

A
PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
SETTLEMENTS AND TRADE
OF THE
E U R O P E A N S
IN THE
EAST AND WEST INDIES.

REVISED, AUGMENTED, AND PUBLISHED,

IN TEN VOLUMES,

By the ABBÉ *Raynal* RAYNAL.

Newly translated from the French,

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WITH A
NEW SET OF MAPS ADAPTED TO THE WORK,
AND A COPIOUS INDEX.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

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tomed to the barbarous and ridiculous manners of Europe.

LET us for a while fix our attention upon a people, who have been judged of so differently by the Europeans. Let us compare the accounts given of them by their Panegyrist, with those which have been transmitted to us by their calumniators; and we may possibly derive from this contrast, some light that may tend to conciliate these contradictory opinions. The history of a nation so well governed, say the partisans of China, is the history of mankind: the rest of the world resembles the chaos of matter before it was wrought into form. After a long series of devastation, society has at length risen to order and harmony. States and nations are produced from each other, like individuals, with this difference, that in families nature brings about the death of some, and provides for the birth of others, in a constant and regular succession: but in states, this rule is violated and destroyed by the disorders of society, where it sometimes happens that ancient monarchies stifle rising republics in their births, and that a rude and savage people, rushing like a torrent, sweep away multitudes of states, which are disunited and broken in pieces.

CHINA alone has been exempted from this fatality. This empire, bounded on the north by Russian Tartary, on the south by India, on the west by Thibet, and on the east by the ocean, comprehends almost all the eastern extremity of the continent of Asia. It is eighteen hundred leagues in circumference; and is said to have

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State of
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lasted through a successive series of four thousand years: nor is this antiquity in the least to be wondered at. The narrow bounds of our history, and the small extent of our kingdoms, which rise and fall in a quick succession, are the consequence of wars, superstition, and the unfavourable circumstances of our situation. But the Chinese, who are encompassed and defended on all sides by seas and deserts, like the ancient Egyptians, may have given a lasting stability to their empire. As soon as their coasts and the inland parts of their territories have been peopled and cultivated, this happy nation must of course have been the center of attraction to all the surrounding people; and the wandering or cantoned tribes must necessarily have gradually attached themselves to a body of men, who speak less frequently of the conquests they have made, than of the attacks they have suffered; and are happier in the thought of having civilized their conquerors, than they could have been in that of having destroyed their invaders.

In a country where a civilized government has been so antiently established, we may every where expect to find strong vestiges of the continued exertions of industry. It's roads have been levelled with the exactest care; and, in general, have no greater declivity than is necessary to facilitate the watering of the land, which the Chinese consider, with reason, as one of the greatest helps in agriculture. There are but few, even of the most useful trees, because their fruits would rob the corn of it's nourishment. We cannot

not therefore expect to meet here with those gardens full of flowers, verdant lawns, groves, and fountains, the sight of which is calculated to exhilarate the idle spectator, while they seem concealed and removed from the public eye, as if the owners were afraid of shewing how much their amusements had encroached upon the soil that ought to be cultivated for the support of life. The land is not overcharged with those parks or extensive forests, which are not near so serviceable to mankind by the wood they furnish, as prejudicial by preventing agriculture; and while they contribute to the pleasure of the great by the beasts that range in them, prove a real misfortune to the husbandman. In China, the beauty of a country-seat consists in it's being happily situated, surrounded with an agreeable variety of cultivated fields, and interspersed with trees planted irregularly, and with some heaps of a porous stone, which at a distance have the appearance of rocks or mountains.

THE hills are generally cut into terraces, supported by dry walls. Here there are reservoirs, constructed with ingenuity, for the reception of rain and spring water. It is not uncommon to see the bottom, summit and declivity of a hill watered by the same canal, by means of a number of engines of a simple construction, which save manual labour, and perform with two men, what could not be done with a thousand any where else. These heights commonly yield three crops in a year. They are first sow'n with a kind of radish, which produces an oil; then with cotton, and
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after that with potatoes. This is the common method of culture; but the rule is not without exception.

UPON most of the mountains which are incapable of being cultivated for the subsistence of man, proper trees are planted for building houses or ships. Many of these mountains contain iron, tin, and copper mines, sufficient to supply the empire. The gold mines have been neglected, either because their produce did not defray the expence of working them, or because the gold dust, washed down by the torrents, was found sufficient for the purposes of exchange.

THE sandy plains, saved from the ravages of the ocean (which changes it's bed as rivers do their course, in a space of time so exactly proportioned to the difference in the mass of water, that a small encroachment of the sea causes a thousand revolutions on the surface of the globe), form, at this day, the provinces of Nankin and Tchekiang, which are the finest in the empire. As the Egyptians checked the course of the Nile, the Chinese have repulsed, restrained, and given laws to the ocean. They have re-united to the continent, tracts of land which had been disjoined by this element. To the action of the universe the Chinese oppose the labours of industry; and while nations, the most celebrated in history, have, by the rage of conquest, increased the ravages which time is perpetually making upon this globe, they exert such efforts to retard the progress of universal devastation, as might appear
supernatural,

supernatural, if they were not continual and evident.

To the improvements of land, this nation adds, if we may be allowed the expression, the improvement of the water. The rivers, which communicate with each other by canals, and run under the walls of most of the towns, present us with the prospect of floating cities, composed of an infinite number of boats filled with people, who live constantly upon the water, and whose sole employment is fishing. The sea itself is covered with numberless vessels, whose masts, at a distance, appear like moving forests. Anson mentions it as a reproach to the fishermen belonging to these boats, that they did not give themselves a moment's intermission from their work to look at his ship, which was the largest that had ever anchored in those latitudes. But this inattention to an object, which appeared to a Chinese sailor of no use, though it was in the way of his profession, is, perhaps, a proof of the happiness of a people, who prefer business to matters of mere curiosity.

THE mode of cultivation is by no means uniform throughout this empire, but varies according to the nature of the soil and the difference of the climate. In the low countries towards the south rice is sow'n, which being always under water, grows to a great size, and yields two crops in a year. In the inland parts of the country, where the situation is lofty and dry, the soil produces a species of rice, which is neither so large, so well-tasted, or so nourishing as the former, and makes the husbandman but one return in the year for his labour.

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labour. In the northern parts, the same kinds of grain are cultivated as in Europe: they grow in as great plenty, and are of as good a quality as in any of our most fertile countries. From one end of China to the other, there are large quantities of vegetables, particularly in the south, where, together with fish, they supply the place of meat, which is the general food of the other provinces. But the improvement of lands is universally understood and attended to. All the different kinds of manure are carefully preserved, and skilfully distributed to the best advantage; and that which arises from fertile lands, is applied to make them still more fertile. This grand system of nature, which is sustained by destruction and re-production, is better understood and attended to in China than in any other country in the world.

