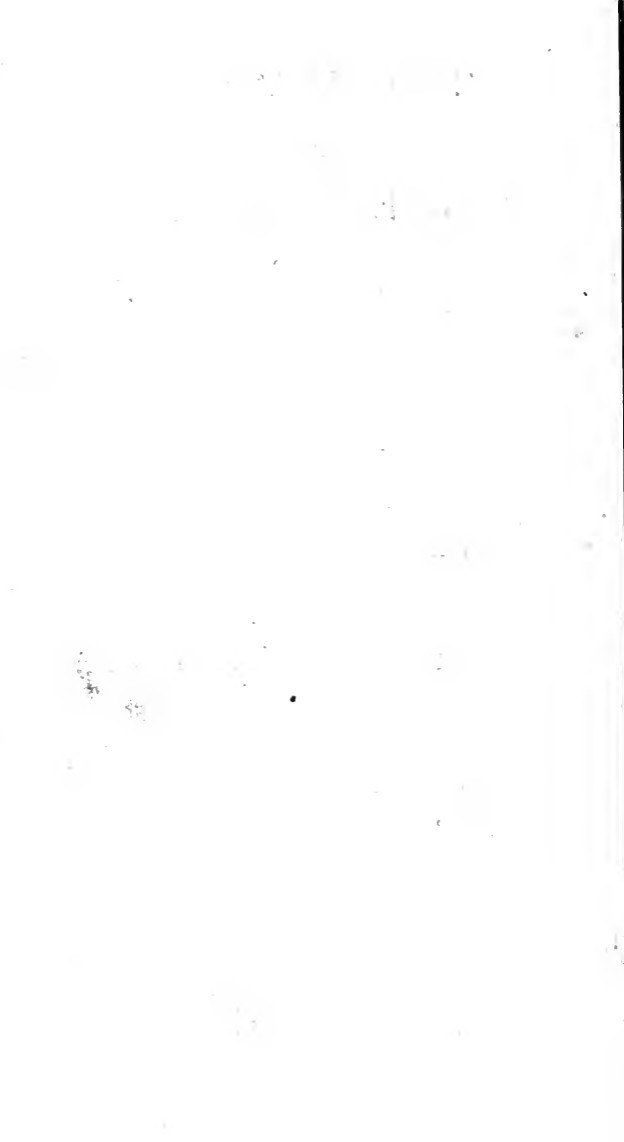


TRAVELS
OF A
PHILOSOPHER:
OR,
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
MANNERS AND ARTS
OF
VARIOUS NATIONS
IN
AFRICA AND ASIA.

TRANSLATED
FROM THE FRENCH OF M. LE POIVRE,
LATE ENVOY TO THE KING OF COCHIN-
CHINA, AND NOW INTENDANT OF THE
ISLES OF BOURBON AND MAURITIUS.

D U B L I N :

Printed for P. and W. WILSON, J. EXSHAW,
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and J. WILLIAMS, M DCC LXX.



ADVERTISEMENT.

LES VOYAGES D'UN PHILOSOPHE of M. le Poivre have been much admired in France. They were originally read in 1764 and 1765, before the Royal Society of Agriculture at Lyons, of which he was then president, and afterwards before the Royal Society of Paris in 1766: For some time they were handed about in manuscript, and at length, in 1768, found their way to the press.

M. le Poivre's manner is easy and elegant; his observations striking and judicious; his sentiments philanthropical and benevolent.—The genuine happiness of every nation must depend on agriculture, and agriculture must ever be influenced by established laws and modes of government: nature indulgently smiles on the labour of a free-born people, but shrinks with horror from the tyrant and the slave. This is his system, and it is the system of truth founded on experience, and supported not only
by

by comparing cōtemporary nations, but by contrasting nations with themselves at different periods.

It is necessary the reader should keep in view the country of the author, as many of his strictures on European agriculture, though unapplicable perhaps to Britain, convey a descriptive Picture of the state of cultivation in France.

Originals generally suffer by translation : this observation perhaps, with too great justice,
 may

may be applied to the present attempt. As a gentleman, however, will be distinguished in any garb, it is hoped M. le Poivre's intrinsic merit will procure him a polite reception, whatever impropriety or inelegance may be found in his present dress.

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T R A-

T R A V E L S

O F A

P H I L O S O P H E R.

EVERY people, however barbarous, have arts peculiar to themselves. The diversity of climates, whilst it varies the wants of mankind, offers to their industry different productions on which to exercise it. Every country, at a certain degree of distance, has fabrics so singularly peculiar to itself, that they could not have been the fabrics of other regions: but agriculture, in every climate, is the universal art of mankind: from one extreme of the globe to the other, nations still barbarous, as well as those whose ideas are civilized, procure to them-

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selves

selves, at least, a part of their subsistence by the culture of their fields; yet this art, however universal, is not every where equally flourishing.

It never fails to prosper among wise nations, who know how to honour and encourage it;—it supports itself but feebly amongst a people half polished, who either prefer to it frivolous arts, or who, being sufficiently enlightened perhaps to perceive its utility, are still too much slaves to the prejudices of their ancient barbarity, to affranchize and confer honours on those who exercise it;—it languishes, and its influence is scarcely to be observed amongst barbarians, who despise it.

The state of agriculture has ever been the principal object of my researches

searches among the various people I have seen in the course of my voyages. It is almost impossible for a traveller, who perhaps only passes through a country, to make such remarks as are necessary to convey a just idea of the government, police, and manners of the inhabitants. In such a case, the criterion which best marks the internal state of a nation, is to observe the public markets, and the face of the country. If the markets abound in provisions, if the fields are well cultivated, and covered with rich crops, then in general you may conclude that the country is well peopled, that the inhabitants are civilized and happy, that their manners are polished, and their government agreeable to the principles of reason.—You may then say to yourself, I am amongst *Men*.

When, on the contrary, I have arrived amongst a people, whom it was necessary to search for amidst forests, whose neglected lands were overgrown with brambles; when I have traversed large tracts of uncultivated deserts, and then at last stumbled on a grubb'd-up wretchedly cultivated field; when arrived at length at some canton, I have observed nothing in the public market but a few sorry roots; I no longer hesitated to determine the inhabitants to be wretched savages, or groaning under the most oppressive slavery.

I never remember a single instance of being obliged to retract this first idea, conceived simply by inspecting the state of agriculture amongst the various nations I have seen: the know-
ledge

ledge of various particulars, which a long residence amongst many of them has enabled me to acquire, has ever confirmed me in opinion, that a country poorly cultivated is always inhabited by men barbarous or oppressed, and that population there can never be considerable.

