, after a ſhort inquiry, they ſtrangled. The recent affair of the unfortunate gunner is well known. An affray happened in Macao a few years ago, in which a Chineſe was killed by the Portugueſe. A peremptory demand was made for one of the latter, to expiate the death of the former. The government of this place, either unable or unwilling to fix on the delinquent, propoſed terms of compromiſe, which were rejected and force was threatened to be uſed. There happened to be a merchant from Manilla then reſiding at Macao, a man of excellent character,

racter, who had long carried on a commerce between the two ports. This unfortunate man was ſelected to be the innocent victim to appeaſe the rigour of Chineſe juſtice, and he was immediately ſtrangled *.

The proceſs of every trial for criminal offences, of which the puniſhment is capital, muſt be tranſmitted to Pekin, and ſubmit-

* Various accidents having happened at different times to Chineſe ſubjects in the port of Canton, which have generally led to diſagreeable diſcuſſions with the Chineſe government, the ſupercargoes of the Eaſt India Company thought proper, on a late occaſion of a perſon being wounded by a ſhot from a Britiſh ſhip of war, to make application for an extract from the criminal code of laws relating to homicide, in order to have the ſame tranſlated into Engliſh, and made public. This extract conſiſted of the following articles:

1. A man who kills another on the ſuppoſition of theft, ſhall be ſtrangled, according to the law of homicide committed in an affray.
2. A man who fires at another with a muſquet, and kills him thereby, ſhall be beheaded, as in caſes of wilful murder. If the ſufferer be wounded, but not mortally, the offender ſhall be ſent into exile.
3. A man who puts to death a criminal who had been apprehended, and made no reſiſtance, ſhall be ſtrangled, according to the law againſt homicide committed in an affray.
4. A man who falſely accuſes an innocent perſon of theft (in caſes of greateſt criminality) is guilty of a capital offence; in all other caſes the offenders, whether principals or acceſſaries, ſhall be ſent into exile.
5. A man who wounds another unintentionally ſhall be tried according to the law reſpecting blows given in an affray, and the puniſhment rendered more or leſs ſevere, according to the degree of injury ſuſtained.
6. A man who, intoxicated with liquor, commits outrages againſt the laws, ſhall be exiled to a deſert country, there to remain in a ſtate of ſervitude.

In this clear and deciſive manner are puniſhments awarded for every claſs of crimes committed in ſociety; and it was communicated to the Engliſh factory from the viceroy, that on no conſideration was it left in the breaſt of the judge to extenuate or to exaggerate the ſentence, whatever might be the rank, character, or ſtation of the delinquent.

ted to the impartial eye of the ſupreme tribunal of juſtice, which affirms or alters, according to the nature of the caſe. And where any peculiar circumſtances appear in favour of the accuſed, an order for reviſing the ſentence is recommended to the Emperor, who, in ſuch caſes, either amends it himſelf, or directs the proceedings to be returned to the provincial court, with the ſentiments of the ſupreme tribunal on the caſe. The proceedings are then reviſed, and if the circumſtances are found to apply to the ſuggeſtions of the high court, they alter or modify their former ſentence accordingly *.

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* The following law caſe, which is literally tranſlated from a volume of reports of trials, publiſhed in the preſent reign of *Kia-King*, and with which I have been favoured by a friend (who was himſelf the tranſlator), will ſerve to ſhew the mode of proceeding in criminal matters of the provincial courts of judicature. The circumſtances of the tranſaction appear to have been enquired into fairly and impartially, and no pains ſpared to aſcertain the exact degree of criminality. Being given to me about the time when the trial took place of Smith, for the murder of the ſuppoſed *Hammerſmith ghoſt*, I was forcibly ſtruck with the remarkable coincidence of the two caſes, and with the almoſt identical defence ſet up by the Chineſe and the Engliſh priſoners, and on that account it excited more intereſt than perhaps it might otherwiſe be conſidered to be entitled to.

Tranſlation of an Extract from a Collection of Chineſe Law Reports, being the Trial, Appeal, and Sentence upon an Indictment for Homicide by Gun-firing.

At a criminal court held in the province of Fo-kien, upon an indictment for ſhooting, and mortally wounding a relation; ſetting forth, that *She-fo-pao*, native of the city of *Fo-ngan-ſien*, did fire a gun, and by miſchance wound *Vang-yung-man*, ſo that he died thereof.

The caſe was originally reported, as follows, by *Vu-ſe-Kung*, ſub-viceroy of the province of Fo-kien:

The accuſed *She-fo-pao*, and the deceaſed *Vang-yung-man*, were of different families, but connected by marriage, were well known to each other, and there had always been a good underſtanding between them.

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As in ſome of the Grecian ſtates, and other nations of modern times, the puniſhment of treaſon was extended to the relations of the criminal, ſo in China, even to the ninth generation,

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In the courſe of the firſt moon, of the 25th year of *Kien-long*, *She-fo-pao* cultivated a farm on the brow of a hill belonging to *Chin-ſe-kien*, and which lay in the vicinity of certain lands cultivated by *Vang-yung-man* and *Vang-ky-hao*, inaſmuch as that the fields of *Vang-yung-man* lay on the left of thoſe of *She-fo-pao*, which were in the center, and thoſe of *Vang-ky-hao* on the right ſide of the declivity of the hill. It occurred that on the 7th day of the 9th moon of the ſame year, *She-fo-pao* obſerving the corn in his fields to be nearly ripe, was apprehenſive that thieves might find an opportunity of ſtealing the grain; and being aware, at the ſame time, of the danger which exiſted on thoſe hills from wolves and tygers, armed himſelf with a muſquet, and went that night alone to the ſpot, in order to watch the corn, and ſeated himſelf in a convenient place on the ſide of the hill. It happened that *Vang-ky hao* went that day to the houſe of *Vang-yung-man*, in order that they might go together to keep watch over the corn in their reſpective fields. However *Vang-yung-tong* the elder brother of *Vang-yung-man*, conceiving it to be yet early, detained them to drink tea, and ſmoke tobacco until the ſecond watch * of the night, when they parted from him, and proceeded on their expedition, provided with large ſticks for defence.

Vang-ky-hao having occaſion to ſtop for a ſhort time upon the road, the other *Vang-yung-man* went on before, until he reached the boundary of the fields watched by *She-fo-pao*.

She-fo-pao, on hearing a ruſtling noiſe among the corn, and perceiving the ſhadow of a perſon through the obſcurity of the night, immediately hailed him, but the wind blowing very freſh, he did not hear any reply. *She-fo-pao* then took alarm, on the ſuſpicion that the ſound proceeded from thieves, or elſe from wild beaſts, and lighting the match-lock, which he held in his hand, fired it off, in order to repel the invaders whoever they might be.

Vang-yung-man was wounded by the ſhot in the head, cheeks, neck, and ſhoulder, and inſtantly fell to the ground. *Vang-ky-hao* hearing the exploſion, haſtened forward, and called aloud to enquire who had fired the gun. The other heard the voice, and going to the place from whence it proceeded, then learned whom he had

* Each watch is two hours, and the ſecond watch begins at eleven o'clock.

tion, a traitor's blood is ſuppoſed to be tainted, though they uſually ſatisfy the law by including only the neareſt male relations, then living, in the guilt of the culprit, and by mitigating their

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wounded by the miſchance. The wounds of *Vang-yung-man* being mortal, he expired after a very ſhort interval of time had elapſed.

She-ſo-pao, being repeatedly examined by the magiſtrate, acknowledged the fact without reſerve; and, upon the ſtricteſt inveſtigation and enquiry being entered upon, depoſed, That it was really during the obſcurity of the night that he had aſcended the hill, in order to watch the corn, and on hearing a noiſe to proceed from a quarter of the field that was extremely dark, and in which the ſhadow of ſome perſon was diſcernable, he had called out, but received no anſwer:—That the ſuſpicion then aroſe in his mind, that they were either thieves or wild beaſts, and alarmed him for the ſecurity of his perſon, being then entirely alone; he therefore fired the gun to repel the danger, and wounded *Vang-yung-man* by miſchance, ſo that he afterwards died.

That he, the deponent, was not actuated by any other motive or intention on this occaſion, nor deſirous of cauſing the death of an individual. The relations of the deceaſed being then examined, gave a correſponding evidence, and raiſed no doubts in other reſpects to the truth of the above depoſition. In conſideration, therefore, hereof it appears that, although *She-ſo-pao* is guilty of homicide by gun-firing, yet, ſince he was upon the watch over the fields, in the darkneſs of the night, and perceived the ſhadow of a man, whom he hailed, and from whom he received no anſwer, and had in conſequence apprehended the approach of thieves or wild beaſts, to prevent which, he fired the gun that occaſioned the wounds whereof the man is now dead—It follows, that there did not exiſt any premeditated intention of murder.—The act of which *She-ſo-pao* ſtands convicted may be, therefore, ranked under the article of homicide committed in an affray, and the ſentence accordingly is, to be ſtrangled upon the next enſuing general execution or gaol delivery.

The above report being tranſmitted to the ſupreme criminal tribunal at Pekin,—They rejoin,

That, on inveſtigation of the laws we find it ordained, that homicide by gun-firing ſhall receive a ſentence conformable to the law againſt intentional murder; and that the law againſt intentional murder gives a ſentence of decapitation on the next enſuing public execution, or gaol delivery. It is likewiſe found to be ordained by law, that

their puniſhment to that of exile. Nothing can be more unjuſt and abſurd, however politic, than ſuch a law; abſurd, becauſe it conſiders a non-entity capable of committing a crime; and unjuſt,

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that whoever ſhall unwarily draw a bow, and ſhoot an arrow towards fields or tenements, ſo that any perſon unperceived therein ſhall be wounded, and die therefrom, the offender ſhall receive a hundred blows with the bamboo, and be baniſhed to the diſtance of three thouſand lys (near a thouſand miles).