THE first cause of the rural œconomy of the Chinese, is that character of industry by which these people are particularly distinguished, who in their nature require a less share of repose. Every day in the year is devoted to labour, except the first, which is employed in paying and receiving visits among relations; and the last, which is sacred to the memory of their ancestors. The first is a social duty, the latter a part of domestic worship. In this nation of sages, whatever unites and civilizes mankind is religion: and religion itself is nothing more than the practice of the social virtues. They are a sober and rational people, who want nothing more than the controul of civil laws to make them just: their private worship consists in the love of their parents,

rents, whether living or dead; and their public worship, in the love of labour; and that kind of labour which is holden in the most sacred veneration is agriculture. BOOK
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THE generosity of two of their emperors is much revered, who, preferring the interests of the state to those of their family, kept their own children from the throne to make room for men taken from the plough. The Chinese also revere the memory of those husbandmen, who sowed the seeds of the happiness and stability of the empire in the fertile bosom of the earth; that inexhaustible source of whatever conduces to the nourishment, and consequently to the increase of mankind.

In imitation of these royal husbandmen, the emperors of China become husbandmen officially. It is one of their public functions to break up the ground in the spring: and the parade and magnificence that accompanies this ceremony, draws together all the farmers in the neighbourhood of the capital. They flock in crowds to see their prince perform this solemnity in honour of the first of all the arts. It is not, as in the fables of Greece, a god who tends the flocks of a king; it is the father of his people, who, holding the plough with his own hands, shews his children what are the true riches of the state. In a little time he repairs again to the field he has ploughed himself, to sow the seed that is most proper for the ground. The example of the prince is followed in all the provinces; and at the same seasons, the viceroys

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viceroy repeat the same ceremonies in the presence of a numerous concourse of husbandmen. The Europeans, who have been present at this solemnity at Canton, never speak of it without emotion; and make us regret that this festival, the political aim of which is the encouragement of labour, is not established in our climate, instead of that number of religious feasts, which seem to be invented by idleness to make the country a barren waste.

It is not to be imagined, however, that the court of Peking is really engaged in the labours of a rural life. The arts of luxury are grown to so great a height in China, that these transactions can only pass for mere ceremonies. But the law, which obliges the prince to shew this token of respect to the profession of husbandmen, has a tendency to promote the advantage of agriculture. The deference paid by the sovereign to public opinions contributes to perpetuate them; and the influence of opinion is the principal spring that actuates the political machine.

This influence is preserved in China by conferring honours on all husbandmen, who excel in the cultivation of the ground. When any useful discovery is made, the author of it is called to court to communicate it to the prince; and is sent by the government into the provinces, to instruct them in his method. In a word, in this country, where nobility is not hereditary, but a mere personal reward, indiscriminately bestowed upon merit; several of the magistrates, and per-

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sons raised to the highest employments in the empire, are chosen out of families which are solely employed in the cultivation of land.

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I.

THESE encouragements which belong to the manners of the people, are further seconded by the best political institutions. Whatever is in its nature incapable of being divided, as the sea, rivers, canals, &c. is enjoyed in common, and is the property of no individual. Every one has the liberty of going upon the water, of fishing, and hunting; and a subject who is in possession of an estate, whether acquired by himself or left by his relations, is in no danger of having his right called in question by the tyrannical authority of the feudal laws.

THE smallness of the taxes is still a further encouragement to agriculture. Except the customs established in the sea-ports, there are but two kinds of tribute know'n in the empire. The first, which is personal, is paid by every citizen from twenty to sixty years of age, in proportion to his income. The second, which is levied on the produce of the land, amounts to a tenth, a twentieth, or a thirtieth part, according to the quality of the soil. There certainly have been some of their emperors, or ministers, who have attempted to extend and multiply the taxes; but as such an undertaking would require much time, and that no man could flatter himself that he should live to see the success of it, the attempt has been given up. Men of bad principles aim at immediate enjoyment, while the virtuous minister extending his benevolent views beyond the present generation,

tion, contents himself with forming designs, and propagating useful truths for the advantage of posterity, without expecting to see the effect of them himself.

THE manner of levying the contributions in China, is as mild as the contributions themselves. The only penalty inflicted on persons liable to be taxed, and who are too slow in the payment of the tribute demanded by the public, is to quarter old, infirm, and poor people upon them, to be maintained at their expence, till they have discharged the debt due to government. This manner of proceeding has a tendency to awaken pity and humanity in the breast of a citizen, when he sees miserable objects, and hears the cries of hunger; instead of giving him disgust, and exciting his resentment by the odious perquisitions and researches of the finance as practised in Europe, by forcible seizures and the menaces of an insolent soldiery, who come to live at discretion in a house exposed to the numberless extortions of the treasury.

THE mandarins levy the tenth part of the produce of the earth in kind; and collect the poll-tax in money. The officers in the municipal towns pay the whole of the produce into the public treasury, through the hands of the receiver-general of the province. The use that is made of this revenue prevents all frauds in collecting it; as it is well know'n, that a part of these duties is allotted for the maintenance of the magistrates and soldiers. The money arising from the sale of this proportion of the product of the lands which has

has been exposed to sale, is never issued from the treasury but in public exigencies. It is laid up in the magazines against times of scarcity, when the people receive what they had only lent, as it were, in times of plenty.

It may naturally be expected that a nation, enjoying so many advantages, would be extremely populous; especially in a climate where, whatever reason may be assigned for it, the women are remarkably prolific; where debauchery is very uncommon; where the extent of paternal rights necessarily excites the desire of having a numerous progeny; where an equality of fortunes prevails, which the difference of conditions renders impossible in other places; where the mode of living is generally simple, little expensive, and tending always to the most rigid œconomy; where wars are neither frequent, nor destructive; where celibacy is proscribed by the manners of the country; and where the healthiness of the climate prevents epidemic diseases. Accordingly, there is no country in the universe so populous as this. The population is indeed carried to too great a height, since it appears from the records of the empire, that a bad harvest seldom fails to produce an insurrection.

It is unnecessary to search beyond this circumstance for the reasons which prevent despotism from making any advances in China. It is evident from these frequent revolutions, that the people are fully sensible that a regard to the rights of property, and submission to the laws, are duties of a secondary class, subordinate to

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the original rights of nature, whose only view, in the formation of communities, has been the common benefit of those who enter into them. Accordingly, when the more immediate necessities of life fail, the Chinese cease to acknowledge an authority which does not provide for their subsistence. The right of kings is founded on the regard they pay to the preservation of the people. Neither religion nor morality teach any other doctrine in China.