You will observe by the detail I now offer you of my enquiries, that in every country agriculture depends absolutely on the laws, the manners and even on the established prejudices of the respective inhabitants. I shall begin with observations on some parts of Africa.

THE WESTERN COASTS OF
AFRICA.

The islands and western districts of this part of the world which I have seen, are for the greater part uncultivated lands, inhabited by unhappy negroes. These wretched men, who have so poor an estimation of themselves as to sell one another, never employ a thought on the cultivation of their lands. Satisfied to exist from day to day, under a climate where their wants are few, they cultivate just as much as prevents their dying of hunger; they carelessly sow every year some maize, a very little rice, and plant in small quantities, different kinds of potatoes, not of the nature of ours, though the culture is much the same; we know
them

them by the name of *yams*. In general their harvests are so poor, that the Europeans, who resort to them for the purchase of slaves, are obliged to bring from Europe or America the provisions necessary for the maintenance of those unfortunate creatures doomed to compose their cargoes.

The negroes who inhabit the environs of the European colonies, give somewhat more attention to agriculture than the others. — They rear flocks; they cultivate rice in greater quantities; and in their gardens are found pulse, of which the seed has been brought from Europe; yet all they know of agriculture, they have learnt from the Europeans settled amongst them; their own experience is extremely bounded; and I have never been able to discover in their

industry any process which could in the least improve our own.

From the river of Angola to Cape Negroe, and from thence till you approach the Cape of Good Hope, nothing is to be seen but sterile uncultivated lands; the coasts are naked, and covered with barren sands; and you are under the necessity of travelling many leagues before you can discover a palm-tree, or the slightest verdure. The country and its few inhabitants seem to be struck with one common curse. From the informations I have received touching these countries from the Italian missionaries, who with an admirable zeal have penetrated into the heart of these accursed regions, I learn likewise that agriculture is just as languid in the interior parts as upon the

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the coasts, although, in many places, the soil appeared much more fruitful from its natural productions.

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

The countries around the Cape were condemned to the same sterility before the Dutch took possession of them; but since their establishment on this point of Africa, the lands produce in abundance wheat and grain of every kind, wines of different qualities, and a considerable quantity of excellent fruits, collected from every quarter of the world. There you see extensive pastures covered with horses, black cattle, and sheep—these herds and flocks thrive exceedingly well. The abundance which this colony enjoys, compared to the barrenness of the surrounding countries, evidently

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dently demonstrates that the earth denies her favours only to the tyrant and the slave; but becomes prodigal of her treasures, beyond the most sanguine hope so soon as she is free, and cultivated by men of discernment, whom wise and invariable laws protect.

A number of Frenchmen, forced from their country by the revocation of the edict of Nantz, have on this coast found a new establishment, and with it, security, property, and liberty, the only true encouragers of agriculture, the only principles of abundance. They have enriched this adopted mother by their industry; they have there founded considerable colonies, some of which bear the name of that unhappy country which denied them the use of water and of
fire,

fire, the remembrance of which however they still fondly cherish.

The colony of Little Rochelle surpasses all the rest, by the industry of the colonists, and the fertility of the lands which belong to it. The pastures are there composed of a variety of grasses, natives of the country, together with several different species of herbage, which compose our artificial meadows in Europe, such as trefoil, lucerne, and faintfoin. The exotic plants, the seeds of which have been imported by the Dutch, flourish there as the natural productions of the country. Those seeds are sown by an operation of the plough; they cut the grass only the first year; the second they open the meadows to cattle, which live there at discretion, without any other attention than that of collecting

lecting them together every evening into a park inclosed with strong and high pallifadoes, to secure them against the lions and tigers, with which this country abounds.

Some of these enclosures are watered only by the rains, although they generally endeavour to choose them in the neighbourhood of some brook, where they dig commodious watering places. In all these pasturages, they have an eye to groves of trees, where the herds and flocks may find shelter against the intense heat of the sun; particularly in January, February, and March, which in this part of the world are the most sultry months in the year.

The arable land is here laboured as in Europe, sometimes by horses,
but

but oftener by oxen : the Dutch of this colony have by their industry corrected the natural sluggishness of these latter animals, by exercising them while young in a brisk pace ; in consequence of which I have seen, at the Cape, carriages, drawn by teams of ten or a dozen yoke of oxen, go as expeditiously as if drawn by horses.

The grains commonly sown at the Cape, are wheat, turkey corn, and rice ; these generally produce an increase of fifty-fold. They cultivate a variety of different kinds of pulse, such as pease, common beans, and French beans. This pulse makes a refreshing provision to the ships touching at the Cape going or returning to India.

❖ A particular species of this pulse is much in request in India, to which they

they export a considerable quantity : it is there known by the name of *Cape Pease* : it is a kind of French bean which requires no prop ; its grain is of the form of that bean, but larger and flatter ; it tastes like our green pease, and preserves its freshness for a long time. I have this year attempted the culture of this plant, which promises success. The climate at the Cape seems to demand from the cultivator an attention which appears not so necessary in this country, and which would even perhaps be prejudicial to the productions of our lands.

The Cape however is exposed the greatest part of the year to violent hurricanes, which blow generally from the north-east. These winds are so impetuous that they would
beat

beat down the fruits from the trees, and sweep to destruction the labours of the farmer, had they not provided a barrier for the security of the harvest. The Dutch colonists have divided their lands into small fields, which they have surrounded with high pallisades of oaks and other trees, planted very close to one another, somewhat resembling a char-mille, designed for the ornament of a garden. These pallisades they cut every year, as they grow; their height being commonly from twenty-five to thirty feet; every separate field, in consequence, is enclosed like a chamber.

It is by this industry alone that the Dutch have rendered this colony not only the granary of all their settlements in the East-Indies, but the
most

most commodious place for vessels to touch at for refreshments and provisions of all kinds.

When the dutch began to form their vineyards, they endeavoured to procure plants from those cantons which enjoyed the greatest reputation for their vines ; but after many fruitless attempts to produce, at the extremity of Africa, the wines of Burgundy and Champagne, they applied to rearing the plants transported from Spain, the Canaries, and the Levant, where the climate is more analagous to the Cape. At present the plants which are cultivated most successfully, are those of the Muscadel kind : the red Muscadel particularly, which they rear in a small district called Constance, produces most delicious wine ; the Dutch East-India
Company

Company always secure this vintage, which they send in presents to the sovereigns of Europe.

The wines at the Cape are cultivated without vine-props; the method of labour is much the same with that in France. The vineyards are surrounded by a number of trees, upon which they entwine the slips of the great Spanish Muscadine, in form of espaliers, very high, by which the vines are sheltered from the violence of the winds.