In the caſe now before us, *She-fo-pao*, being armed with a muſquet, goes to watch the corn, hears a noiſe in the fields, and calls aloud, but, receiving no anſwer, ſuſpects it to proceed from thieves or wild beaſts, and fires the gun, by which *Vang-yung-man* was wounded, and is now dead. But in the depoſition given in by the defendant, the declaration that he ſaw the ſhadow of ſome perſon does not accord with the ſuſpicion afterwards expreſſed, that the noiſe aroſe from wild beaſts. If, in truth, he diſtinguiſhed traces of a man, at the time of his calling out, notwithſtanding that the violence of the wind prevented his hearing the reply, *She-fo-pao* had ocular proof of the reality of the perſon from the ſhadow he had ſeen. Continuing our inveſtigation, we have further to notice, that when *She-fo-pao* took his ſtation in order to guard the middle ground, *Vang-yung-man* was engaged in watching his fields in a ſimilar manner, and would have occaſion to go near the limits of the middle ground in his way to his own farm, and which could not be far removed from the path leading to the middle ground; on which account it behoved *She-fo-pao* to hail the perſon repeatedly, previous to the firing of the gun, whoſe effect would be inſtantaneous, and occaſion the death of the unknown perſon from whom the ſound proceeded.

She-fo-pao not having repeatedly hailed the perſon from whom the noiſe had ariſen to diſturb him, and proceeding to the laſt extremity upon the firſt impulſe or alarm, are grounds for ſuſpecting that there exiſts a fallacy and diſguiſe in the teſtimony given in this affair, in which caſe, a ſentence conformable to the law againſt homicide, committed in an affray, would afford a puniſhment unequal and inadequate to the poſſible aggravation of the offence.

On the other hand, it would appear, in confirmation of his ſtatement, that theſe fields were, according to the cuſtom of the neighbouring villages, underſtood to be guarded at that time in the manner aforeſaid, and that circumſtance proving true, the accident that followed might ſtill be conſidered ſolely as the effect of apprehenſion

unjuſt, becauſe it puniſhes an innocent perſon. The lawgiver of Iſrael, in order to intimidate his ſtiff-necked and rebellious ſubjects, found it expedient to threaten the viſitation of God on the

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ſion of wild beaſts by night, inducing the accuſed to fire towards fields or tenements, ſo as to wound a man mortally by the miſchance.

Should a ſtrict examination admit of this interpretation of the offence, the ſentence may be awarded according to the law, immediately applicable to the ſubject, and not in conformity with the law againſt homicide committed in an affray. As the life or death of the offender reſts on the preference to be ſhewn towards either of thoſe expoſitions of the caſe, it is reſolved to hold any immediate deciſion as premature, and we iſſue our directions to the ſaid ſub-viceroy to reviſe the prior deciſion; and, with the aſſiſtance of a renewed inveſtigation, finally to determine and report to us the ſentence which he may conceive moſt agreeable to the ſpirit of our laws.

After a ſecond inveſtigation, and conſideration of the affair, the ſub-viceroy ſent in the following report to the ſupreme tribunal: Purſuant to the order for reviſal iſſued by the ſupreme criminal tribunal, *She-ſo-pao* has been again examined at the bar, and depoſes, That on hearing a noiſe in the corn fields, he conceived it to proceed from thieves, and called out in conſequence, but, receiving no anſwer, and finding the noiſe gradually to approach him, he then ſuſpected it to have ariſen from a wolf or tyger; and, in the alarm thus excited for his perſonal ſafety, had fired the gun, by which *Vang-yung-man* had been mortally wounded; That, ſince the event happened in the ſecond watch of the night, after the moon had ſet, and while clouds obſcured the faint light of the ſtars, it was really a moment of impenetrable darkneſs; and that it was only at the diſtance of a few paces that he diſtinguiſhed the approach of the ſound that had alarmed him, but, in fact, had never ſeen any ſhadow or traces whatſoever; That had he perceived any traces or ſhadow of that deſcription, he would not have ceaſed to call out, though he had failed to receive an anſwer the firſt time, nor would he have had the temerity to fire the gun, and render himſelf guilty of murder.

That, on the preceding examination, the ſeverity and rigour of the enquiry regarding the grounds upon which he ſuſpected the approach of thieves, ſo as to induce him to fire, had overcome him with fear, being a countryman unuſed to ſimilar proceedings, and produced the apparent incongruity in his depoſition, but that the true meaning and intent was to expreſs his abſolute uncertainty whether the alarm aroſe from thieves or wild beaſts, and nothing farther; and that from

the children, for the ſins of the fathers, unto the third and fourth generation, a ſentiment however which, it would ſeem, lapſe of time had rendered leſs expedient, for the prophet Ezekiel,

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ſuch depoſition he had never intentionally ſwerved in the courſe of the inveſtigation.

According, therefore, to the amendment ſuggeſted by the ſupreme tribunal, it appears indeed, that when the noiſe was firſt perceived in the fields, *She-fo-pao* had called out, and on being prevented by the wind from hearing a reply, had taken alarm as aforeſaid.

And whereas it was likewiſe depoſed by *She-fo-poa*, That the grain being ripe at that ſeaſon, the ſtems were exceeding high and ſtrong, ſo as to render it difficult to walk amongſt them, it ſeems that *Vang-yung-man*, in walking through the corn, had produced a ruſtling noiſe very audible to *She-fo-pao*, who was ſitting on the declivity of the hill, and in a direction in which the wind favoured the progreſs of the ſound; but when the latter called out, the wind, on the contrary, prevented him from being heard, and conſequently from receiving an anſwer; this miſchance, therefore, gave riſe to his ſuſpicion of the approach of wild beaſts, which appears to have been the ſole and undiſguiſed motive for firing the gun.

This ſtatement of facts being narrowly inveſtigated, in compliance with the ſupreme tribunal's order for reviſal, may be confided in as accurate, and worthy of credit; the reſult, therefore, is that the offender during the darkneſs of the night, and under the apprehenſion of the approach of a wolf or tyger, had fired a muſquet in a ſpot frequented by men, and had mortally wounded a man by the miſchance, which correſponds with the law ſuggeſted in the order for reviſal iſſued by the ſupreme tribunal; namely, that law againſt an offender who ſhould unwarily draw a bow and ſhoot an arrow towards fields or tenements, ſo that any perſon unperceived therein ſhould be wounded and die therefrom.

The prior deciſion, conformably to the law againſt homicide committed in an affray, ſubſequent inveſtigation does not confirm; and *She-fo-pao* is, therefore, only puniſhable with baniſhment.

This ſecond report being received by the ſupreme criminal tribunal, they declare that,

The ſentence having been altered on a reviſion by the ſub-viceroy, and rendered conformable to the law, which ordains that, whoever ſhall unwarily draw a bow and

ſhoot

kiel, who on this ſubject had more elevated notions of moral right than either the Greeks or the Chineſe, ſpurns it with great indignation. In alluſion to ſuch an idea, which it ſeems had become a proverb among the Jews, he breaks out into this ſublime exclamation: "What mean ye that ye uſe this pro-
"verb concerning the land of Iſrael, ſaying, The fathers have
"eaten ſour grapes, and the children's teeth are ſet on edge?
"As I live, ſaith the Lord, ye ſhall not have occaſion any
"more to uſe this proverb in Iſrael. Behold all ſouls are
"mine; as the ſoul of the father, ſo alſo the ſoul of the ſon, is
"mine. The ſoul that ſinneth, *it* ſhall die. The ſon ſhall not
"bear the iniquity of the father, neither ſhall the father bear
"the inquity of the ſon: the righteouſneſs of the righteous
"ſhall be upon *him*, and the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be
"upon *him*."

In moſt cauſes, except thoſe of high treaſon, it may be preſumed, the high tribunal of Pekin will act with ſtrict impar-

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ſhoot an arrow towards fields or tenements, ſo that any perſon unperceived therein may be wounded, and die therefrom, the offender ſhall receive a hundred blows with the bamboo, and ſuffer baniſhment to the diſtance of 3000 lys.

We confirm the ſentence of a hundred blows of the bamboo, and baniſhment to the diſtance of 3000 lys; and further preſcribe, that ten ounces of ſilver (3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*) ſhall be paid by the offender to the relations of the deceaſed for the expences of burial.

The ſentence, being thus pronounced on the 19th day of the 5th moon, of the 27th year of *Kien-Long*, received the Imperial ſanction on the 21ſt day of the ſame moon, in the following words: Purſuant to ſentence be this obeyed.

KHIN-TSE.

tiality.

tiality. And it is greatly to be lamented, that all civil cauſes have not been made ſubject to a ſimilar reviſion as thoſe of a criminal nature, which would ſtrike at the root of an evil that is moſt grievouſly felt in China, where the officers of juſtice are known, in moſt caſes, to be corrupted by bribery. They have, however, wiſely ſeparated the office of judge from that of the legiſlator. The former, having found the fact, has only to refer to the code of laws, in which he is ſupplied with a ſcale of crimes and their puniſhments. Such a mode of diſtributing juſtice is not however without its inconveniences. Tender as the government has ſhewn itſelf, where the life of a ſubject is concerned, having once eſtabliſhed the proportion of puniſhment to the offence it has ſuppoſed an appeal, in civil cauſes and miſdemeanors, to be unneceſſary. The ſentence in ſuch cauſes being thus left in the breaſt of a ſingle judge, how great ſoever may be the nicety by which the penalty is adapted to the offence, the excluſion from appeal is in itſelf a bar to the juſt and impartial adminiſtration of the laws. The ſubject being refuſed the benefit of carrying his cauſe into a higher, and on that account more likely to be a more impartial, court, has no ſecurity againſt the caprice, malice, or corruption of his judge.

It may not perhaps be thought unworthy of notice that the legiſlators of China, among the various puniſhments deviſed for the commiſſion of crimes, have given the criminal no opportunity, either by labouring at any of the public works, or in ſolitary confinement, to make ſome reparation for the injury he has committed againſt ſociety. Confinement in priſon, as a

puniſhment, is not known. Exile or perſonal chaſtiſement are decreed for all irregularities not approaching to capital offences.