THE emperor is well aware, that he presides over a people who submit to the laws no longer than while they promote their happiness. He is sensible, that if the spirit of tyranny, which is so common and epidemical in other countries, should seize him but for a moment, such a violent opposition would be raised, that he would be expelled from the throne. Accordingly, finding himself invested with the supreme command by a people who observe and criticise his conduct, he is far from attempting to erect himself into an object of religious superstition, which sets no bounds to it's authority. He does not violate the sacred contract, by virtue of which he holds the sceptre. He is convinced that the people are so well acquainted with their rights, and know so well how to defend them, that whenever a province complains of the mandarin who governs it, he recalls him without examination, and delivers him up to a tribunal, which proceeds against him if he be in fault; but should he even prove innocent, he is not reinstated in his employment; for even the circumstance of it's having been possible for

For him to excite the resentment of the people, is imputed to him as a crime. He is considered as an ignorant tutor, who attempts to deprive a father of the love his children bear him. This compliance, which, in other countries, would nourish perpetual discontent, and occasion an infinite number of intrigues, is not attended with any inconvenience in China, where the inhabitants are naturally disposed to be mild and just, and the constitution of the state is so ordered, that it's delegates have seldom any rigorous commands to execute.

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THIS obligation the prince is under of being just, tends to make him more wise and intelligent. He is in China what we wish to make princes in all countries believe they are, the idol of his people. It should seem that the manners and laws of this country have mutually conspired to establish this fundamental principle, that China is a family of which the Emperor is the patriarch. It is not as a conqueror, or a legislator, that he holds his authority; but as a father: it is by this tie that he governs, rewards, and punishes. This pleasing sentiment gives him a greater share of power, than the tyrants of other nations can possibly derive from the number of their troops, or the artifices of their ministers. It is not to be imagined what esteem and affection the Chinese have for their emperor; or, as they express it, for their common, their universal father.

THIS public veneration is founded upon that which is established by private education. In China, the father and mother claim an absolute

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right over their children at every period of life, even when raised to the highest dignity. Paternal authority and filial affection are the springs of this empire: they regulate the manners, and are the tie that unites the prince to his subjects, the subjects to their prince, and the citizens to one another. The Chinese government, by the gradual perfection it has acquired, has been brought back to that point from which all other governments seem to have finally and irrevocably degenerated; to the patriarchal government, which is that of nature itself.

THIS sublime system of morals, which for so many ages has contributed to the prosperity of the Chinese empire, would, however, probably have experienced an insensible change, if the chimerical distinctions allowed to birth had destroyed that original equality established by nature among mankind, and which ought only to give way to superior abilities and superior merit. In all the states of Europe, there are a set of men who assume from their infancy a pre-eminence independent of their moral character. The attention paid them from the moment of their birth, gives them the idea that they are formed for command; they soon learn to consider themselves as a distinct species, and being secure of a certain rank and station, take no pains to make themselves worthy of it.

THIS institution, to which we owe so many indifferent ministers, ignorant magistrates, and bad generals, is not established in China, where nobility does not descend by hereditary right. The same any citizen acquires, begins and ends with himself.

himself. The son of the prime minister of the empire has no advantages at the moment of his birth, but those he may have derived from nature. The rank of nobility is sometimes conferred upon the ancestors of a man who has done signal services to his country; but this mark of distinction, which is merely personal, dies with its possessor, and his children derive no other advantage from it than the memory and example of his virtues.

In consequence of this perfect equality, the Chinese are enabled to establish an uniform system of education, and to inculcate correspondent principles. It is no difficult task to persuade men who are upon an equal footing by birth, that they are all brethren. This opinion gives them every advantage which a contrary idea would make them lose. A Chinese, who should abstract himself from this common fraternity, would become a solitary and miserable being, and wander as a stranger in the heart of his country.

INSTEAD of those frivolous distinctions which are allotted to birth in almost every other country, the Chinese substitute real ones, founded entirely on personal merit. A set of wise and intelligent men, who are honoured with the title of the learned mandarins, devote themselves to the study of all sciences necessary to qualify them for the administration of public affairs. None can be admitted into this respectable society, who are not recommended by their talents and knowledge; for riches give no claim to this privilege. The mandarins themselves fix upon proper persons to

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associate with them; and their choice is always the result of a strict examination. There are different classes of mandarins, the succession to which is regulated by merit, and not by seniority.

FROM this body of mandarins, the emperor, according to a custom as ancient as the empire, elects ministers, magistrates, governors of provinces, and officers of every denomination who are called to any employment in the state. As his choice can only fall upon men of tried abilities, the welfare of the people is always lodged in the hands of those who are worthy of such a trust.

IN consequence of this institution, no dignity is hereditary except that of the crown; and even that does not always devolve on the eldest son; but on him whom the emperor and the council of mandarins judge most worthy. By this method, a spirit of virtuous emulation prevails even in the imperial family. The throne is given to merit alone, and it is assigned to the heir only in consideration of his abilities. The emperors rather chuse to look for a successor in a different family, than to intrust the reins of government to unskilful hands.

THE viceroys and magistrates enjoy the affection of the people, at the same time that they partake of the authority of the sovereign; and any mistakes in their administration meet with the same indulgence that is shew'n to those of the supreme legislator. They have not that tendency to sedition which prevails in this part of the world. In China there is no set of men to form or manage a faction: as the mandarins have no rich and powerful

ful family connections, they can derive no support but from the crown, and their own wisdom. They are trained up in a way of thinking that inspires humanity, the love of order, beneficence, and respect for the laws. They take pains to inculcate these sentiments into the people, and secure their attachment to every law, by pointing out to them it's useful tendency. The sovereign passes no edict that does not convey some moral or political instruction. The people necessarily become acquainted with their interests, and the measures taken by government to promote them; and the better informed they are, the more likely they will be to remain quiet,

SUPERSTITION, which excites disturbances in all other countries, and either establishes tyranny, or overthrows government, has no influence in China. It is tolerated, injudiciously, perhaps, by the laws: but, at least, it never makes laws itself. No person can have any share in the government who does not belong to the class of literati, who admit of no superstition. The bonzes are not allowed to ground the duties of morality upon the doctrines of their sects, nor consequently to dispense with them. If they impose upon some part of the nation, their artifices do not affect those whose example and authority are of the greatest importance to the state,

CONFUCIUS, in whose actions and discourses precept was joined to example, whose memory is equally revered, and whose doctrine is equally embraced by all classes and sects whatsoever, was the founder of the national religion of China,

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His code contains a system of natural law, which ought to be the ground-work of all religions, the rule of society, and standard of all governments. He taught, that reason was an emanation of the Deity; and that the supreme law consisted in the harmony between nature and reason. The religion that runs in opposition to these two guides of human life, does not come from heaven.

As the Chinese have no term for God, they say that heaven is God. *But*, says the emperor Chang-chi, in an edict published in 1710, *it is not to the visible and material heaven that we offer our sacrifices, but to the Lord of heaven.* Thus atheism, though not uncommon in China, is not publicly professed. It is neither the characteristic of a sect, nor an object of persecution; but is tolerated as well as superstition.