The same attention, at the Cape, is paid to gardening, as to the other branches of agriculture. You there find all the variety of European pulse, greens, herbs, and roots, with the best of those peculiar to other parts of the world. Independent of the
gardens

gardens of the colonists, which are kept in as fine order as any in Europe, the India Company have caused to be laid out two or three gardens, extensive and magnificent, which they support with an expence worthy of a soveraign company.

Fifteen or twenty European gardeners, whose abilities are approved before they are embarked, are employed in the cultivation of each of those vast gardens, under the direction of a principal gardener, whose place is lucrative and honourable. It is in those gardens, at the expence of the company, that all the experiments are made in every new species of culture ; and it is there that every private individual is provided, gratis, with such plants and seeds as he may have occasion for, together with the neces-

necessary instructions for their cultivation. These gardens furnish, in the greatest abundance, herbage and fruits of various kinds to the company's ships.

Travellers cannot but with pleasure and admiration observe large enclosures consecrated to the study and improvement of botany, in which the most rare and useful plants, from every quarter of the world, are arranged in the most excellent order: the curious have the additional satisfaction also of finding skilful gardeners, who take pleasure in describing and pointing out their virtues.

Those beautiful gardens are terminated by large orchards, where are to be found all the fruits of Europe, together with several natives of
Africa

Africa and Asia. Nothing is more agreeable than to see in different expositions, even in the same enclosure, the chesnut, the apple, and other trees, from the most northern climates, together with the muscadine of the Indies, the camphres of Borneo, the palms, and a variety of other trees, which are natives of the torrid zone.

MADAGASCAR.

After doubling the Cape of Good Hope, you enter the Indian sea, where you find the great island of Madagascar: we are still unacquainted with many places of this island, though the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and other Europeans have had settlements, and frequented it above two centuries. Those parts, which

which we know, are very fertile, and the inhabitants would, in all probability, cultivate them extremely well, were there a vent for their productions. They rear numerous herds of cattle and sheep ; their pasturages, such as nature has formed them, are rich : in many cantons are large tracts of tilled ground, covered with grass of an extraordinary size, which grows to the height of five or six feet ; the natives call it *Fatak* ; it is excellent for nourishing and fattening their horned cattle, which are of the largest species, and differ in shape from ours, particularly by a large fleshy protuberance on their neck. — Another grass, of a finer blade, shoots spontaneously through the sands on the sea coast, which furnishes food for the sheep : these are of the same species with those of Barbary, and differ from
from

from ours most remarkably, by the monstrous size of their tails, which weigh in general from six to eight pounds.

The Madecasses or Malegaches (which is the name of the inhabitants of this island) cultivate scarce any other grain but rice : they sow at the commencement of the rainy season ; in consequence of which they are not under the necessity of watering their fields. In labouring their ground, they use no other instrument but the pick-axe ; they begin by grubbing up all the weeds ; then five or six men, ranging themselves in a line on the field, dig little holes as they pass along, into which the women or children, who follow, throw the grains of the rice, and then with their feet cover them with earth : a
field

field sown in this manner, produces an increase of above eighty or a hundred-fold, which proves rather the extreme fertility of the soil, than the goodness of the cultivation: badly understood as it may be, however, the inhabitants of Madegascar live in abundance. In no country in the world, that I have seen, are rice and other essential provisions cheaper than in this island. For a remnant of coarse blue cloth, which may be worth perhaps twenty pence, the Madecasse gives two or three measures of rice. These measures are furnished by the Europeans, who never fail to enlarge them every year; yet the islanders do not complain. The measure is first of all heaped; the buyer then, in virtue of an established right for securing good measure, thrusts his arm to the elbow in the
rice,

rice, and with one sweep empties it almost entirely, which the Madecasse has the patience a second time to replenish, without a murmur. This measure is called a *Gamelle*, which, thus filled, will hold about 160 pounds of pure rice.

There cannot be a doubt, but if our [the French] India Company, who alone are in possession of the trade with the natives of this island, would give proper encouragement to agriculture, it would in a short time make a rapid progress.—Our islands of Bourbon and France would here always find a certain resource against those dearths which too frequently distress the latter of these islands. Our squadrons bound for India, who put into the Isle of France for refreshments, would there always find abundance

dance of provisions brought from Madagascar, and of consequence would not be subjected to the necessity of losing their time at the Cape, or at Batavia, begging refreshments from the Dutch, whilst the enemies of France, as happened in the late war, are conquering their settlements, and destroying their trade.*

Wheat would grow in Madagascar in the same abundance as rice: it was formerly cultivated successfully in the settlement which we then possessed at the southern point of the island, called Fort Dauphin. Even at this day fine stalks of wheat are still to be found there, produced

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* Perhaps it may be owing to some hint here given, that the French (as is reported) are now again endeavouring to establish settlements on the island of Madagascar.

from the scattered grains of the ancient crops, which being blown about by the winds, have annually, since our being drove from that settlement, sown of themselves, and sprung up at random, amongst the native herbs of the country. The lands there are of inconceivable fertility; the islanders intelligent and ingenious. In those districts where the Arabs have not penetrated, the simple laws of nature are their guides; their manners the manners of the primitive ages. These laws, and these manners, are more favourable for agriculture, than all our sublime speculations, than all our most applauded theories on the most approved practice; than all those ineffectual means now employed to re-animate an art, which our manners teach us to regard with contempt,
or

or treat with levity ; and which is perpetually harassed, perpetually oppressed by innumerable abuses, which derive their source from the very laws themselves.

THE ISLE OF BOURBON.

Almost 200 leagues east of Madagascar lie the two islands of Bourbon and France ; the soil of which is naturally as fertile as that of Madagascar, whilst they enjoy a happier climate. Bourbon has no port : it is of consequence little frequented by the shipping. The inhabitants have preserved their simplicity of manners, and agriculture is there in a flourishing state. The island produces wheat, rice, and maize, not only for its own consumpt, but even furnishes a small supply to the Isle of

France : the culture there is the same as at Madagascar. The horned cattle and sheep, which they have imported from that island, thrive here extremely well, especially as they have also introduced the grass called *Fatak*, which, as I have before observed, makes excellent pasturage.

The lands of this island are principally employed in the culture of the coffee-tree. The first plants of this shrubby tree were brought from Mocha. It multiplies by its grains, sowing spontaneously ; little attention is required ; nothing more is necessary than to grub up, three or four times during the first year, the neighbouring weeds, which would otherwise rob it of its proper nourishment : the second year it grows without care ; its branches which extend
hori-

horizontally along the surface of the ground, by their shade stifle the growth of all such weeds, as might shoot up within their circumference: at the end of eighteen months the coffee-tree begins to bear fruit, and in three years yields a plentiful crop. They plant these trees chequer-wise, at about the distance of seven feet from one another, and, when they grow too tall, prune them to the height of perhaps two feet from the ground.