Executions for capital crimes are not frequently exhibited; when found guilty the criminals are remanded to priſon till a general gaol delivery, which happens once a year, about the autumnal equinox. In adopting ſuch a meaſure government may perhaps have conſidered, how little benefit the morals of the people were likely to derive from being the frequent ſpectators of the momentary pain that is required to take away the exiſtence of a fellow mortal. All other puniſhments, however, that do not affect the life of man, are made as public as poſſible, and branded with the greateſt degree of notoriety. The beating with the bamboo, in their ideas, ſcarcely ranks under the name of puniſhment, being more properly conſidered as a gentle correction, to which no diſgrace is attached; but the cangue or, as they term it, the *tcha*, a kind of walking pillory, is a heavy tablet of wood, to which they are faſtened by the neck and hands, and which they are ſometimes obliged to drag about for weeks and months; this is a terrible puniſhment, and well calculated to deter others from the commiſſion of thoſe crimes of which it is the conſequence, and the nature of which is always inſcribed in large characters upon it.

The order that is kept in their jails is ſaid to be excellent, and the debtor and the felon are always confined in ſeparate places; as indeed one ſhould ſuppoſe every where to be the caſe, for, as Sir George Staunton has obſerved, " To aſſociate " guilt

" guilt with imprudence, and confound wickedneſs with miſ-
" fortune, is impolitic, immoral, and cruel *."

The abominable practice of extorting confeſſion by the application of the torture is the worſt part of the criminal laws of China; but they pretend to ſay this mode is ſeldom recurred to, unleſs in caſes where the guilt of the accuſed has been made to appear by ſtrong circumſtantial evidence. It is however a common puniſhment to ſqueeze the fingers in caſes of miſdemeanour, and is particularly practiſed as a puniſhment of thoſe females who purchaſe licences for breaking through the rules of chaſtity.

By the laws relating to property, women in China, as in ancient Rome, are excluded from inheriting, where there are children, and from diſpoſing of property; but where there are no male children a man may leave, by will, the whole of his property to the widow. The reaſon they aſſign for women not inheriting is, that a woman can make no offering to deceaſed relations in the hall of anceſtors; and it is deemed one of the firſt ideal bleſſings of life for a man to have ſome one to look up to, who will tranſmit his name to future ages, by performing, at certain fixed periods, the duties of this important ceremony. All their laws indeed reſpecting property, as I have already obſerved, are inſufficient to give it that ſecurity and ſtability which alone can conſtitute the pleaſure of accumulating wealth. The avarice of men in power may overlook thoſe who are in moderate circumſtances, but the affluent rarely

* A debtor is releaſed when it appears that the whole of his property has been given up for the uſe of his creditors.

eſcape their rapacious graſp. In a word, although the laws are not ſo perfect as to procure for the ſubject general good, yet neither are they ſo defective as to reduce him to that ſtate of general miſery, which could only be terminated in a revolution. The executive adminiſtration is ſo faulty, that the man in office generally has it in his power to govern the laws, which makes the meaſure of good or evil depend greatly on his moral character.

Such are indeed the diſpoſition and the habits of the people, that ſo long as the multitude can procure their bowl of rice and a few ſavory ſauces, that coſt only a mere trifle, there will be leſs danger of a revolt; and the government is ſo well convinced of this, that one of its firſt concerns is to lay up, in the public magazines erected in every part of the empire, a proviſion of grain, to ſerve as a ſupply for the poor in times of famine or ſcarcity. In this age of revolutions, a change, however, ſeems to be taking place in the minds of the people, which I ſhall preſently notice.

The ſyſtem of univerſal and implicit obedience towards ſuperiors pervades every branch of the public ſervice. The officers of the ſeveral departments of government, from the firſt to the ninth degree, acting upon the ſame broad baſis of paternal authority, are inveſted with the power of inflicting the ſummary puniſhment of the bamboo, on all occaſions where they may judge it proper, which, under the denomination of a fatherly correction, they adminiſter without any previous trial, or form of inquiry. The ſlighteſt offence is puniſhable in this manner, at the will or the caprice of the loweſt magiſtrate.

giſtrate. Such a ſummary proceeding of the powerful againſt the weak naturally creates in the latter a dread and diſtruſt of the former; and the common people, accordingly, regard the approach of a man in office, juſt as ſchoolboys obſerve the motions of a ſevere maſter; but the fatherly kindneſs of the Emperor is recogniſed even in puniſhment; the culprit may claim the exemption of every fifth blow as the Emperor's *coup-de-grace;* but in all probability he gains little by ſuch remiſſion, as the deficiency in number may eaſily be made up in weight.

This practical method of evincing a fatherly affection is not confined to the multitude alone, but is extended to every rank and deſcription of perſons, ceaſing only at the foot of the throne. Each officer of ſtate, from the ninth degree upwards to the fourth, can, at any time, adminiſter a gentle correction to his inferior; and the Emperor orders the bamboo to his miniſters, and to the other four claſſes, whenever he may think it neceſſary for the good of their morals. It is well known that the late *Kien Long* cauſed two of his ſons to be bambooed long after they had arrived at the age of maturity, one of which, I believe, is the preſent reigning Emperor.

In travelling through the country, a day ſeldom eſcaped without our witneſſing the application of the *Pan-tsé*, or bamboo, and generally in ſuch a manner that it might be called by any other name except a *gentle* correction. A Chineſe ſuffering under this puniſhment cries out in the moſt piteous manner; a Tartar bears it in ſilence. A Chineſe, after receiving a certain number of ſtrokes, falls down on his knees, as a matter

of courſe, before him who ordered the puniſhment, thanking him, in the moſt humble manner, for the fatherly kindneſs he has teſtified towards his ſon, in thus putting him in mind of his errors; a Tartar grumbles, and diſputes the point as to the right that a Chineſe may have to flog him; or he turns away in ſullen ſilence.

Ridiculous as it may appear to a foreigner, in obſerving an officer of ſtate ſtretching himſelf along the ground for the purpoſe of being flogged by order of another who happens to rank one degree above him; yet it is impoſſible, at the ſame time, to ſuppreſs a glow of indignation, in witneſſing ſo mean and obſequious a degradation of the human mind, which can bring itſelf, under any circumſtances, patiently to ſubmit to a vile corporal puniſhment, adminiſtered by the hand of a ſlave, or by a common ſoldier; and when this is done, to undergo the ſtill more vile and humiliating act of kiſſing the rod that corrects him. But the policy of the government has taken good care to remove any ſcruples that might ariſe on this ſcore. Where paternal regard was the ſole motive, ſuch a chaſtiſement could not poſſibly be followed with diſhonour or diſgrace. It was a wonderful point gained by the government, to ſubject every individual, the Emperor only excepted, to the ſame corporal correction; but it muſt have required great addreſs, and men's minds muſt have been completely ſubdued, or completely convinced, before ſuch a ſyſtem of univerſal obedience could have been accompliſhed, the conſequence of which, it was obvious, could be no other than univerſal ſervility. It could not fail to eſtabliſh a moſt effectual check againſt the complaints of the multitude,

multitude, by ſhewing them that the ſame man, who had the power of puniſhing them, was equally liable to be corrected in his turn, and in the ſame manner, by another. The puniſhment of the bamboo muſt, I ſuſpect, be one of the moſt ancient inſtitutions of China. Indeed we can ſcarcely conceive it ever to have been introduced into a ſociety already civilized; but rather to have been coeval with the origin of that ſociety.

A ſimilar kind of perſonal chaſtiſement for light offences, or miſconduct, was inflicted in Ruſſia on perſons of all ranks, but with this difference, that the correction was private and by order of the Sovereign alone. The Czar Peter, indeed, generally beſtowed a drubbing on his courtiers with his own hand; who, inſtead of being diſhonoured or diſgraced by ſuch a caſtigation, were ſuppoſed, from that very circumſtance, to be his particular favourites, and to ſtand high in his confidence. The great Mentzikoff is ſaid to have frequently left his cloſet with a black eye or a bloody noſe; and ſeemed to derive encreaſing importance from the unequivocal marks of his maſter's friendſhip. Even at the preſent day, or till very lately, little diſgrace was attached to the puniſhment of the *knout*, which was a private flagellation by order of the court; but this abominable practice either is altogether diſcontinued, or in its laſt ſtage of exiſtence. Such arbitrary proceedings could not long remain in force among an enlightened people.

Theſe two great empires, the greateſt indeed that exiſt in the world, dividing between them nearly a fifth part of the whole habitable globe, each about a tenth, exhibit a ſingular difference

ference with regard to political circumſtances. One century ago Ruſſia was but juſt emerging from a ſtate of barbariſm, and in a century hence, in all human probability, ſhe will make a conſpicuous figure among European nations, both in arts and arms. Two thouſand years ago China was civilized to the ſame degree, or nearly ſo, that ſhe is at preſent. The governments were both arbitrary, and the people were ſlaves. The natural genius of the Ruſſian, cramped perhaps in ſome degree by his frozen climate, is leſs ſuſceptible of improvement than that of the Chineſe. Whence then, it may be aſked, proceeds the very great difference in the progreſſive improvement of the two nations? principally, I ſhould ſuppoſe, from the two following reaſons. Ruſſia invites and encourages foreigners to inſtruct her ſubjects in arts, ſciences, and manufactures. China, from a ſpirit of pride and ſelf-importance, as well as from jealouſy, rejects and expels them. The language of Ruſſia is eaſily acquired, and her ſubjects as eaſily learn thoſe of other countries, whilſt that of China is ſo difficult, or their method of learning it ſo defective, as to require the ſtudy of half the life of man to fit him for any of the ordinary employments of the ſtate, and they have no knowledge of any language but their own. The one is in a ſtate of youthful vigour, advancing daily in ſtrength and knowledge; the other is worn out with old age and diſeaſe, and under its preſent ſtate of exiſtence is not likely to advance in any kind of improvement.