THE emperor, who is sole pontiff, is likewise the judge in matters of religion; but as the national worship was made for the government, not the government for it; and as both were designed to be subservient to the ends of society; it is neither the interest nor inclination of the sovereign to employ the combination of authority lodged in his hands, for the purposes of oppression. If on the one hand the doctrines and ceremonies of the hierarchy do not prevent the prince from making an ill use of absolute authority; he is more powerfully restrained on the other, by the general influence of the national manners.

ANY attempt to change these manners would be attended with the greatest difficulty, because they are inculcated by a mode of education which

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is, perhaps, the best we are acquainted with. The Chinese do not make a point of instructing their children till they are five years old. They are then taught to write words or hieroglyphics, which represent sensible objects, of which at the same time they endeavour to give them clear ideas. Afterwards, their memory is stored with sententious verses containing precepts of morality, which they are taught to reduce to practice. As they advance in years they are instructed in the philosophy of Confucius. This is the manner of education among the ordinary ranks. The children who may aspire to posts of honour, begin in the same manner; but intermix other studies relative to human conduct in the different stations of life.

In China, the manners take their complexion from the laws, and are preserved by common usage, which is likewise prescribed by the laws. The Chinese have a greater number of precepts, relating to the most common actions, than any other people in the world. Their code of politeness is very voluminous; the lowest citizen is instructed in it, and observes it with the same exactness as the mandarins and the court.

THE laws in this code, like all the rest, are formed with a view of keeping up the opinion that China is but one great family, and of promoting that regard and mutual affection in the citizens, which is due to each other as brethren. These rights and customs tend to preserve the manners. Sometimes, indeed, ceremonies are substituted for sentiment; but how often are they the means of
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reviving it! They compose a kind of constant homage that is paid to virtue; and is calculated to engage the attention of youth. This homage preserves the respect due to virtue herself; and if it sometimes leads to hypocrisy, it encourages at least a laudable zeal. Tribunals are erected to take cognizance of transgressions against custom; as well as to punish crimes, and reward merit. Mild and moderate punishments are inflicted upon crimes, and virtue is distinguished by marks of honour. Honour is therefore one of the principles that actuate the Chinese government: and though it be the leading one, it operates more strongly than fear, and more feebly than affection.

UNDER the influence of such institutions, China must be the country in the whole world, where men are most humane. Accordingly, the humanity of the Chinese is conspicuous on those occasions, where it should seem, that virtue could have no other object but justice; and that justice could not be executed without severity. Their prisoners are confined in neat and commodious apartments, where they are well taken care of, even to the moment when they suffer. It frequently happens, that the only punishment inflicted on a rich man amounts to no more than obliging him, for a certain time, to maintain or clothe some old men and orphans at his own expence. Our moral and political romances form the real history of the Chinese, who have regulated all the actions of men with such an exact nicety, that they have scarcely any need of sentiment.

Yet they do not fail to cultivate the latter, in order to give a proper estimation to the former.

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THE spirit of patriotism, that spirit, without which states are mere colonies, and not nations, is stronger, perhaps, and more active among the Chinese, than it is found in any republic. It is common to see them voluntarily contributing their labour to repair the public roads: the rich build places of shelter upon them for the use of travellers; and others plant trees there. Such actions, which are proofs of a beneficent humanity rather than an ostentation of generosity, are far from being uncommon in China.

THERE have been times, when they have been frequent, and others, when they have been less so; but the corruption which was the cause of the latter, brought on a revolution, and the manners of the people were reformed. They suffered by the late invasion of the Tartars: they are now recovering, in proportion as the princes of that victorious nation lay aside the superstitions of their own country, to adopt the principles of the nation they have conquered; and in proportion as they improve in the knowledge of those books, which the Chinese call canonical.

It cannot be long before we see the amiable character of this nation entirely revived; that fraternal, and kindred principle; those enchanting and social ties, which soften the manners of the people, and attach them inviolably to the laws. Political errors and vices cannot take deep root in a country where no persons are ever promoted to public employments, but such as are of the sect of the learned,

learned, whose sole occupation is to instruct themselves in the principles of morality and government. As long as real knowledge shall be holden in estimation, as long as it shall continue to lead to public honours, there will exist among the people of China a fund of reason and virtue, which will not be found among other nations.

It must, however, be acknowledged, that the greatest part of those improvements, which depend upon theories that are in the least complicated, are not so far advanced there, as might naturally be expected from that ancient, active, and diligent people, who have so long had a clue to them. But this circumstance is not inexplicable. The Chinese language requires a long and laborious study, scarcely to be comprehended within the term of a man's life. The rights and ceremonies which they observe upon every occasion, afford more exercise for their memory than their sensibility. Their manners are calculated to check the impulses of the soul, and weaken its operations. Too assiduous in the pursuit of what is useful, they have no opportunity of launching out into the extensive regions of imagination. An excessive veneration for antiquity, makes them the slaves of whatever is established. All these causes united, must necessarily have stifled, among the Chinese, the spirit of invention. It requires ages with them to bring any thing to perfection; and whoever reflects on the state, in which arts and sciences were found among them three hundred years ago, must be convinced of the extraordinary antiquity of their empire.

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THE low state of learning, and of the fine arts in China, may perhaps be further owen to the very perfection of it's government, and system of policy. This paradox has it's foundation in reason. Where the study of the laws holds the first rank in a nation, and is rewarded with an appointment in the administration, instead of a post in an academy; where learning is applied to the regulation of manners, or the maintenance of the public weal; where the same nation is exceedingly populous, and requires a constant attention in it's learned members to make subsistence keep an equal pace with population; where every individual, beside the duties he owes to the public, which take a considerable time to be well understood, has particular duties arising from the claims of his family or profession: in such a nation, the speculative and ornamental parts of science cannot be expected to arrive at that height of splendour they have attained in Europe. But the Chinese, who are only our scholars in the arts of luxury and vanity, are our masters in the science of good government. They can teach us the art of increasing population, not that of destroying it.

ONE of the arts in which the Chinese have made the least progress, is that of war. It is natural to imagine, that a nation, whose whole conduct, like that of infants, is influenced by ceremonies, precepts, and customs either of private or public institution, must consequently be pliant, moderate, and inclined to tranquillity both at home and abroad. Reason and reflection, while they cherish sentiments like these, leave no room for that

that enthusiasm, which constitutes the hero and the warrior. The spirit of humanity, which they imbibe in their tender years, makes them look with abhorrence on those sanguinary scenes of rapine and massacre, that are so familiar to nations of a warlike turn. With such dispositions, can we wonder that the Chinese are not warriors? They have soldiers without number, but totally undisciplined, except in the single article of obedience, and which are still more deficient in military manœuvres than in courage. In their wars with the Tartars, the Chinese knew not how to fight, and only stood to be killed. Their attachment to their government, their country, and their laws, may supply the want of a warlike spirit, but will never supply the want of good arms, and military skill. When a nation has found the art of subduing it's conquerors by it's manners, it has no occasion to overcome it's enemies by force of arms.