The coffee-tree demands a light soil: it thrives better in sand almost pure, than in rich ground: they observe in the isle of Bourbon, that these trees yield annually, one with another about a pound of coffee: this fruit comes to perfection, and is gathered-in during dry weather,

which gives it a great advantage over the West India coffee, which never ripens nor is got-in but in the rainy seasons. The coffee, after it is gathered-in, must be dried; for several days, therefore, it is exposed to the sun, till the bean becomes extremely dry; they then clear it of the pulp, which is done by pebbles in large wooden troughs.

THE ISLE OF FRANCE.

This island possesses two excellent harbours, where all the shipping of the French Company, employed in the commerce of China and the Indies, touch for refreshments; here also rendezvous their armaments in times of war: this island is, of consequence, not so solitary as Bourbon. The politics and manners of Europe have

have here more influence. The lands are as fertile as those of Bourbon; rivulets, which are never dry, water it like a garden: notwithstanding which the harvests often fail, and scarcity is here almost perpetually felt.

Since the days of the celebrated M. de la Bourdonnois (who governed this island for ten or twelve years, and ought to be regarded as the founder of the colony, for his introduction and patronage of agriculture) they have wandered incessantly from project to project; attempting the culture of almost every species of plants, without properly prosecuting any one of them. The coffee, the cotton, the indigo, the sugar-cane, the pear, the cinnamon, the mulberry, the tea, and the cocoa trees,

have all been cultivated by experiments, but in such a superficial manner as could never secure success. Had they followed the simple plan of the founder which was to secure bread, the island would at this day have been flourishing; abundance would then have reigned amongst the colonists, and the shipping never been disappointed of the necessary refreshments and provisions.

The cultivation of grain, nevertheless, though neglected and badly understood, is that which succeeds the best. Those lands, which are so employed, yield annually a crop of wheat, and another of rice or Turkey corn, without the intervention of one fallow year, and without the least improvement, or
any

any other mode of labour, than that which is practised at Madagascar.

The *Maniac* was first introduced into this island by M. de la Bourdonnois: the culture of this plant was at first attended with very great difficulty, but is now the principal resource of the colonists for the nourishment of their slaves. As the culture of this root is here the same as in America, I shall not repeat what has been related by a number of travellers.

They formerly brought from Madagascar black cattle and sheep; but since they have discovered that more advantage attends the transportation of slaves, they have neglected the increase of their cattle, which the continual demands of the shipping,

and the wants of the inhabitants at the same time, daily diminish: besides, they have never hitherto formed any pastures; such as they have attempted having been laid out with so little skill, that they have not succeeded. The island produces naturally, in different cantons, an excellent kind of grass, which grows to the height of five or six feet. This grass begins to appear above ground about the beginning of the rainy season; it performs all its vegetation during the three months, which this season lasts: the inhabitants take advantage of this to pasture their herds, who fatten upon it amazingly; but, the vegetation over, there remains nothing on the ground but a straw too hard to afford nourishment to the cattle; and, soon after, the fire, which is kindled here by a thousand acci-

accidents, consumes this straw, and with it frequently part of the neighbouring forests. During the remainder of the year, the herds wander about and languish amongst the woods.

The greatest fault which has been committed in this island, and which has proved most prejudicial to cultivation, is the method of clearing the woods from off the grounds by fire, without leaving groves and thickets at proper distances. The rains, in this island, conduce most to the amelioration of the grounds; but the clouds being stopt by the forests, there the rains fall; whilst the cleared lands are scarce watered by a single drop: the fields, at the same time, being thus deprived of defence, are exposed to the violence of the winds, which

which often entirely destroy the harvests.—The Dutch, as we have before observed, found no trees at the Cape; but they have planted them there, as shelter for their habitations. The Isle of France, on the contrary, was covered with woods, and the colonists have entirely destroyed them.

COAST OF COROMANDEL.

Agriculture has ever flourished in the East-Indies; it has, however, degenerated since the conquest of this country by the Moguls; who, like all barbarous nations, have despised that industry which nourishes mankind, to attach themselves to that destructive art which desolates the earth.

The

The conquerors, when they took possession of the country, appropriated to themselves at the same time all the lands. The Mogul emperors divided them into great moveable fiefs, which they distributed amongst their grandees; these farmed them out to their vassals; and those again to others; so that the lands are now no longer cultivated but by the servants and day-labourers of the sub-farmers.

As no country in the world is more exposed to revolution than the Indies, subjected to masters whose government is an absolute anarchy, the possessor of the fief, as well as the farmer, for ever uncertain of their fate endeavour to make the most of the lands and their cultivators, without ever bestowing a thought on improvement.

provement. Fortunately for these Barbarian conquerors, the conquered natives, inviolably attached to their ancient manners, apply themselves incessantly to agriculture, from inclination, and from religion. Notwithstanding the frantic despotism of the Mogul government, the Malabar *, despising and pitying the master whom he obeys, cultivates, with the same ardor as if he was proprietor, the fields of his ancestors, the care of which is confided to him by the usurper.

The labourers are a tribe, much honoured among the Indians. Religion has consecrated agriculture, even
to

* The French give the name of Malabar, not only to the ancient inhabitants of the Malabar coast, but in general to the Aborigines of the great Peninsula of Indostan.

to the animals destined for the labour of the ground. As the Indies in general are deficient in pastures, as horses are scarce, as buffaloes and other cattle for the draught multiply but slowly, the ancient Indian policy made it a crime against their religion to kill these useful animals.—The Malabars make them more serviceable than any other people: they employ them, as we do, in labouring the ground; as also in drawing their carriages, and in carrying every kind of load: there are no other beasts of burden in the neighbourhood of Pondicherry. I am convinced that in every country they might be rendered equally useful.

The soil on the Coromandel coast is light, dry, and sandy; the industry and labour, however, of the natives

tives make it produce two crops every year, without the necessity of one fallow season. After the rice harvest is over, there is always a crop of some smaller grains, such as millet, and a species of French beans, of which India produces a variety of different kinds.

The most remarkable process of Indian husbandry, is the watering their grounds for the culture of rice.

MACHINE FOR WATERING RICE- GROUNDS.