To the principle of univerſal obedience the Chineſe government has added another, which is well calculated to ſatisfy the

the public mind: the firſt honours and the higheſt offices are open to the very loweſt of the people. It admits of no hereditary nobility; at leaſt none with excluſive privileges. As a mark of the Sovereign's favour a diſtinction will ſometimes deſcend in a family, but, as it confers no power nor privilege nor emolument, it ſoon wears out. All dignities may be conſidered as merely perſonal; the princes of the blood, even, ſink gradually into the common maſs, unleſs their talents and their application be ſufficient to qualify them for office, independent of which there can be neither rank nor honours, and very little if any diſtinction, not even in the imperial family, beyond the third generation. On public days the Emperor, at a ſingle glance, can diſtinguiſh the rank of each of the many thouſand courtiers that are aſſembled on ſuch occaſions by their dreſs of ceremony. The civilians have a bird, and the military a tyger, embroidered on the breaſt and back of their upper robe; and their ſeveral ranks are pointed out by different coloured globes, mounted on a pivot on the top of the cap or bonnet. The Emperor has alſo two orders of diſtinction, which are conferred by him alone, as marks of particular favour; the order of the yellow veſt and of the peacock's feather.

The influence that, in nations of Europe, is derived from birth, fortune, and character, is of no weight in the Chineſe government. The moſt learned, and I have already explained how far the term extends, provided he be not of notorious bad character, is ſure to be employed; though under the preſent Tartar government, the Chineſe complain that they never arrive at the higheſt rank till they are advanced in years. Learning

alone, by the ſtrict maxims of ſtate, leads to office, and office to diſtinction. Property, without learning, has little weight, and confers no diſtinction, except in ſome corrupt provincial governments, where the external marks of office are ſold, as in Canton. Hence property is not ſo much an object of the laws in China as elſewhere, and conſequently has not the ſame ſecurity. In the governments of Europe, property ſeldom fails to command influence and to force dependence: in China, the man of property is afraid to own it, and all the enjoyments it procures him are ſtolen.

Sometimes, indeed, the higheſt appointments in the ſtate are conferred, as it happens elſewhere, by ſome favourable accident, or by the caprice of the monarch. A ſtriking inſtance of this kind was diſplayed in the perſon of *Ho-tchung tang*, the laſt prime miniſter of the late *Kien-long*. This man, a Tartar, happened to be placed on guard in the palace, where his youth and comely countenance ſtruck the Emperor ſo forcibly in paſſing, that he ſent for him to the preſence; and finding him equally agreeable in his converſation and manners, he raiſed him rapidly, but gradually, from the ſituation of a common ſoldier, to the higheſt ſtation in the empire. Such ſudden changes, from a ſtate of nothingneſs to the ſummit of power, have frequently been obſerved to be attended with conſequences no leſs fatal to the man ſo elevated, than pernicious to the public: and thus it happened to this favourite miniſter. During the life of his old maſter, over whom, in his later years, he is ſaid to have poſſeſſed an unbounded influence, he availed himſelf of the means that offered, by every ſpecies of fraud and extortion,

tortion, by tyranny and oppreſſion, to amaſs ſuch immenſe wealth in gold, ſilver, pearls, and immoveable property, that his acquiſitions were generally allowed to have exceeded thoſe of any ſingle individual, that the hiſtory of the country had made known. His pride and haughty demeanor had rendered him ſo obnoxious to the royal family that, at the time we were in Pekin, it was generally ſuppoſed, he had made up his mind to die with the old Emperor, for which event he had always at hand a doſe of poiſon, not chuſing to ſtand the ſevere inveſtigation which he was well aware the ſucceeding prince would direct to be made into his miniſterial conduct. It ſeems, however, when that event actually happened, the love of life, and the hope of eſcaping, prevailed on him to change his purpoſe and to ſtand the hazard of a trial. Of the crimes and enormities laid to his charge he was found, or rather he was ſaid to have pleaded, guilty. The vaſt wealth he had extorted from others was confiſcated to the crown, and he was condemned to ſuffer an ignominious death *.

But

* The circumſtances attending the downfal of this miniſter are curious, and ſhew, in its true light, the deſpotic nature of the Chineſe government, notwithſtanding their ſalutary laws. The new Emperor, determined on his ruin, makes a public declaration wherein, after apologizing for not abſtaining agreeably to the laws of the empire from all acts of innovation, for the ſpace of three years after his father's death, he obſerves, that the crimes and exceſſes of *Ho-tchung-tang* are of ſo horrid a nature, as to preclude him from acting towards him with any pity or indulgence. He then exhibits about twenty articles of accuſation againſt him, the principal of which are,

Contumacy towards his father (the late Emperor) by riding on horſeback to the very door of the hall of audience at *Yuen-min-yuen*.

Audacity, under pretence of lameneſs, in cauſing himſelf to be carried to and from the palace through the door ſet apart for the Emperor.

But *Ho-tchung tang*, if guilty of inordinate ambition, or acts of injuſtice, is far from being the only inſtance of ſuch conduct in men thus raiſed from humble ſituations. The officers of

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Scandalous behaviour, in taking away the virgins of the palace, and appropriating them to his own uſe.

Pride and inſolence, in countermanding his (the new Emperor's) order, for all the princes of Tartary to be ſummoned to Pekin, thoſe who had not had the ſmall-pox excepted, to aſſiſt at the funeral of his father, and by iſſuing a new one, in which *none* were excepted.

Bribery and partiality, in ſelling and giving away appointments of weight to perſons totally unqualified to fill them.

Arrogance, in making uſe of the wood *Nan-moo* (cedar) in his houſe, which is deſtined excluſively for royal palaces; and in building a houſe and gardens in the ſtyle and manner of thoſe belonging to the Emperor.

For having in his poſſeſſion more than two hundred ſtrings of pearls, and an immenſe quantity of jewels and precious ſtones, which his rank did not allow him to wear, and among which was a pearl of ſuch wonderful magnitude, that the Emperor himſelf had no equal to it.

For having in gold and ſilver alone, which has been already diſcovered and confiſcated, the amount, at leaſt, of ten million taels (about 3,300,000*l.* ſterling).

One article is ſingularly curious. For having been guilty of the deepeſt treachery in informing him (the new Emperor) of his father's intention to abdicate the government in his (the new Emperor's) favour, *one day* before his father made it public, thinking by ſuch means to gain his favour and affection!

After enumerating the ſeveral articles of accuſation, the Emperor ſtates, that this miniſter being interrogated by a Tartar prince on the ſeveral points, had confeſſed the whole to be true, and, therefore, without further evidence, he commands the preſidents and members of the ſeveral courts in Pekin, the viceroys of provinces, and governors of cities, on theſe articles of accuſation being laid before them, to paſs a proper ſentence on the ſaid *Ho-tchung-tang*. According to the majority, he was condemned to be beheaded; but as a peculiar act of grace and benevolence on the part of the Emperor, this ſentence was mitigated to that of his being allowed to be his own executioner. A ſilken cord being ſent as an intimation of this mark of the Emperor's favour, he cauſed himſelf to be ſtrangled by ſome of his attendants.

Who

of government in general, though intended by the conſtitution as a kind of barrier between the prince and the people, are the greateſt oppreſſors of the latter, who have ſeldom any means of redreſs, or of conveying their complaints to the Imperial ear. There is no middle claſs of men in China: men whoſe property and ideas of independence give them weight in the part of the country where they reſide; and whoſe influence and intereſt are conſidered as not below the notice of the government. In fact, there are no other than the governors and the governed. If a man, by trade, or induſtry in his profeſſion, has accumulated riches, he can enjoy them only in private. He dares not, by having a grander houſe, or finer clothes, to let his neighbour perceive that he is richer than himſelf, leſt he ſhould betray him to the commanding officer of the diſtrict, who would find no difficulty in bringing him within the pale of the ſumptuary laws, and in laying his property under confiſcation.

Sometimes, indeed, the extortions that the officers practiſe upon the people, as in the caſe of *Ho-tchung-tang*, meet the hand of juſtice. Other magiſtrates keep a ſteady eye upon their proceedings, and, in proper time, tranſmit the neceſſary information to court. Spies alſo are detached from court into the

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Who could eſcape when the Emperor of China is himſelf the accuſer? It will readily occur, from the fate of *Ho-tchung-tang*, that there is not that line of independence drawn between the executive and juridical authority, which the ingenious author of the Spirit of Laws has clearly proved to be the grand foundation of a juſt, legal, and efficient ſecurity of the life and property of the ſubject. In fact, in all ſtate crimes, the Emperor becomes both the accuſer and the judge. In the caſe of *Ho-tchung-tang* he may likewiſe be ſaid to have been the only evidence.

provinces, under the name of inſpectors. Jealous of each other, they let no opportunity ſlip of making unfavourable reports to their ſuperiors. Notwithſtanding which, with all the precautions taken by government in favour of the ſubject, the latter finds himſelf moſt dreadfully oppreſſed. It is true, for very ſlight offences preferred againſt men in office, the court directs a public reprimand in the official Gazette; for thoſe of a more ſerious nature, degradation from rank; and every officer ſo degraded is under the neceſſity of proclaiming his own diſgrace in all his public orders; not only to put him in mind of his paſt conduct, but likewiſe to ſhew the people how watchful the eye of government is over the actions of its ſervants. The laſt ſtage of public degradation, which amounts to a ſentence of infamy, is an order to ſuperintend the preparation of the Emperor's tomb, which implies that the perſon ſo ſentenced is more fit to be employed among the dead than the living. *Tchang-ta-gin*, the late viceroy of Canton, was condemned to this degrading ſervice *.