Is there a man who can look with so much indifference upon the happiness of a considerable portion of the human race, as not to wish that the state of China were really such as we have been representing it? Let us, however, attend to what those persons have to say upon the subject, who think themselves warranted in entertaining a contrary opinion.

State of
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cording to
the accounts
of the ca-
lumniators
of that em-
pire.

IN order to judge, say these people, of a nation, equally closed on all sides, since foreigners are not permitted to enter into it, and the natives are prohibited from going out of it, it is necessary to set out from some principles, which how-
ever

ever uncertain they may be, are still received as found principles. These shall be the very facts that are alleged by the panegyrist of China. We shall take them for granted, without entering into a discussion of them; and we shall only draw the conclusions that are necessarily derived from them.

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I.

1. CHINA enjoyed, or was under the calamity of an immense population, when it was conquered by the Tartars; and it is concluded, from the circumstance of the laws having been adopted by the conqueror, that they must have been wise laws.

THIS submission of the Tartars to the Chinese government, does not appear to us to be a proof of it's excellence. It is in the nature of things that great bodies should give the law to little ones; and this rule is observed in morality as well as in philosophy. If we therefore compare the number of the conquerors with that of the vanquished people, we shall find that to one Tartar there were fifty thousand Chinese. Is it possible that one individual should alter the customs, manners, and legislation of fifty thousand men? Besides, how could it happen otherwise than that these Tartars should have adopted the Chinese laws, when they had none of their own to substitute to them? The circumstances which this extraordinary revolution most conspicuously displays, are the cowardice of the nation, and it's indifference for it's masters, which is one of the most striking characteristics of the slave. Let us proceed to consider the population of China.

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2. FROM time immemorial agriculture has been honoured in China: this is a fact upon which all are agreed. Every country addicted to husbandry, and which enjoys a long continuance of peace; which does not experience any bloody revolutions; which is neither oppressed by tyranny, nor exposed to devastation by the diseases of the climate; and where we see the laborious citizen collecting in the plain a basket full of earth, carrying it up to the tops of the mountains, covering the naked point of a rock with it, and keeping it in it's situation by little palisades; such a country must infallibly abound with inhabitants. Would these inhabitants indeed employ themselves in extravagant labours, if the plain from which they have gathered this small parcel of land, were uncultivated, deserted, and abandoned to the first man who might be desirous of possessing it? If the people were at liberty to extend themselves into the country, would they remain clustered together in the neighbourhood of the cities? The empire of China is therefore very well peopled in all it's parts.

THE country is intersected by a great number of canals; which would be useless, if they did not establish a frequent and necessary communication between one place and another. What can these things imply, unless it be a great deal of internal motion, and consequently a very considerable degree of population?

EVERY country subsisting by husbandry, where dearths are frequent, and where those dearths occasion the insurrection of thousands of men; where

where, in the course of these insurrections, more crimes and murders are committed; and there are more conflagrations and more pillaging, than would take place on the irruption of a band of savages; and where, as soon as the season of the famine and the revolt is over, the administration abstains from pursuing the criminal: such a country certainly contains a greater number of inhabitants than it can subsist. Would not the Chinese be the most absurd of all people, if the accidental want of the necessaries of life proceeded from their neglect, either in cultivating their land, or in providing for their subsistence? But China, an immense and fertile country, so well cultivated, and so admirably governed, is not the less exposed to this sort of calamity. It must therefore contain ten times, twenty times as many inhabitants, as it does acres of land.

EVERY country, in which the attachment of parents to their offspring, a sentiment so natural that it is common to man and brutes, is totally disregarded, and in which the children are murdered, stifled, or exposed, without incurring the resentment of the public, has either too many inhabitants, or is occupied by a race of men different from any other on the surface of the globe. This, however, is what is practised in China; and to deny or to invalidate this fact, would be to throw the veil of uncertainty upon all the rest.

BUT there is still another phenomenon which more particularly confirms the opinion of the excessive population of China, and this is, the little

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progress the arts and sciences have made there, in proportion to the extreme length of time they have been cultivated. The spirit of inquiry has stopped just at that point, where ceasing to be useful, it's researches begin to be more objects of curiosity. There is more advantage to be derived from the invention of the most trifling practical art, than from the most sublime discovery which should be only the work of genius. The man who knows how to cut up a piece of gauze to the best advantage, would be in higher estimation than he who should resolve the most difficult problem in philosophy. In this country that question is more particularly repeated, which we hear too frequently among ourselves: *What is the use of all this?* I ask whether this spirit of tranquillity, so contrary to the natural disposition of man, who is always inclined to go beyond what he already knows, can be otherwise explained, than by a degree of population which prohibits idleness and the spirit of contemplation, and which keeps the nation in a continual state of anxiety and attention to it's wants. China is therefore the most populous region on the face of the globe.

THIS being granted, doth it not follow that it is also the most corrupt? Do we not learn from general experience, that the vices of society are in proportion to the number of individuals which compose it? What answer could be made, if it were to be affirmed, that the morals of the Chinese, throughout the whole extent of their empire, must necessarily be still more depraved than in our

our largest cities, where a sense of honour, at least, to which the Chinese is a stranger, adds a lustre to virtue, and conceals the deformity of vice ?

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MAY it not be asked, what is, and what must be the character of a people, among whom we see, not unfrequently, one province rushing upon another, and putting all the inhabitants to death, without mercy and with impunity ? Can the manners of such a people be mild ? Is that nation to be esteemed civilized or barbarous, in which the laws neither restrain nor punish the exposition or the murder of new-born infants ? Can these people be said to cherish in an eminent degree the sentiments of humanity, benevolence, and commiseration ? Or can we entertain a high opinion of their wisdom, when, being incited by a concurrence of extraordinary circumstances to found colonies, they have either not conceived, or have disdained to put in practice an expedient so simple, and so effectual against the dreadful calamities to which they are repeatedly and continually exposed ?

So far, we cannot form any high opinion of the wisdom of the Chinese. Let us see whether the examination of the constitution of the empire, of the conduct of the sovereign and his ministers, of the knowledge of the learned, and of the manners of the people, will contribute to inspire us with a more sublime idea of it.

3. A SERIOUS writer, who is not among the crowd that admires the wisdom of the Chinese, says expressly, that *the cudgel is the sovereign of China.*

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According to this ludicrous, and at the same time sagacious idea, I imagine there would be some difficulty in persuading us that a nation, in which man is treated as beasts are in other places, can have the least tincture of those delicate and susceptible manners that prevail in Europe, where an injurious word is expiated with blood; and where even at hreatening gesture is revenged by death. The Chinese must be of a very pacific and forbearing disposition. So much the better, say our antagonists.