If the grounds they propose watering, have neither rivulet nor fountain sufficiently abundant, they dig a pit-well, on the brink of which they raise a pillar of near the same height as the depth of the well. At
the

the summit of this pillar, which is forked, is an iron bar, which crossing both divisions horizontally, supports a kind of see-saw, to one end of which a ladder is suspended; the other end of this see-saw projects from the top of the pillar about three feet, having a long pole fastened to it in a position parallel with the pillar, at which hangs a large bucket of wood or copper: by the side of this machine is a large reservoir, built with bricks and closely cemented, elevated above the level of the grounds they propose to water; the opening whence the waters are discharged being on that side which fronts the field. Every thing being thus disposed, a man ascends to the top of the column, by the ladder fixed to the see-saw: as soon as he has reached the top, another man, stationed

stationed by the side of the reservoir, plunges the bucket, which is suspended by the pole, into the well; upon which he at the top descends the ladder, and bringing thereby the bucket full of water to a level with the reservoir, the other there empties it. As soon as the reservoir is full, they open a kind of sluice; the inundation begins, and is kept constantly flowing by the operations of these two men, who sometimes are thus employed whole days, the one ascending and descending, the other throwing the bucket into the well, and emptying it when full.

MODE OF LABOUR.

The Malabars labour their grounds with instruments resembling the Aire and the Souchée, in use in the south
of

of France. They employ oxen, but more commonly buffaloes; these last being stronger, and more capable of enduring the heat, than the oxen, which on the coast of Coromandel, are generally weakly, and of a small size.

FLOCKS OF SHEEP, &c.

These animals are generally fed with the straw of rice, some herbs, and boiled beans. Here and there in the fields you see some small flocks of goats, and others of sheep, which differ from ours by their being covered with hair instead of wool. They are known in the French colonies by the name of *Chiens marous*. These flocks, however, are lean, and multiply but slowly.

Were

Were the inhabitants of India to eat the flesh of animals, like the Europeans, their cattle would very soon be destroyed. It appears, therefore, that the religious law rendering it criminal for an Indian to eat the flesh of animals, has been dictated by the wisdom of sound policy, which has employed the authority of religion to secure obedience to a regulation which the nature of the climate required.

The principal food of the Malabars is grain, butter, pulse, and fruits. They eat nothing which has ever enjoyed life. The countries to the south and west of Indostan, are the granaries of this vast continent, and maintain the inhabitants in abundance. These countries still remain
in

in the possession of the Aborigines of the country, whose laws are extremely favourable for agriculture. The Moguls have endeavoured often to make themselves masters of these countries, but hitherto in vain.

G A R D E N S.

In the Malabar gardens there is no kind of pulse equal to ours. Exclusive of the various kinds of French-bean, some of which are of the arborescent kind; the best they cultivate is the *Bazella*, known in France by the name of the *Spinage of China*; this is a lively, clambering plant, which, while growing, they support upon sticks, like our pease, or prop up against the walls, which it very soon covers with a most agreeable verdure

verdure ; its taste is almost the same with our spinage.

Gardening is but little known on the Coromandel coast. The orchards are better supplied than the gardens ; yet they have no fruits that can be compared to those of Europe. They do not understand the art of engrafting. Their most common fruits are the pine-apple, the mango, the banana, and the gouyave. The two first of these fruits are but indifferent on the Coromandel coast, though excellent on the Malabar coast, and several other parts of India.

THE COCOA-TREE.

The most useful of all the trees in their orchards is undoubtedly the cocoa-tree. This tree bears clusters of
nuts

nuts of an immense size. When these nuts are ripe, they yield a species of oil in great abundance, which the Indians use for various purposes, particularly in seasoning their garden stuff; the taste of this oil, however, is extremely disagreeable to those who are not accustomed to eat it. But the method of rendering the culture of this tree most advantageous, is the extracting wine from its fruit. The Indian watches the time when the nuts of the cocoa-tree have attained to the size of our ordinary nuts, which happens soon after the fall of the flower: he then makes an incision in the stalk of the cluster about seven or eight inches from the trunk of the tree; here he fastens an earthen vessel to receive the juice, which issues in great abundance: the mouth of the vessel he carefully wraps

wraps round with a cloth, to prevent the admission of the air, which would soon turn it to the fret. The vessel fills in twenty-four hours: the Indian takes care to change it every day. This natural wine which is called *Soury*, is sold and drunk in this state. It has much of the taste and strength of the *Must*, or new wine of the grape: it keeps, however, but a few days; it is necessary then to distil it, otherwise it would sour, and become entirely useless. This species of wine, when distilled, is the well-known liquor called *Ar-rack*.

A cocoa-tree, thus managed, is worth a pagoda (about eight shillings) per annum. These trees are planted about twenty-five or thirty feet distant from each other. They
produce

produce nothing for ten or twelve years, but then annually bear fruit for above fifty years. They flourish best in a mixed sandy soil ; and succeed extremely well even in pure sand.

The Malabars cultivate, in the open fields, a variety of plants, whose productions are of an oily substance ; such as the *Sesame* or *Gergelin*, which is a kind of fox-grass, and the *Ricin* or *Palma Christi*. The fresh oil extracted from this plant, which is known in Europe for a violent and dangerous caustic, cannot have the same hurtful quality in the Indies, as the Malabars consider it as a gentle purgative, and the best remedy for almost all the diseases incident to infants at the breast ; giving them usually, every month, a spoonful of it,

C

mixed

mixed in an equal quantity of their mother's milk.

I shall conclude this article by observing, that the reader must not form an idea of agriculture over the Indies in general, from the sketch I have given of that on the Coromandel coast : this coast, and the countries adjacent, form but a small part of the East-Indies, properly so called : they are, at the same time, the most barren, and have suffered most from the devastations of the Moguls, from the destructive government of these conquerors, and from the continual wars which harrafs and depopulate the country. The coasts of Orixá, Malabar, the territory of Surat, the banks of the Ganges, and the interior parts of Indostan, are much more fertile, and in many of these coun-

countries agriculture flourishes surprisingly.—I relate nothing but facts, which I had opportunities of observing myself.

THE KINGDOM OF SIAM.

The kingdom of Siam, situate on the peninsula of the Indies beyond the Ganges, is in general extremely fertile. Divided, like Indostan, by a chain of mountains from north to south, it enjoys, all the year round, and at the same time, two very opposite seasons. The western division, all along the bay of Bengal, is deluged by continual rains, during the six months that the monsoons continue to blow from the west. This season is considered as their winter on this coast ; whilst in the other division of the kingdom, towards the east, they

enjoy the finest climate, and never experience that difference of season, which reigns on the western side, except by the overflowing of the Menam. This noble river runs along a great way among mountains, where the rains concenter : it washes the walls of the capital, and annually overflows, without the least ravage, a delightful country, covered all over with rice plantations. The slime, which the Menam leaves behind, enriches the soil prodigiously ; the rice seems to grow up in proportion as the inundation rises, and the river at length gently retires by degrees into its bed, as the rice approaches to maturity, and has no further occasion for its waters. How bountiful has nature been to those who inhabit this charming country !—she has, however, done more : the fields
pro-

produce, in profusion, an infinite variety of most delicate fruits, which require almost no cultivation ; such as the pine-apple, the mangouftas, (the most delicate fruit perhaps in the world) mangoes of different kinds, and all excellent, several species of oranges, the banana, the ducion, the gacca, with other fruits of an inferior quality. Nature, still more bountiful, has also scattered over this country, almost on the surface of the ground, mines of gold, copper, and a species of fine tin, which there, as in other parts of India, they name *Calin*.