The viceroy of a province can remain in that office no longer than three years, leſt he might obtain an undue influence. No ſervant of the crown can form a family alliance in the place where he commands, nor obtain an office of importance in the city or town wherein he was born. Yet with theſe, and other precautions, there is ſtill little ſecurity for the ſubject. He has no voice whatſoever in the government, either directly or by

* Among the various cuſtoms of China, particularized in the accounts of the two Mahomedan travellers in the ninth century, this remarkable one is noticed, affording, with the reſt, equally ſingular and peculiar to this nation, an irrefragable proof of the authenticity of theſe two relations.

repre-

repreſentation; and the only ſatisfaction he poſſibly can receive for injuries done to him, and that is merely of a negative kind, is the degradation or the removal of the man in power, who had been his oppreſſor, and who perhaps may be replaced by another equally bad.

The ingenious Mr. Pauw has obſerved, that China is entirely governed by the whip and the bamboo. To theſe he might have added the yearly calendar and the Pekin Gazette, both of which, as engines in the hands of government, contribute very materially to aſſiſt its operations. By the circulation of the firſt is kept alive the obſervance of certain ſuperſtitions which it is, apparently, the ſtudy of government to encourage. The ſecond is a vehicle for conveying into every corner of the empire the virtues and the fatherly kindneſs of the reigning ſovereign, ſhewn by puniſhing the officers of his government, not only for what they have done amiſs, but for what they may have omitted to do. Thus, if a famine has deſolated any of the provinces, the principal officers are degraded for not having taken the proper precautions againſt it. This paper, in the ſhape of a ſmall pamphlet, is publiſhed every ſecond day. The miſſionaries have pretended that immediate death would be the conſequence of inſerting a falſehood in the Imperial Gazette. Yet it is famous for deſcribing battles that were never fought, and for announcing victories that were never gained. The truth of this obſervation appears from ſeveral proclamations of *Kaung-ſhee*, *Tchien Long*, and the preſent Emperor, warning the generals on diſtant ſtations from making falſe reports,

ports, and from killing thouſands and ten thouſands of the enemy, ſometimes even when no engagement had taken place *. The reverend gentlemen only mean to ſay, that the editor would be puniſhed if he ventured to inſert any thing not ſent to him officially by the government.

The preſs in China is as free as in England, and the profeſſion of printing open to every one, which is a ſingular circumſtance, and perhaps the only inſtance of the kind, in a deſpotic government. It has uſually been ſuppoſed that, in free countries only where every perſon is equally under the protection, and equally liable to the penalties, of the law, the liberty of the preſs could be cheriſhed; and that it was a thing next to impoſſible, that power, founded on error and ſupported by oppreſſion, could long be maintained where the preſs was free. It was the preſs that in Europe effected the ruin of prieſtly power, by diſpelling the clouds that had long obſcured the rays of truth; and by opening a free acceſs to the doctrines of that religion which, of all others, is beſt calculated for the promotion of individual happineſs and public virtue †.

In

* The words of *Kaung-ſhee*'s proclamation, repeated by *Kia-king*, are: "At preſent when an army is ſent on any military ſervice, every report that is made of its operations, contains an account of a victory, of rebels diſperſed at the firſt encounter, driven from their ſtations, killed, and wounded, to a great amount, or to the amount of ſome thouſands, or, in ſhort, that the rebels ſlain were innumerable."

Pekin Gazette, 31ſt July, 1800.

† When the art of printing was firſt introduced into England, and carried on in Weſtminſter Abbey, a ſhrewd churchman is ſaid to have obſerved to the Abbot of Weſtminſter, "If you don't take care to deſtroy that machine, it will very ſoon deſtroy your trade." He ſaw at a ſingle glance of the preſs, the downfal of prieſtly dominion

In China the liberty of the preſs ſeems to excite no apprehenſions in the government. The ſummary mode of puniſhing any breach of good morals, without the formality of a trial, makes a poſitive prohibition againſt printing unneceſſary, being itſelf ſufficient to reſtrain the licentiouſneſs of the preſs. The printer, the vender, and the reader of any libellous publication, are all equally liable to be flogged with the bamboo. Few, I ſuppoſe, would be hardy enough to print reflexions on the conduct of government, or its principal officers, as ſuch publications would be attended with certain ruin. Yet, notwithſtanding all the dangers to which the printing profeſſion is liable, daily papers are publiſhed in the capital, circulating, ſomething like our own, private anecdotes, domeſtic occurrences, public notices of ſales, and the wonderful virtues of quack medicines. We were told that, in one of theſe papers, the Portugueſe miſſionary mentioned in Mr. Grammont's letter got a paragraph inſerted, purporting the great neglect of the Engliſh in having brought no preſents for the princes of the blood, nor for the Emperor's miniſters. This falſe and malicious paragraph was ſaid to be followed by another, inſinuating that thoſe for the Emperor were common articles of little value. Another pretended to give a catalogue of them, and included an elephant about the ſize of a rat, giants, dwarfs, wiſhing pillows, and ſuch like nonſenſe. Theſe, however, and other publications,

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dominion in the general diffuſion of knowledge that would be occaſioned by it, and had the reſt of the clergy been equally clear-ſighted, it is probable the dark ages of ſuperſtition and ignorance had ſtill continued, or at leaſt had been greatly protracted.

were induſtriouſly kept from our ſight, Under the generous idea of being the Emperor's gueſts, we were not allowed to purchaſe any thing. He alone was to ſupply our wants, but his officers took the liberty of judging what theſe wants ſhould conſiſt in.

It is a ſingular phenomenon in the hiſtory of nations, how the government of an empire, of ſuch vaſt magnitude as that of China, ſhould have preſerved its ſtability without any material change, for more than two thouſand years; for, dropping their pretenſions to an extravagant antiquity, for which however they have ſome grounds, there can be no doubt they were pretty much in the ſame ſtate, regulated by the ſame laws, and under the ſame form of government as they now are, four hundred years before the birth of Chriſt, about which time their renowned philoſopher flouriſhed, whoſe works are ſtill held on the higheſt reputation. They contain indeed all the maxims in which their government is ſtill grounded, and all the rules by which the different ſtations of life take their moral conduct; and the monarchy is ſuppoſed to have been eſtabliſhed two thouſand years before his time.

If the teſt of a good government be made to depend on the length of its continuance, unſhaken and unchanged by revolutions, China may certainly be allowed to rank the firſt among civilized nations. But, whether good or bad, it has poſſeſſed the art of moulding the multitude to its own ſhape in a manner unprecedented in the annals of the world. Various accidents, improved by policy, ſeem to have led to its durability. Among theſe

theſe the natural barriers of the country, excluding any foreign enemy, are not to be reckoned as the leaſt favourable; whilſt the extreme caution of the government in admitting ſtrangers kept the world in ignorance, for many ages, of the exiſtence even of the moſt extenſive, powerful, and populous empire among men. Secluded thus from all intercourſe with the reſt of the world, it had time and leizure to mould its own ſubjects into the ſhape it wiſhed them to retain; and the event has ſufficiently proved its knowledge in this reſpect.

A number of fortunate circumſtances, ſeldom combined in the ſame country, have contributed to the preſervation of internal tranquillity in China. The language is of a nature well calculated to keep the maſs of the people in a ſtate of ignorance. They are neither prohibited from embracing any religion of which they may make a choice, nor coerced to contribute towards the ſupport of one they do not approve. The pains that have been taken to inculcate ſober habits, to deſtroy mutual confidence, and render every man reſerved and ſuſpicious of his neighbour, could not fail to put an end to ſocial intercourſe. No meetings were held, even for convivial purpoſes, beyond the family circle, and theſe only at the feſtival of new year. Thoſe kind of turbulent aſſemblies, where real or imagined grievances are diſcuſſed with all the rancour and violence that malicious inſinuations againſt government, added to the effects of intoxicating draughts, too frequently inſpire, never happen among the Chineſe. Contented in having no voice in the government, it has never occurred to them that they have any

rights *: and they certainly enjoy none but what are liable to be invaded and trampled on, whenever the ſovereign, or any of his repreſentatives, from intereſt, malice, or caprice, think fit to exerciſe the power that is within their graſp. The doctrine of employing reſiſtence againſt oppreſſion, applied to the people and the government, is ſo contrary to every ſentiment of the former, that the latter has little to fear on that ſcore.

Partial inſurrections occaſionally happen, but they are generally owing to the extreme poverty of the people which, in ſeaſons of ſcarcity and famine, compels them to take by violence the means of ſubſiſting life, which otherwiſe they could not obtain. To this cauſe may be referred the origin of almoſt all the commotions recorded in their hiſtory, through ſome of which, when the calamity became general, the regular ſucceſſion has been interrupted, and even changed. We were told, however, by our Chineſe attendants, that certain myſterious ſocieties did exiſt in ſome of the provinces, whoſe chief object was to overturn the Tartar government; that they held ſecret

* When the miſchievous doctrines of *Tom Paine*, expounded in his "Rights of "Man," were tranſlated into various languages, and induſtriouſly attempted to be propagated among the eaſtern nations, by means of French emiſſaries; when one of thoſe aſſiduous diſturbers of the peace of mankind had actually ſucceeded in furniſhing the Seiks with an abſtract of this precious work in their own language, he next turned his attention to the vaſt empire of China, a glorious theatre for thoſe zealous coſmopolites to play their parts in, if they could once contrive to ſuit their drama to the taſte of the people. The experiment, however, failed of ſucceſs. The golden opinions of *Tom Paine* could not be transfuſed into the Chineſe language; and theſe unfortunate people underſtood no other but their own; ſo that three hundred and thirty-three millions were doomed to remain in ignorance and miſery on account of their language being incapable of conveying the enlightened doctrines of *Tom Paine*.

meetings, in which they gave vent to their complaints againſt Tartar preponderancy, revived the memory of ancient glory, brooded over preſent injuries, and meditated revenge. If even this be the caſe, the preſent ſtate of ſociety is little favourable to their views. Nor indeed would a revolution be a deſirable event for the Chineſe themſelves. It could not fail of being attended with the moſt horrible conſequences. The Tartar ſoldiers would be tired with ſlaying, and millions that eſcaped the ſword muſt neceſſarily periſh by famine, on the leaſt interruption of the uſual purſuits of agriculture; for they have no other country to look to for ſupplies, and they raiſe no ſurplus quantity in their own.