THE sovereign of China is however considered, obeyed, and respected as the father of his subjects. In our turn we shall say, so much the worse. This is indeed a certain proof of the humble submission of the children; but not of the goodness of the father. The best expedient to precipitate a nation into the most abject state of slavery, from which it never can recover, is to consecrate the title of despot, by adding that of father to it. Such monsters are rarely to be met with any where, as children who dare lift up their hands against their parents; but in defiance of the authority of the laws, which has set limits to paternal authority, we find, unfortunately, that parents who treat their children ill, are a species of monsters too commonly met with every where. The child never calls his father to account for his conduct; and the liberty of the subject, which is ever in danger, if the sovereign be screened from every kind of inquiry, by his infinitely respectable title of father, will become annihilated under
a despot,

a despot, who shall not allow the least investigation of the principles of his administration.

We may perhaps mistake, but the Chinese appear to us to be bent under the yoke of a double tyranny; of paternal tyranny in a family, and of civil tyranny in the empire. From whence we might venture to conclude, that they are the most mild, the most insinuating, the most respectful, the most timid, the most abject, and least dangerous of all slaves; unless we suppose an exception to have been made in their favour, to the experience of all nations, and of all ages. What is the effect of paternal despotism amongst us? The marks of outward respect, joined to a secret and ineffectual hatred against our fathers. What has been, and what is still the effect of civil despotism in all nations? Meanness and the total extinction of every virtue. If things have taken another turn in China; let us be informed in what manner this miracle has been accomplished.

It is alleged, *the Emperor is well aware that he presides over a people who submit to the laws no longer than while they promote their happiness.* Is there any difference between the Chinese and the European upon this point? *He is sensible, that if the spirit of tyranny should seize him but for a moment, he would be in danger of being expelled from the throne.*—Do not antient and modern histories present us with instances of this just and terrible punishment? And what effect have they produced? Will it be said; that a Chinese is more impatient of oppression than an Englishman or a Frenchman; or that China has never been, is

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not at present, and never will be hereafter governed by any but the most accomplished Monarchs? What absurdities are we not made to adopt by our blind veneration for antiquity and for distant regions! Mercy, firmness, application, knowledge, the love of the people and justice, are qualities which nature only bestows, even separately, upon a few distinguished mortals; and there is not any one in whom they are not unfortunately more or less weakened by the dangerous possession of the supreme power. It has therefore been reserved to China alone, to escape this curse which has begun with all societies, and will last as long as they do.

CERTAINLY, *For there is a tribunal constantly subsisting by the side of the throne, which keeps an exact and severe account of the emperor's actions.*—Does not the same kind of tribunal exist in all countries? Are monarchs unacquainted with it? or, do they fear or respect it? The difference between our tribunal and that of China, is, that our's, being composed of the whole body of the nation, cannot be corrupted; while that of the Chinese consists only of a small number of learned men. Most singularly fortunate country, where the historian is neither pusillanimous, nor servile, nor open to seduction; and where the prince, who has the power to order the hand or head of his historian to be cut off, turns pale with fear, as soon as the writer takes up his pen! There have never been any except good kings, who have stood in awe of the judgment of their contemporaries, and of the censure of posterity.

ACCORDINGLY,

ACCORDINGLY, *the sovereigns of China are virtuous, just, resolute, and enlightened.*—What, all of them without exception? We may however reasonably presume, that the Imperial palace of China does not differ from the palace of the sovereign in all other countries. It is one single dwelling in the midst of the numberless habitations of the subjects: that is to say, that when genius or virtue happen to fall once from heaven directly upon the house of the ruler, they must necessarily fall one hundred thousand times upon the side of it. But perhaps this law of nature does not hold in China as it does in Europe, where we should esteem ourselves too fortunate, if, after a good king shall have ten bad successors, there should arise one to resemble him.

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But *the sovereign authority in China is limited.*—Where is it not? Or, in what manner, and by whom is it limited in China? If the barrier that protects the people be not thick set with lances, swords and bayonets turned against the breast, or against the sacred head of the paternal and despotic emperor, we should be apprehensive, though perhaps without reason, that this barrier in China would be nothing more than a large cobweb upon which the image of Justice and Liberty may have been painted, while, through it's transparency, the quick-sighted man may readily discern the hideous form of the despot. Have there been a great number of tyrants deposed, imprisoned, sentenced, and put to death there? Does the public scaffold continually stream with the blood of the sovereigns? Why have not these events taken place?

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WHY?

WHY? *Because the Chinese government, by a series of revolutions, has been brought back to that state, from which all other nations have receded, the patriarchal government.*—Let us observe, under favour of our antagonists, that the patriarchal government of an immense region, of a family consisting of two hundred millions of individuals, appears to be an idea almost as visionary, as that of a republic extending over one half of the known world. The republican form of government implies a country, the limits of which are sufficiently confined to admit of a speedy and easy communication of the wishes of the people; as the patriarchal form of government supposes a small wandering nation living under tents. The notion of a patriarchal government existing in China is a kind of speculative illusion, that would raise a smile in the emperor and his mandarines.

4. *As the mandarines are not attached to any rich or powerful families, the empire is free from commotions.*—Singular assertions; that the tranquillity of the empire is secured by the very circumstance which seems most likely to disturb it! Unless we suppose that Richelieu had mistaken in his system of politics, when he made it a rule, that great places were not to be given to men of low extraction or fortune, who are actuated by no other motive than their duty.

It is a fact that these statesmen never excite any commotions.—Perhaps it may be equally a fact, that they have no poor relations to take care of, no flatterers to load with favours, no favourites or mistresses to enrich; and that they are equally superior

superior to seduction as to error. But a circumstance which is incontestible, is, that these magistrates or chiefs of the law, carry about with them, without a sense of shame, the marks of their degradation and ignominy. What an opinion can we have of a magistrate who bears the banner or ensign of his own disgrace, without being humbled by it? What can we think of a people, whose reverence for such a magistrate is not diminished?

5. AFTER the sovereign and the mandarin, the learned man presents himself to our examination. This learned man is a person educated in a doctrine which inspires humanity; and who teaches it to others. A man who preaches the love of order, benevolence, and respect for the laws; and who diffuses these sentiments among the people, and points out their utility to them.—And have we not in our schools and our pulpits, amongst our clergy, our magistrates and philosophers, men who may be reckoned not inferior to these literati either in knowledge or in sound morals; who exercise the same functions, both in their discourses and in their writings, in the capital, in the great cities, in the smaller towns, in the villages and in the hamlets? If the wisdom of a nation were to be computed by the number of its teachers, no people would be superior to us in that quality.