In this terrestrial paradise, surrounded with so much riches, who would imagine that the Siamese are, perhaps, the most wretched people in the world ?

The government of Siam is despotic : the fovereign alone enjoys that liberty which is natural to all mankind : his subjects are all his slaves ; every one of them is annually taxed at six months personal service without wages, and even without food : he allows them the other six months to procure themselves wherewithal to exist the year. Under such a government, there is no law that can afford protection to individuals against violence, or in the smallest degree secure them in their property. Every thing is subjected to the caprice of a prince, rendered brutal by every species of excess, particularly that of power ; who passes his days locked up in his seraglio, without an idea of any thing beyond the walls of his palace ; and particularly ignorant of the

the wretched condition of his subjects. These are exposed to the avarice of the grandees, who themselves are only the chief slaves, and tremblingly approach, on appointed days, the presence of their tyrant, whom they adore like a divinity, though subject to the most dangerous caprices.

Religion alone has preserved the power of protecting against tyranny those who, ranging themselves under its standard, are admitted into the order of the priests of *Somonacondom*, the deity of the Siamese. Those who embrace this order, and their number is considerable, are by law obliged to observe the strictest celibacy, which, in a warm climate, such as that of Siam, whilst it occasions

great disorders, almost depopulates the country.

It may easily be conceived, that under such a government agriculture cannot flourish ; it may be said, even, that no regard is paid to it at all, when the small portion of ground which is laboured, is compared to the immense extent of lands which are totally neglected.

With regard even to those grounds which they have laid out, nature may be said to do every thing. Men oppressed, debased, without spirit, nay, in a manner without hands, give themselves scarce any other trouble than just to reap what the earth produces ; and, as the country is extensive, and thinly peopled, they
enjoy

enjoy abundance of necessaries, almost without labour.

From the port of Mergin, situated on the western coast of this kingdom, to the capital, during a journey of ten or twelve days, you cross immense plains, charmingly watered, and the soil excellent : some of which appear to have been formerly tilled, but now lie quite uncultivated. This journey travellers are under the necessity of making in caravans, in order to defend themselves from the tygers and the elephants, to which this fine country is in a manner entirely abandoned, during a journey of eight days there scarce being the vestige of a habitation.

The environs of the capital are cultivated ; the lands belonging to the
 C 5 king,

king, those of the princes, the ministers, and principal officers display the amazing fertility of the country, producing, as I have been assured, an increase of two hundred-fold.

The Siamese method of cultivating their rice, is first to sow it very thick in a small square plot of ground, well watered, a little below the surface of the earth. As soon as the plants have grown about five or six inches high, they pull them up by the roots, and transplant them in small parcels of three or four stalks, distant from each other about four inches every way. These plants are placed deep in a clay soil, which has been previously well laboured with a plow, drawn by two buffaloes. The rice, transplanted in this manner, has beyond comparison a much greater
in-

increase, than if allowed to grow up in the same ground where it was originally planted.

It is the Chinese, and the Cochinese, settled in the capital and its neighbourhood, who contribute most to the improvement of the grounds. These strangers are useful to the sovereign, by the commerce they carry on with him, and it is the interest of the government to protect them from oppression.

In the neighbourhood of the uncultivated lands I have mentioned, you find others, belonging to different individuals, who, discouraged by continual oppressions, have quite abandoned them. It is astonishing, however, to observe these lands, frequently neither laboured nor sown
for

for years together, produce extraordinary crops of rice. The grain, reaped negligently, sows of itself, and re-produces annually another harvest, by the help of the inundations of the river Menam ; which proves, at the same time, the extreme fertility of the ground, and the extreme misery of the inhabitants.

The orchards of the prince, and the great Talapoins *, are admirable for the variety of their fruits, all of the most exquisite kind ; but these delicacies no private individual is allowed to enjoy. When a man is so unhappy as to have in his grounds a tree of excellent fruit, such as the mangouftas, a party of soldiers never fail to come every year, to secure, for the

* A religious order.

the king, or some great minister, the produce of this tree. They take an account of every mangousta, good or bad, making the proprietor guardian and security for the whole; and, when the fruits ripen, should there happen the smallest deficiency, the poor proprietor is subjected to all the insolence of unrestrained power; it becomes, of consequence, a real misfortune for a private man to be possessed of such a tree.

The Siamese rear herds of buffaloes, and horned cattle; but all the care they take of them is, to conduct them, in the day time, to the fallow grounds, which abound in pastures, and re-conduct them, in the evening, to the inclosures, in order to secure them from the tygers, of which there are great numbers in this country.

The

The milk, and a very little labour, is all the advantage they draw from them. Their religion, which is the same that prevails in Indostan, and which the Talapoins alone know any thing about, forbids them killing these animals. They elude, however, this law, by selling them to the Mahometans settled among them, who kill them, and sell their flesh privately. They have also great numbers of poultry, particularly ducks, of the best kinds in the Indies.

The king maintains a number of tame elephants. Each of these monstrous animals has twelve or fifteen men daily employed in cutting herbs, bananiers, (a kind of large rose) and sugar-canes. They are after all of no real use; they serve only for shew. They display, say the Siamese,

amefe, the grandeur of their prince; and he conceives an idea of his greatness, more from the number of his elephants, than from the number of his subjects.

These animals, wherever they come, make most destructive havoc; of this their keepers take advantage, making every individual, who is possessed of cultivated lands, or gardens, pay annually a certain tribute: should they refuse, the elephants would immediately be let loose, and ravage and ruin desolate their fields: for what subject would be hardy enough to dare to fail in respect to the elephants of the king of Siam, many of which, to the disgrace of humanity, are loaded with a profusion of titles, and preferred to the first dignities in the kingdom.

T H E

THE MALAIS.