In order to prevent as much as poſſible a ſcarcity of grain, and in conformity to their opinion, that the true ſource of national wealth and proſperity conſiſts in agriculture, the Chineſe government has in all ages beſtowed the firſt honours on every improvement in this branch of induſtry. The huſbandman is conſidered as an honourable, as well as uſeful, member of ſociety; he ranks next to men of letters, or officers of ſtate, of whom indeed he is frequently the progenitor. The ſoldier in China cultivates the ground. The prieſts alſo are agriculturiſts, whenever their convents are endowed with land. The Emperor is conſidered as the ſole proprietary of the ſoil, but the tenant is never turned out of poſſeſſion as long as he continues to pay his rent, which is calculated at about one-tenth of what his farm is ſuppoſed capable of yielding; and though the holder of lands can only be conſidered as a tenant at will, yet it is his own fault if he ſhould be diſpoſſeſſed. So accuſtomed are the Chineſe

to

to conſider an eſtate as their own, while they continue to pay the rent, that a Portugueſe in Macao had nearly loſt his life for endeavouring to raiſe the rent upon his Chineſe tenants. If any one happens to hold more than his family can conveniently cultivate, he lets it out to another on condition of receiving half the produce, out of which he pays the whole of the Emperor's taxes. A great part of the poorer peaſantry cultivate lands on theſe terms.

There are, in fact, no immenſe eſtates graſping nearly the whole of a diſtrict; no monopolizing farmers, nor dealers in grain. Every one can bring his produce to a free and open market. No fiſheries are let out to farm. Every ſubject is equally entitled to the free and uninterrupted enjoyment of the ſea, of the coaſts, and the eſtuaries; of the lakes and rivers. There are no manor lords with excluſive privileges; no lands ſet apart for feeding beaſts or birds for the profit or pleaſure of particular perſons; every one may kill game on his own grounds, and on the public commons. Yet with all theſe ſeeming advantages, there are rarely three ſucceſſive years without a famine in one province or another.

As in the Roman Empire examples were not wanting of the firſt characters in the ſtate glorying to put their hands to the plough, to render the earth fertile, and to engage in the natural employment of man; as,

> In ancient times the ſacred plough employ'd,
> The kings and awful fathers,

So,

So, in China, the Emperor at the vernal equinox, after a ſolemn offering to the God of Heaven and Earth, goes through the ceremony of holding the plough, an example in which he is followed by the viceroys and governors and great officers in every part of the empire. This ceremony, though, in all probability, the remains of a religious inſtitution, is well calculated to give encouragement to the labouring peaſantry, whoſe profeſſion, thus honourably patronized, cannot fail to be purſued with more energy and cheerfulneſs than where it receives no ſuch marks of diſtinction. Here merchants, tradeſmen, and mechanics, are conſidered far beneath the huſbandman. So far from obtaining the honours attendant on commerce in the ancient city of Tyre, "whoſe merchants were princes, whoſe "traffickers were the honourable of the earth"—or the ancient immunities granted in Alfred's reign, by which an Engliſh merchant, who had made three foreign voyages by ſea, was raiſed to the rank of nobility, the man who, in China, engages in foreign trade is conſidered as little better than a vagabond. The home trade only is ſuppoſed to be neceſſary, and deſerving the protection of government. It allows all goods and manufactures, the produce of the country, to be interchanged between the ſeveral provinces, on payment only of a ſmall tranſit duty to the ſtate, and certain tolls on the canals and rivers, applied chiefly to the repairs of flood-gates, bridges, and embankments. This trade, being carried on entirely by barter, employs ſuch a multitude of craft of one deſcription or other, as to baffle all attempts at a calculation. I firmly believe, that all the floating veſſels in the world beſides, taken collectively, would not be equal either in number or tonnage to thoſe of China.

Foreign

Foreign trade is barely tolerated. So very indifferent the court of Pekin affects to be on this ſubject, that it has been hinted, on ſome occaſions, and indeed ſerious apprehenſions have been entertained in Europe, that they were half diſpoſed to ſhut the port of Canton againſt foreigners. The treatment, indeed, which ſtrangers meet with at this place, from the inferior officers of government, is of itſelf ſufficient to exclude them, and ſuch as could only be tolerated in conſideration of the importance of the trade, and eſpecially in the ſupply of tea; an article which, from being about a century ago a luxury, is now become, particularly in Great Britain, one of the firſt neceſſities of life.

The taxes raiſed for the ſupport of government are far from being exorbitant or burthenſome to the ſubject. They conſiſt in the tenth of the produce of the land paid uſually in kind, in a duty on ſalt, on foreign imports, and a few ſmaller taxes, that do not materially affect the bulk of the people. The total amount of taxes and aſſeſſments which each individual pays to the ſtate, taken on an average, does not exceed four ſhillings a year.

With ſuch advantages, unknown in moſt other countries, and ſuch great encouragement given to agriculture, one would be led to ſuppoſe that the condition of the poor muſt be leſs expoſed to hardſhips here than elſewhere. Yet in years of ſcarcity many thouſands periſh from abſolute want of food. And ſuch years ſo frequently occur in one province or another, either from unfavourable ſeaſons of drought or inundations, the ill effects of both of which might probably be counteracted by proper management,

management, or by an honeſt application of the ſums of money voted for the purpoſe out of the public revenue, that government has ſeldom been able to lay up in ſtore a ſufficient quantity of grain to meet the neceſſities of the people in ſeaſons of general calamity; and they have no other relief to depend on but this precarious ſupply, ſeldom adminiſtered with alacrity, on account of the number of hands it has to paſs through. This leads them to commit outrages againſt their wealthier neighbours. There are few public charities; and it is not a common cuſtom to aſk alms. I did not obſerve a ſingle beggar from one extremity of China to the other, except in the ſtreets of Canton. Nor are there any poor-laws griping the induſtrious huſbandman and labourer, to feed the lazy, and to feaſt thoſe who have the care of them; no paupers of any deſcription, ſupported from funds that have been levied on the public. The children, if living and, if not, the next of kin, muſt take care of their aged relations; and the parents diſpoſe of their children in what manner they may think beſt for the family intereſt. As ſeveral generations live together, they are ſubſiſted at a much cheaper rate than if each had a ſeparate houſehold. In caſes of real diſtreſs the government is ſuppoſed to act the parent; and its good intentions in this reſpect cannot be called in queſtion; whenever it appears that any of its officers, through neglect or malice, have withheld grain from the poor, they are puniſhed with ſingular ſeverity, ſometimes even with death.

Another great advantage enjoyed by the Chineſe ſubject is, that the amount of his taxes is aſcertained. He is never re-

quired to contribute, by any new aſſeſſment, to make up a given ſum for the extraordinary expences of the ſtate, except in caſes of rebellion, when an additional tax is ſometimes impoſed on the neighbouring provinces. But in general the executive government muſt adapt its wants to the ordinary ſupplies, inſtead of calling on the people for extraordinary contributions. The amount of the revenues of this great empire has been differently ſtated. As the principal branch, the land-tax, is paid in kind, it is indeed ſcarcely poſſible to eſtimate the receipt of it accurately, as it will greatly depend on the ſtate of the crop. An Emperor who aims at popularity never fails to remit this tax or rent, in ſuch diſtricts as have ſuffered by drought or inundation. *Chou-ta-gin* gave to Lord Macartney, from the Imperial rent-roll, a rough ſketch of the ſums raiſed in each province, making them to amount in the whole to about ſixty-ſix millions ſterling; which is not more than twice the revenue of the ſtate in Great Britain, excluſive of the poor's-rate and other parochial taxes, in 1803, and which gives, as I before obſerved, if reduced to a capitation, the ſum of about four ſhillings for each individual, whilſt that of Great Britain, by an analogous computation, would amount to about fifteen times that ſum. I ſhould ſuppoſe, however, that a ſhilling in China, generally ſpeaking, will go as far as three in Great Britain.

From the produce of the taxes the civil and military eſtabliſhments, and all the incidental and extraordinary expences, are firſt paid on the ſpot where they are incurred, out of the provincial magazines, and the remainder is remitted to the Imperial treaſury in Pekin to meet the expences of the court, the eſtabliſhment

eſtabliſhment of the Emperor, his palaces, temples, gardens, women, and princes of the blood. The confiſcations, preſents, tributes, and other articles, may be reckoned as his privy purſe. The ſurplus revenue remitted to Pekin, in the year 1792, was ſtated to be about 36,000,000 ounces of ſilver, or 12,000,000l. ſterling. It is a general opinion among the Chineſe part of his ſubjects, that vaſt ſums of the ſurplus revenue and ſuch as ariſe from confiſcations are annually ſent to Moukden, the capital of Man-tchoo Tartary; but this ſhould appear to be an erroneous opinion founded on prejudice. Notwithſtanding the enormous wealth of *Ho-tchung-tang*, that filled the Imperial coffers, the preſent Emperor found it neceſſary the ſame year to accept an offering, as it was called, of 500,000 ounces of ſilver, or 166,666l. ſterling, from the ſalt merchants of Canton, and ſums of money and articles of merchandize from other quarters, to enable him to quell a rebellion that was raging in one of the weſtern provinces. He even ſent down to Canton a quantity of pearls, agates, ſerpentines, and other ſtones of little value, in the hope of raiſing a temporary ſupply from the ſale of them to foreign merchants. The Emperor of China, therefore, has not ſo much wealth at his diſpoſal as has uſually been imagined. He even accepts of patriotic gifts from individuals, conſiſting of pieces of porcelain, ſilks, fans, tea, and ſuch-like trifling articles, which afterwards ſerve as preſents to foreign embaſſadors, and each gift is pompouſly proclaimed in the Pekin gazette.

The chief officers in the civil departments of government, independent of the miniſters and the different boards in Pekin,

according to the ſtatement of *Tchou-ta-gin*, with their ſalaries and allowances reduced into ſilver, will be ſeen from the following table, which, with that of the military eſtabliſhment, is publiſhed in the appendix to the authentic account of the embaſſy by Sir George Staunton; and as they differ very little from the court calendar publiſhed in 1801, and as I have occaſion to make a few remarks on them, as well as on that of the population, which will be given in a ſubſequent chapter, I have not heſitated to introduce them into the preſent work.