WE have thus gone through the higher ranks of the empire; let us now descend to persons of inferior stations, and take a cursory view of the popular manners.

6. WHAT do we find in some works of morality translated from the Chinese? We find a set of infamous

BOOK famous persons exercising the functions of the police; the innocent man condemned, beaten, whipped, and thrown into prison; the guilty pardoned upon payment of a pecuniary fine, or punished, if the offended person happens to be the most powerful: in a word, all our public and domestic vices in a more hideous and disgusting point of view.

7. BUT we cannot acquire more just ideas of the popular manners, than from the system of education. In what mode is the state of infancy managed in China? A child is obliged to remain sitting for hours together, without the least motion, in perfect silence, it's arms folded over it's breast, and in the attitude of the most profound thought and meditation. What effect can be expected from an habitual practice so contrary to nature? A man of common sense would answer; Taciturnity, cunning, falsehood, hypoerisy, and all the train of vices that are peculiar to the cool, deliberate villain. He would think, that in China, that amiable frankness which delights us so much in children; that artless ingenuousness which disappears as they advance in age, and which engages universal confidence in those few persons who are so fortunate as to preserve it; that all these charming qualities, in a word, were stifled there in the cradle.

8. *THE* *role of Chinese politeness is very long.*— A man of common sense would infer from this, that politeness in China is not the simple and natural expression of attentive complaisance and general good-will; but merely a formal etiquette;

quette; and he would consider the cordial appearance of those dirty carmen, who kneel to each other, who embrace, who address each other in the most affectionate terms, and who lend each other a mutual assistance, as a kind of mummery practised among a ceremonious people.

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9. *THERE is a tribunal established to take cognizance of offences against custom.*—A man of common sense would suspect, that justice would be more properly administered against these trifling offences, than in the civil tribunals against crimes of greater magnitude; and he would doubt much whether the powers of the soul could be exalted, or the springs of genius brought into action, under the shackles of rites, ceremonies, and formalities. He would imagine, that a people devoted to ceremony, must inevitably be narrow-minded; and without ever having lived at Peking or at Nankin, he would venture to assert, that there is no country in the world, in which there is less regard for virtue, or more attention to the appearances of it.

10. ALL persons who have traded with the Chinese are unanimous in declaring, that the utmost precautions are necessary to prevent being duped by them. They are not even ashamed of their dishonesty,

A CERTAIN European, in his first voyage to this empire, bought some merchandise of a Chinese, who cheated him both in the quality and the price. The goods had been carried on board of ship, and the bargain was completed. The European flattered himself, that he might possibly move the Chinese by moderate representations, and said to him,

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him; 'Chinese, thou hast sold me bad goods.'—
 'That may be,' replied the Chinese, 'but you must
 pay.'—'Thou hast broken the laws of justice, and
 abused my confidence.'—'That may be, but you
 must pay.'—'But thou art then no better than a
 rogue, or a thief.'—'That may be, but you must
 pay.'—'What opinion then must I carry back to my
 country, of those Chinese, so celebrated for wisdom?
 I shall say, that you are a set of rascals.'—'That
 may be, but you must pay.' The European hav-
 ing added to these reproaches every injurious
 epithet suggested to him by his rage, without
 being able to get any thing more than these cool
 words, pronounced with deliberation; 'That may
 be, but you must pay—'; at length pulled out his
 purse, and laid down the money. The Chinese
 then taking it up, said to him: 'European, in-
 stead of storming against me in the manner you
 have just been doing, would it not have been
 better for you to hold your tongue, and to do
 at first what you have been obliged to come to at
 last? For, after all, what have you got by it?'

THE Chinese, therefore, have not even that re-
 maining sense of shame common to all professed
 rogues, who still will not submit to be told that they
 are so. They are consequently arrived at the last
 stage of depravity. Neither are we to imagine,
 that the instance here quoted is a singular one:
 these phlegmatic manners are the natural effect of
 that reserve which is inspired by the Chinese mode
 of education.

NEITHER is it to be urged, that the Chinese
 observe the rules of good faith among themselves,
 while

while they think themselves free from this obligation in their intercourse with strangers. This certainly is not, because it cannot be. A man cannot be alternately honest and dishonest. The man who has made it a practice to cheat foreigners, is too often exposed to the temptation of cheating his fellow-citizens, to be able constantly to resist it.

II. But it may be objected, that, according to these representations, China is a barbarous country. I answer, it is still worse. The half civilized Chinese appear to me as savages with pretensions to civilization; they are a people completely corrupt, a condition more wretched than that of simple and natural barbarism. The principle of virtue may unfold itself in a savage, by a series of favourable circumstances; but we know of no circumstance, nor can we conceive any one, capable of rendering this important service to a Chinese, in whom this principle is not stifled, but totally obliterated. To the depravity and ignorance of these people, we may add their ridiculous vanity. Do they not say, that *they have two eyes, while we have but one, and that the rest of the world is blind?* This prejudice, their excessive population, the indifference they have for their sovereigns, which is probably the consequence of it, the obstinate attachment they have to their customs, the prohibition established by their laws of going out of their country: all these circumstances must necessarily fix the Chinese in their present state; during an indefinite course of ages. The man who thinks all knowledge centered in himself, or
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who despises what he is ignorant of, will never learn any thing. How is it possible to teach wisdom to him, who supposes himself the only wise man? or, to improve him, who esteems himself arrived at perfection? We will venture to foretell, that the state of the Chinese will never be meliorated, either by war, pestilence, famine, or even by tyranny, the most insupportable of all these calamities, and for this very reason more proper than all the others combined, to regenerate a nation by the violence of it's oppression.

12. We know not whether the other nations of the universe have been of much advantage to the Chinese; but of what service have they been to the rest of the earth? It should seem that their encomiasts have affected to bestow upon them a degree of colossal magnitude, while they have reduced us to the low stature of pigmies. We, on the contrary, have been attentive to shew them as they are; and till they can bring us from Peking works of philosophy superior to those of Descartes and Locke; mathematical treatises that may be compared to those of Newton, Leibnitz, and their followers; pieces of poetry, eloquence, literature, and erudition not unworthy the attention of our great writers, and the depth, graces, taste and refinement of which they shall be forced to acknowledge; till they can produce from thence discourses upon morality, politics, legislation, finances or commerce, which may contain only one single line of novelty to our men of genius; till they can exhibit vases, statues, pictures, musical instruments, or plans of architecture

ture fit for our artists to consider; or philosophical instruments and machines in which the inferiority of our's shall be very palpable: till these things, I say, can be brought to us from China, we shall retort upon the Chinese his own saying, and we shall tell him, that he perhaps has but one eye, and that we have two: we shall carefully avoid insulting other nations which we may have left behind us in the career of science, and which are destined, perhaps, to get beyond us in some future time. Who is that Confucius of whom we hear so much talk, when compared to Sidney or Montesquieu?