Beyond the kingdom of Siam is the peninsula of Malacca ; a country formerly well peopled, and, consequently, well cultivated. This nation was once one of the greatest powers, and made a very considerable figure on the theatre of Asia. The sea was covered with their ships, and they carried on a most extensive commerce. Their laws, however, were apparently very different from those which subsist among them at present. From time to time they sent out numbers of colonies, which, one after another, peopled the islands of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, the Celebes or Macassar, the Moluccas, the Philippines, and those innumerable islands of the Archipelago, which bound Asia on the east, and which occupy

cupy an extent of seven hundred leagues in longitude, from east to west, by about six hundred of latitude, from north to south. The inhabitants of all these islands, those at least upon the coasts, are the same people; they speak almost the same language, have the same laws, the same manners. — Is it not somewhat singular, that this nation, whose possessions are so extensive, should scarce be known in Europe?—I shall endeavour to give you an idea of those laws, and those manners; you will, from thence, easily judge of their agriculture.

Travellers, who make observations on the Malais, are astonished to find, in the center of Asia, under the scorching climate of the line, the laws, the manners, the customs, and the

the prejudices of the ancient inhabitants of the north of Europe. The Malais are governed by feudal laws, that capricious system, conceived for the defence of the liberty of a few, against the tyranny of one, whilst the multitude is subjected to slavery and oppression.

A chief, who has the title of king, or sultan, issues his commands to his great vassals, who obey when they think proper. These have inferior vassals, who often act in the same manner with regard to them. A small part of the nation live independent, under the title of *Oramçai*, or *noble*, and sell their services to those who pay them best; whilst the body of the nation is composed of slaves, and live in perpetual servitude.

With

With these laws the Malais are restless, fond of navigation, war, plunder, emigrations, colonies, desperate enterprizes, adventures, and gallantry. They talk incessantly of their honour, and their bravery, whilst they are universally considered, by those with whom they have intercourse, as the most treacherous, ferocious people on the face of the globe; and yet, which appeared to me extremely singular, they speak the softest language of Asia. That which the Count de Forbin has said, in his memoirs, of the ferocity of the Macassars, is exactly true, and is the reigning characteristic of the whole Malay nations. More attached to the absurd laws of their pretended honour, than to those of justice or humanity, you always observe, that
amongst

amongst them, the strong oppress and destroy the weak : their treaties of peace and friendship never subsisting beyond that self-interest which induced them to make them, they are almost always armed, and either at war amongst themselves, or employed in pillaging their neighbours.

This ferocity, which the Malais qualify under the name of courage, is so well known to the European companies, who have settlements in the Indies, that they have universally agreed in prohibiting the captains of their ships, who may put into the Malay islands, from taking on board any seamen of that nation, except in the greatest distress, and then, on no account, to exceed two or three.

It

It is nothing uncommon for a handful of these horrid savages suddenly to embark, attack a vessel by surprize, poignard in hand, massacre the people, and make themselves masters of her. Malay batteaus, with twenty-five or thirty men, have been known to board European ships of thirty or forty guns, in order to take possession of them, and murder with their poignards great part of the crew. The Malay history is full of such enterprizes, which mark the desperate ferocity of these barbarians.

The Malais, who are not slaves, go always armed : they would think themselves disgraced, if they went abroad without their poignards which they call *Crit*. The industry of
this

this nation even surpasses itself, in the fabrick of this destructive weapon.

As their lives are a perpetual round of agitation and tumult, they could never endure the long flowing habits, which prevail amongst the other Asiatics. The habits of the Malais are exactly adapted to their shapes, and loaded with a multitude of buttons, which fasten them close to their bodies in every part. — I relate these seemingly trifling observations, in order to prove, that, in climates the most opposite, the same laws produce similar manners, customs, and prejudices. Their effect is the same too with respect to agriculture.

The lands possessed by the Malais are, in general, of a superior quality.

lity. Nature seems to have taken pleasure in there assembling her most favourite productions. They have not only those to be found in the territories of Siam, but a variety of others peculiar to these islands. The country is covered with odoriferous woods, such as the eagle or aloes wood, the sandal, and the cassia odorata, a species of cinnamon. You there breathe an air impregnated with the odours of innumerable flowers of the greatest fragrance, of which there is a perpetual succession the year round, the sweet flavour of which captivates the soul, and inspires the most voluptuous sensations. No traveller, wandering over the plains of Malacca, but feels himself strongly impelled to wish his residence fixed in a place so luxuriant in allurements,
where

where nature triumphs without the assistance of art.

The Malay islands produce various kinds of dying woods, particularly the *Sapan*, which is the same with the Brasil wood. There are also a number of gold mines, which the inhabitants of Sumatra and Malacca call *Ophirs*: some of which, those especially on the eastern coast, are richer than those of Brazil or Peru. There are likewise mines of fine copper, mixed with gold, which the inhabitants name *Tombage*. In the islands of Sumatra and Banea are mines of calin, or fine tin; and at Succadana, in the island of Borneo, is a mine of diamonds. Those islands enjoy also, exclusively, the rotin, the sagou, (or bread-palm-tree) the camphre, and other precious aromatics,

incessantly from their rustic employments, by their restless masters, who delight in war and maritime enterprises, have rarely time, and never resolution, to give the necessary attention to the labouring of their grounds. Their lands, in general, remain uncultivated ; and produce no kind of grain for the subsistence of the inhabitants.

S A G O U.

The sagou-tree, in part, supplies the defect of grain. This admirable tree is a present which bountiful nature has made to men incapable of labour. It requires no culture ; it is a species of the palm-tree, which grows naturally, in the woods, to the height of about twenty or thirty feet ; its circumference being sometimes

times from five to six. Its ligneous bark is about an inch in thickness, and covers a multitude of long fibres, which, being interwoven one with another, envelope a mass of a gummy kind of meal. As soon as this tree is ripe, a whitish dust, which transpires through the pores of the leaves, and adheres to their extremities, proclaims its maturity. The Malais then cut them down near the root, divide them into several sections, which they split into quarters: they then scoop out the mass of mealy substance, which is enveloped by and adheres to the fibres; they dilute it in pure water, and then pass it through a straining bag of fine cloth, in order to separate it from the fibres. When this paste has lost part of its moisture by eva-

poration, the Malais throw it into a kind of earthen vessels, of different shapes, where they allow it to dry and harden. This paste is wholesome nourishing food, and preserves for many years.

The Indians, in general, when they eat the sagou, use no other preparation than diluting it in water; but sometimes they dress it after different manners: they have the art of separating the finest of the flour, and reducing it to little grains, somewhat resembling grains of rice. The sagou, thus prepared, is preferred to the other, for the aged and infirm; and is an excellent remedy for many complaints in the stomach. When diluted, either in cold or boiling water, it forms a whitish jelly, very agreeable to the taste.

Though

Though this fagou-bearing-palm grows naturally in the forests, the Malay chiefs have formed considerable plantations of it, which constitute one of their principal resources for subsistence.