Quality.	Number.	Salaries in ounces of ſilver.	Total.
Viceroys over one or more provinces - -	11	20,000	220,000
Governors of provinces - - -	15	16,000	240,000
Collectors of revenue - - -	19	9,000	171,000
Preſidents of criminal tribunals -	18	6,000	108,000
Governors of more than one city of the firſt order -	86	3,000	258,000
Governors of one city only of the firſt order - -	184	2,000	368,000
Governors of a city of the ſecond order - -	149	1,000	149,000
Governors of a city of the third order - -	1305	800	1,044,000
Preſidents of literature and examinations -	17	3,000	402,000
Inſpectors general - - - -	117		
	Total oz.		2,960,000

The inferior officers acting immediately under the orders of theſe, and amounting to many thouſands, together with the ſalaries and expences of the different boards in the capital, all of which are paid out of the public treaſury, muſt require a ſum at leaſt equal to the above; ſo that on a moderate calculation, the ordinary expences of the civil eſtabliſhment will amount to the ſum of 5,920,000 ounces, or 1,973,333l. ſterling.

Some

Some idea may be formed of the numerous appointments, and the frequent changes in adminiſtration, from the circumſtance of the Court Calendar, or red book, being publiſhed every three months making four tolerable large volumes, or ſixteen volumes every year.

The fatherly attention, the wiſe precautions, and the extreme jealouſy of the government, have not been conſidered as alone ſufficient for the internal and external protection of the empire, without the aſſiſtance of an immenſe ſtanding army. This army, in the midſt of a profound peace, was ſtated by *Van-ta-gin* to conſiſt of eighteen hundred thouſand men, one million of which were ſaid to be infantry, and eight hundred thouſand cavalry. As this government, however, is ſuppoſed to be much given to exaggeration in all matters relating to the aggrandiſement of the country, and to deal liberally in hyperboles, wherever numbers are concerned, the authenticity of the above ſtatement of their military force may perhaps be called in queſtion. The ſum of money, that would be required to keep in pay and furniſh the extraordinaries of ſo immenſe an army, is ſo immoderate that the revenues would appear to be unable to bear it. If the pay and the appointments of each ſoldier, infantry and cavalry one with another, be ſuppoſed to amount to a ſhilling a day, the ſum required for the pay alone would amount to 33,000,000l. ſterling a year!

To come nearer the truth, let us take the calculation drawn up by Lord Macartney from the information of *Van-ta-gin*.

Rank.	Number.	Salaries. oz.	Total.
Tau-ton,	18	4000	72,000
Tſung-ping	62	2400	148,800
Foo-tſung	121	1300	157,300
Tchoo-tſung	165	800	132,000
Tchoo-tzé	373	600	223,800
Too-tzé	425	400	170,000
Sciou-foo	825	320	264,000
Tſien-tſung	1680	160	268,800
Pa-tſung	3622	130	470,870
Commiſſaries of proviſions of firſt rank	44	320	14,080
Commiſſaries of proviſions of ſecond rank	330	160	52,800
		Total	1,974,450
1,000,000 infantry, at two ounces of ſilver each *per* month, proviſions included			24,000,000
800,000 cavalry, at four ounces each, proviſions and forage included			38,400,000
800,000 horſes, coſt at twenty ounces each, 16,000,000 oz. the annual wear and tear at 10 *per cent.* will be			1,600,000
Uniforms for 1,800,000 men once a year, at four ounces			7,200,000
Yearly wear and tear of arms, accoutrements, and contingencies, at one ounce *per* man			1,800,000
			73,000,000
		Total ounces	74,974,450

And as no allowance is made in the above eſtimate for the expence of artillery, tents, war equipage, nor for veſſels of force on the different rivers and canals, the building and keeping in repair the military poſts, the flags, ceremonial dreſſes, boats, waggons, muſical bands, all of which are included in the extraordinaries of the army, theſe may probably be equal to the ordinaries; thus the whole military eſtabliſhment would require the ſum of 149,948,900 ounces, or 49,982,933l. ſterling.

The

The diſpoſal of the revenues will then ſtand as follows:

Total amount of the revenue	-		£. 66,000,000
Civil eſtabliſhment	-	£. 1,973,333	
Military ditto	-	49,982,933	
			51,956,266

Surplus, being for the Emperor's eſtabliſhment £. 14,043,734 which accords pretty nearly with the ſum ſaid to be remitted to Pekin in the year 1792.

It will appear then that if the revenues be admitted as accurate, and I ſee no juſt reaſon for ſuppoſing the contrary, they are more than ſufficient to meet the expences of ſo apparently an enormous eſtabliſhment. If, however, the King of Pruſſia, the Monarch of a ſmall indiſtinguiſhable ſpeck on the globe, when put in compariſon with the empire of China, can keep up an army of one hundred and eighty or two hundred thouſand men, I can perceive nothing either extravagant or extraordinary in ſuppoſing that a Sovereign whoſe dominions are eight times the extent of thoſe of France, before her late uſurpations, ſhould have ten times as great a force as that of the King of Pruſſia. It may perhaps be aſked in what manner are they employed, ſeeing the nation is ſo little engaged in foreign war? The employments for which the military are uſed differ materially from thoſe among European nations. Except a great part of the Tartar cavalry, who are ſtationed on the northern frontier and in the conquered provinces of Tartary, and the Tartar infantry, who are diſtributed as guards for the different cities of the empire, the reſt of the army is parcelled

parcelled out in the ſmaller towns, villages, and hamlets; where they act as jailors, conſtables, thief-takers, aſſiſtants to magiſtrates, ſubordinate collectors of the taxes, guards to the granaries; and are employed in a variety of different ways under the civil magiſtracy and police. Beſides theſe, an immenſe multitude are ſtationed as guards at the military poſts along the public roads, canals, and rivers. Theſe poſts are ſmall ſquare buildings, like ſo many little caſtles, each having on its ſummit a watch-tower and a flag; and they are placed at the diſtance of three or four miles aſunder. At one of theſe poſts there are never fewer than ſix men. They not only prevent robberies and diſputes on the roads and canals, but convey the public diſpatches to and from the capital. An expreſs ſent from poſt to poſt travels between the capital and Canton in twelve days, which is upwards of one hundred miles a day. There is no other poſt nor mode of conveying letters for the convenience of the public.

A great part then of the Chineſe army can only be conſidered as a kind of militia, which never has been, and in all human probability never will be, embodied; as a part of the community not living entirely on the labour of the reſt, but contributing ſomething to the common ſtock. Every ſoldier ſtationed on the different guards has his portion of land aſſigned to him, which he cultivates for his family, and pays his quota of the produce to the ſtate. Such a proviſion, encouraged by public opinion, induces the ſoldier to marry, and the married men are never removed from their ſtations.

It

It will not be expected that men thus circumſtanced ſhould exhibit a very military appearance under arms. In ſome places, where they were drawn out in compliment to the Embaſſador, when the weather happened to be a little warm, they were employed in the exerciſe of their fans, inſtead of their matchlocks; others we found drawn up in a ſingle line, and reſting very compoſedly on their knees to receive the Embaſſador, in which poſture they remained till their commanding officer paſſed the word to riſe. Whenever we happened to take them by ſurprize, there was the greateſt ſcramble to get their holyday dreſſes out of the guard-houſe, which, when put on, had more the appearance of being intended for the ſtage than the field of battle. Their quilted petticoats, ſattin boots, and their fans, had a mixture of clumſineſs and effeminacy that ill accorded with the military character.

The different kinds of troops that compoſe the Chineſe army conſiſt of

Tartar cavalry, whoſe only weapon is the ſabre; and a few who carry bows.

Tartar infantry, bowmen; having alſo large ſabres.

Chineſe infantry, carrying the ſame weapons.

Chineſe matchlocks.

Chineſe Tygers of war, bearing large round ſhields of baſket-work, and long ill-made ſwords. On the ſhields of the laſt are painted monſtrous faces of ſome imaginary animal, intended to frighten the enemy, or, like another gorgon, to petrify their beholders.

The military dreſs varies in almoſt every province. Sometimes they wore blue jackets edged with red, or brown with yellow; ſome had long pantaloons; ſome breeches, with ſtockings of cotton cloth; others petticoats and boots. The bowmen had long looſe gowns of blue cotton, ſtuffed with a kind of felt or wadding, ſtudded all over with braſs knobs, and bound round the middle with a girdle, from which the ſabre was appended behind, hanging with the point forwards, and on the right, not the left, ſide as in Europe. On the head they wore a helmet of leather, or gilt paſteboard, with flaps on each ſide that covered the cheeks and fell upon the ſhoulder. The upper part was exactly like an inverted funnel, with a long pipe terminating in a kind of ſpear, on which was bound a tuft of long hair dyed of a ſcarlet colour.

The greateſt number we ſaw at any one place might be from two to three thouſand, which were drawn up in a ſingle line along the bank of a river; and as they ſtood with an interval between each equal to the width of a man, they formed a very conſiderable line in length. Every fifth man had a ſmall triangular flag, and every tenth a large one; the ſtaffs that ſupported them were fixed to the jacket behind the ſhoulders. Some of the flags were green, edged with red; others blue, edged with yellow. I never ſaw the Chineſe troops drawn out in any other way than a ſingle line in front; not even two deep.

The Tartar cavalry appear to be remarkably ſwift, and to charge with great impetuoſity; but the horſes are ſo ſmall and are broken into ſo quick and ſhort a ſtroke that the eye is deceived. Their real ſpeed, in fact, is very moderate. Their

 ſaddles

ſaddles are remarkably ſoft, and raiſed ſo high both before and behind, that the rider cannot eaſily be thrown out of his ſeat. The ſtirrups are ſo ſhort that the knee is almoſt as high as the chin. They have very little artillery, and that little is as wretched as it well can be. I ſuſpect it is borrowed from the Portugueze, as the matchlock moſt unqueſtionably has been.