13. *THE Chinese nation is the most laborious of any that is know'n.* We have no doubt of it; it is necessary they should labour, and that their labour should be renewed. Are they not condemned to this from the disproportion between the produce of their soil, and the number of their inhabitants? We may, however, conclude from hence, that this population so much boasted of has it's limits, beyond which it becomes a calamity, which deprives man of his natural rest, leads him on to desperate actions, and destroys in his mind the principles of honour, delicacy and morality, and even the sentiment of humanity.

14. *AND shall we still persist, after all that has been said, in calling the Chinese nation, a people of sages?* A people of sages, among whom children are exposed and put to death! where the most infamous of all debaucheries is common! where man is mutilated! where the government knows not how to prevent or punish the crimes occasioned

occasioned by a dearth! where the merchant cheats both the foreigner and the citizen! where the knowledge of the language is the ultimate point of science! where, for a succession of ages, a character and mode of writing has been adhered to, which is scarcely sufficient for the common transactions of life! where the inspectors of the manners are men destitute of honour and probity! where justice is beyond comparison more corrupt than it is among the most degenerate people! where the works of the legislator, to whom all persons pay homage, would not deserve a reading, if the ignorance of the period in which he lived were not an apology for his writings! where, from the emperor to the meanest of his subjects, we see nothing more than a continued series of rapacious beings devouring each other! in a word, where the sovereign only suffers some of his immediate dependants to enrich themselves, in order that he may acquire at once the spoils of the extortioner, and the title of avenger of his people.

15. If it be true, as we do not doubt it, that in China, every thing which will not admit of a division, such as the sea, the rivers, the canals, navigation, fishing, and hunting, belongs in common to all; it must be acknowledged that this is a very reasonable order of things. But is it possible that so numerous a people could patiently have abandoned their harvest for the nourishment of animals? And if persons of high rank had arrogated to themselves the exclusive enjoyment of the woods and waters, would not such an incroachment have been followed by a speedy and just

just revenge? Let us endeavour not to confound the laws of necessity with the institutions of wisdom.

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16. HAVE not the Chinese a set of monks more intriguing, more dissolute, more idle, and in greater number than our's? Monks! leeches! in a country where the most continued labour scarce furnishes the means of subsistence! *But, the government despises them.* Say rather, that it stands in awe of them, and that they are revered by the people.

17. IT might perhaps be an advantageous circumstance, if in all countries, as we are assured it is in China, the administration were attached to no doctrine, to no sect, nor to any particular mode of religious worship. This toleration, however, extends no farther than to the religious systems antiently settled in the empire. Christianity has been proscribed there, either because the mysterious foundation of it's doctrine has disgusted men of weak understandings; or, because the intrigues of those who propagated it, have excited the alarms of a suspicious government.

18. IN China, the merit of the son confers the rank of nobility on his father, with whom this prerogative ends. This is an institution which we cannot but applaud; although it must be acknowledged that the system of hereditary nobility has it's advantages. Where shall we find the descendant of an illustrious family so abject, as not to feel the obligations imposed upon him by a respectable name, or not to exert his efforts to make his conduct answerable to it? If we de-

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grade, the nobleman who has made himself unworthy of his ancestors, we shall be as wise upon this point as the Chinese.

19. THERE is nothing we are so desirous of as to commend. Accordingly, we confess there is a great deal of prudence in the mode which the Chinese use of punishing a neglect in paying the taxes. Instead of fixing in the house of the debtor a set of satellites who seize upon his bed, his utensils, his furniture, his cattle, or his person; instead of dragging him into prison, or leaving him extended without bread upon straw in his cottage, after it has been stript of every thing; it is certainly better to sentence him to feed the poor. But the man who should infer the wisdom of China from this excellent custom alone, would be as inaccurate a logician as he, who, from our customs upon the same occasion, should conclude that we were a barbarous people. The censure which the Chinese deserve, is softened as much as possible; and that country is exalted in order to depreciate our's. We are not directly told that we are mad; but it is declared, without hesitation, that it is at China that wisdom dwells; and immediately afterwards it is said, that according to the last calculation, China contained about sixty millions of men capable of bearing arms. Extravagant panegyrist of China, do ye understand yourselves? Have you an exact conception of such a number as two hundred millions of individuals heaped one upon the other? Believe me, you must either subtract one-half, or three-fourths of this enormous population; or, if you

you persist in giving credit to it, acknowledge, from the good sense you possess, and from the result of the experience that is submitted to your inspection, that there is not, and that there cannot be, either policy, or manners in China.

20. *The Chinese extends his benevolence to the succeeding as well as to the present generation.* This is impossible. Children, fond of the marvelous, how long will ye be amused with such stories? Every nation which is constantly obliged to strive against want, cannot extend it's thoughts beyond the present moment; and were it not for the honours publicly paid to ancestors, ceremonies which must excite and keep up in the minds of men a faint idea of something beyond the grave, we ought to admit it as a demonstration, that if there be any part of the world where the sense of immortality, and the respect for posterity, are expressions destitute of meaning, it must be in China. We do not perceive that we carry every thing to the extreme, and that the only result of such extravagant opinions is palpable contradiction; that an excessive population is inconsistent with good morals; and that we decorate a depraved multitude with the virtues which belong only to a few distinguished persons.

THE several arguments of the partisans and of the calumniators of China are now submitted to the judgment of our readers, to whom it is left to decide: for why should we be so presumptuous as to attempt to direct their judgment? If we might be allowed to hazard an opinion, we should say, that although these two systems be supported

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by respectable testimonies, yet these authorities do not bear the marks of that great character that requires an implicit faith. Perhaps, in order to decide this matter, we must wait till some impartial and judicious men, and who are well versed in the Chinese writing and language, shall be permitted to make a long residence at the court of Peking, to go through all the provinces, to live in the country villages, and to converse freely with the Chinese of all ranks.

WHATEVER may have been the state of China when the Portuguese landed there, as they had no other object in view than to draw riches from thence, and to propagate their religion, had they found the best kind of government established in this country, they would not have profited by it. Thomas Perez, their ambassador, found the court of Peking disposed to favour his nation, the fame of which had spread itself throughout Asia. It had already attracted the esteem of the Chinese, which the conduct of Ferdinand Andrada, who commanded the Portuguese squadron, tended still further to increase. He visited all the coasts of China, and traded with the natives. When he was on the point of departure, he issued a proclamation in the ports he had put into, that if any one had been injured by a Portuguese, and would make it know'n, he should receive satisfaction. The ports of China were now upon the point of being opened to them: Thomas Perez was just about concluding a treaty, when Simon Andrada, brother to Ferdinand, appeared on the coasts with a fresh squadron. This commander