When our fellow-traveller *Van-ta-gin* was aſked the reaſon of their pretending to give a preference to the clumſy matchlocks over the firelocks now in uſe among European troops, he replied, it had been found, after a ſevere engagement in Thibet, that the matchlocks had done much more execution than the firelocks. It is difficult to combat prejudices; but it was not very difficult to convince *Van* that the *men* might probably have been quite as much in fault as the *muſquets;* and that the ſuperior ſteadineſs of the fire from the matchlocks might poſſibly be owing to their being fixed, by an iron fork, into the ground. The miſſionaries have aſſigned a very abſurd reaſon for firelocks not being uſed in China; they ſay the dampneſs of the air is apt to make the flint miſs fire. With equal propriety might theſe gentlemen have aſſerted that flints would not emit fire in Italy. Their want of good iron and ſteel to manufacture locks, or the bad quality of their gunpowder, might perhaps be offered as better reaſons; and as the beſt of all their want of courage and coolneſs to make uſe of them with that ſteadineſs which is required to produce the effects of which they are capable. Their favourite inſtrument is the bow, which, like all other miſſile weapons, requires leſs courage to

manage, than thoſe which bring man to oppoſe himſelf in cloſe conteſt with man.

Although the Tartars have found it expedient to continue the Chineſe army on the old footing, it may naturally be ſuppoſed they would endeavour to ſecure themſelves by all poſſible means in the poſſeſſion of this vaſt empire, and that they would uſe every exertion to recruit the army with their own countrymen, in preference to the Chineſe. Every Tartar male child is accordingly enrolled. This precaution was neceſſary, as their whole army, at the time of the conqueſt, is ſaid not to have exceeded eighty thouſand men. At this time, in fact, a weak adminiſtration had ſuffered the empire to be torn aſunder by convulſions. Every department, both civil and military, was under the control of eunuchs. Six thouſand of theſe creatures are ſaid to have been turned adrift by the Tartars on taking poſſeſſion of the palace in Pekin.

The conduct of the Mantchoo Tartars, whoſe race is now on the throne, was a maſter-piece of policy little to be expected in a tribe of people that had been conſidered but as half civilized. They entered the Chineſe dominions as auxiliaries againſt two rebel chiefs, but ſoon perceived they might become the principals. Having placed their leader on the vacant throne, inſtead of ſetting up for conquerors, they melted at once into the maſs of the conquered. They adopted the dreſs, the manners, and the opinions of the people. In all the civil departments of the ſtate they appointed the ableſt Chineſe, and all vacancies were filled with Chineſe in preference to Tartars.

Tartars. They learned the Chineſe language; married into Chineſe families; encouraged Chineſe ſuperſtitions; and, in ſhort, omitted no ſtep that could tend to incorporate them as one nation. Their great object was to ſtrengthen the army with their own countrymen, whilſt the Chineſe were ſo ſatisfied with the change, that they almoſt doubted whether a change had really taken place.

The uninterrupted ſucceſſion of four Emperors, all of whom were endowed with excellent underſtandings, uncommon vigour of mind, and deciſion of character, has hitherto obviated the danger of ſuch an enormous diſproportion between the governors and the governed. The wiſdom, prudence, and energy of theſe Emperors have not only maintained the family on the throne, the fifth of which now fills it, but have enlarged the dominions to an extent of which hiſtory furniſhes no parallel. The preſent Emperor, *Kia-king*, is ſaid to poſſeſs the learning and prudence of his father, and the firmneſs of *Kaung-Shee;* but it is probable he will have a more difficult taſk in governing the empire than either of his predeceſſors. In proportion as the Tartar power has increaſed, they have become leſs ſolicitous to conciliate the Chineſe. All the heads of departments are now Tartars. The miniſters are all Tartars; and moſt of the offices of high truſt and power are filled by Tartars. And although the ancient language of the country is ſtill preſerved as the court language, yet it is more than probable that Tartar pride, encreaſing with its growing power, will ere long be induced to adopt its own.

The

The Emperor *Kaung-Shee* indeed took uncommon pains to improve the Mantchoo language, and to form it into a ſyſtematic *Theſaurus* or dictionary; and *Tchien-Lung* directed that the children of all ſuch parents as were one a Tartar, the other a Chineſe, ſhould be taught the Mantchoo language; and that they might paſs their examinations for office in that language. I could obſerve, that the young men of the royal family at *Yuen-min-yuen* ſpoke with great contempt of the Chineſe. One of them, perceiving that I was deſirous of acquiring ſome knowledge of the Chineſe written character, took great pains to convince me that the Tartar language was much ſuperior to it; and he not only offered to furniſh me with the alphabet and ſome books, but with his inſtructions alſo, if I would give up the Chineſe, which, he obſerved, was not to be acquired in the courſe of a man's whole life. I could not forbear remarking, how very much theſe young princes enjoyed a jeſt levelled againſt the Chineſe. An ill-natured remark, for inſtance, on the cramped feet and the hobbling gait of a Chineſe woman met with their hearty approbation; but they were equally diſpleaſed on hearing the clumſy ſhoes worn by the Tartar ladies compared to the broad flat-bottomed junks of the Chineſe.

Although the ancient inſtitutes and laws, the eſtabliſhed forms of office, the pageantry of adminiſtration, were all retained, and the dreſs, the manners, and external deportment of the vanquiſhed were aſſumed by the victors, yet the native character remained diſtinct; and now, in the higher departments of office eſpecially, it burſts through all diſguiſe. The conſcious ſuperio-

ſuperiority of the one checks and overawes the other. " Moſt " of our books," obſerves Lord Macartney, " confound the " two people together, and talk of them as if they made only " one nation under the general name of China; but whatever " might be concluded from any outward appearances, the real " diſtinction is never forgotten by the ſovereign who, though " he pretends to be perfectly impartial, conducts himſelf at " bottom by a ſyſtematic nationality, and never for a moment " loſes ſight of the cradle of his power. The ſcience of go- " vernment in the *Eaſtern* world, is underſtood by thoſe who " govern very differently from what it is in the *Weſtern*. " When the ſucceſſion of a conteſted kingdom in Europe is " once aſcertained, whether by violence or compromiſe, the " nation returns to its priſtine regularity and compoſure: it " matters little whether a Bourbon or an Auſtrian fills " the throne of Naples or of Spain, becauſe the ſovereign, " whoever he be, then becomes to all intents and purpoſes, a " Spaniard or Neapolitan, and his deſcendants continue ſo " with accelerated velocity. George the Firſt and George the " Second ceaſed to be foreigners from the moment our ſceptre " was fixed in their hands; and His preſent Majeſty is as " much an Engliſhman as King Alfred or King Edgar, and go- " verns his people not by Teutonic, but by Engliſh laws.

" The policy of Aſia is totally oppoſite. There the prince " regards the place of his nativity as an accident of mere indif- " ference. If the parent root be good, he thinks it will flouriſh " in every ſoil, and perhaps acquire freſh vigour from tranſ- " plantation. It is not locality, but his own caſt and family; " it

" it is not the country where he drew his breath, but the blook " from which he ſprung; it is not the ſcenery of the theatre, " but the ſpirit of the drama, that engages his attention and " occupies his thoughts. A ſeries of two hundred years, in the " ſucceſſion of eight or ten monarchs, did not change the Mo- " gul into a Hindoo, nor has a century and a half made *Tchien-* " *Lung* a Chineſe. He remains, at this hour, in all his " maxims of policy, as true a Tartar as any of his an- " ceſtors."

Whether this moſt ancient empire among men will long continue in its ſtability and integrity, can only be matter of conjecture, but certain it is, the Chineſe are greatly diſſatisfied, and not without reaſon, at the imperious tone now openly aſſumed by the Tartars; and though they are obliged to cringe and ſubmit, in order to riſe to any diſtinction in the ſtate, yet they unanimouſly load them with

" Curſes, not loud, but deep, mouth-honour, breath *."

* The laſt accounts, indeed, that have been received from China, are rather of an alarming nature. A very ſerious rebellion had broken out in the weſtern provinces, which had extended to that of Canton, the object of which was the overthrow of the Tartar government. It was known for ſome years paſt, as I before obſerved, that certain ſecret ſocieties were forming in the different provinces, who correſponded together by unknown ſigns, agreed upon by convention, but they were not conſidered to be of that extent as to cauſe any uneaſineſs to the government. It appears, however, that not fewer than forty thouſand men had aſſembled in arms in the province of Canton, at the head of whom was a man of the family of the laſt Chineſe Emperor, who had aſſumed the Imperial Yellow. Theſe rebels, it ſeems, are conſiderably encouraged in their cauſe by a prophecy, which is current among the people, that the preſent Tartar dynaſty ſhall be overturned in the year 1804. The exiſtence of ſuch a prophecy may be more dangerous to the Tartar government than the arms of the rebels, by aſſiſting to bring about its own accompliſhment.

Whenever

Whenever the diſmemberment or diſlocation of this great machine ſhall take place, either by a rebellion or revolution, it muſt be at the expence of many millions of lives. For, as is well obſerved by Lord Macartney, " A ſudden tranſition from " ſlavery to freedom, from dependence to authority, can ſel- " dom be borne with moderation or diſcretion. Every change " in the ſtate of man ought to be gentle and gradual, other- " wiſe it is commonly dangerous to himſelf, and intolerable to " others. A due preparation may be as neceſſary for liberty, " as for inoculation of the ſmall-pox, which, like liberty, is " future health but, without due preparation, is almoſt certain " deſtruction. Thus then the Chineſe, if not led to emanci- " pation by degrees, but let looſe on a burſt of enthuſiaſm, " would probably fall into all the exceſſes of folly, ſuffer all " the paroxyſms of madneſs, and be found as unfit for " the enjoyment of rational freedom, as the French and the " negroes."