They might have the finest orchards in the world, would they give themselves the trouble to collect the various plants of those excellent fruits which nature has so liberally bestowed upon them: we find, however, none but a few straggling trees planted at random around their houses, or dispersed over their lands without symmetry or order.

The inhabitants of the great island of Java have somewhat better ideas of agriculture, than the other Malais,

since their subjection to the government of the Dutch. These sovereign merchants have taken advantage of the feudal system of the Malais, to reduce them under their yoke; artfully weakening the regal power, by fomenting, at times, the rebellions of the great vassals; and humbling the vassals, in their turn, by succouring their princes, when drove to the brink of ruin.

The Javanese begin to recover from that state of anarchy, the consequence of their ancient laws now almost no longer remembered. They cultivate, with success, rice, coffee, indigo, and sugar-cane. They rear, on the eastern coast of the island and in the districts of Madur and Solor, in the neighbourhood, numerous herds of buffaloes,

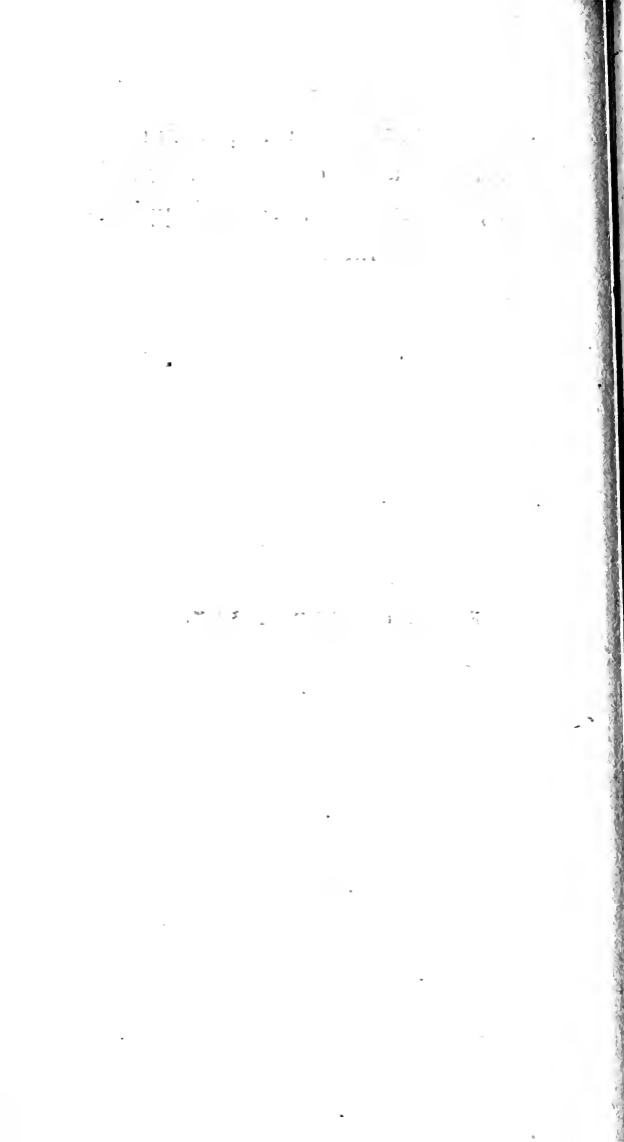
loes, of a monstrous size; their flesh is excellent, and they are of infinite use in labouring the ground. They have likewise numbers of horned cattle, the largest and finest, perhaps, in the world. The common pasturage in this and the rest of the Malay islands, is the same grass I have mentioned under the article of the isle of France, which the colonists there almost entirely neglect.

Here it would be proper to describe the manner of cultivating the spice-ries, the indigo, the sugar-cane, and the camphre; but these must be the subject of another discourse. I could have wished also to have comprehended, in this memoir, the observations I have made on the husbandry of China. You could then have compared nation against nation; and,

after having observed agriculture despised and debased amongst barbarians, oppressed and loaded with fetters by their frantic laws, the genuine productions of delirium incompatible with reason, you would have beheld this art, (divine it may be called, as taught to man by the great author of his being) supported and protected by the most simple of laws, those of nature, dictated by her to the first inhabitants of the earth, and preserved, since the beginning of time, from generation to generation, by one of the wisest and greatest nations in the world. This comparative representation, whilst, on the one hand, it displayed the misery and misfortunes of every kind, which attend the neglect of agriculture, would, on the other, have demonstrated

strated how much this art, honoured, protected, and encouraged as it ought, will ever advance the happiness of the human race.

END OF PART FIRST.



T R A V E L S

O F A

PHILOSOPHER.

PART SECOND.

W. A. A.

PHILIP

1850

T R A V E L S

O F A

P H I L O S O P H E R.

P A R T S E C O N D.

I LAST year began to give you a sketch of my inquiries into the state of agriculture among different nations of Africa and Asia. I observed, that scarce a vestige of it could be traced amongst the stupid the indolent negroes, who inhabit the western coasts of Africa; whilst it flourished, under the shade of liberty, amongst the Hollanders at the Cape of Good Hope. I pointed out the happy abundance which reigned in

in the fertile island of Madagafcar, inhabited by a people governed by the greatest simplicity of manners, and unacquainted with other laws than those of nature. Whilst I did justice also to the system of cultivation that prevailed at the Isle of Bourbon, which, having no port, and of consequence little or no intercourse with Europe, the colonists have preserved an uncorrupted system of manners, ever favourable for agriculture, I was, at the same time, under the necessity of acknowledging, that this art, which requires perseverance and simplicity, was greatly neglected at the Isle of France, which, having two excellent ports, and being much frequented by European ships, was more influenced by the inconstant and volatile manners of our quarter of the world; and that, in consequence

quence, though the soil, in point of fertility, was equal to Madagascar and Bourbon, their harvests generally failed, and an almost perpetual scarcity prevailed over the island.— I passed from thence to the great peninsula of the Indies, where agriculture, however oppressed by the barbarous laws of the Mogul conquerors, is still honoured and supported by the religion, the manners, and the perseverance of the conquered Malabars.— At Siam, under the happiest climate, and blessed with a soil inferior in fertility to no country in the world, agriculture we have observed debased by the indignities of tyranny, and abandoned by a race of slaves, whom nothing can interest, after the loss of liberty.— I have represented it almost in the same condition

tion amongst the Malais, who inhabit immense dominions, and innumerable islands, where nature has distributed her choicest treasures, and lavished her bounties with a profusion unknown to other regions. The destructive genius of the feudal laws, which keep this people in a perpetual ferment, permits not their application to the culture of the finest soil in the world. Nature alone does all. I am convinced that if the other nations of the earth, who have the misfortune to be governed by the feudal system, inhabited a climate equally happy, and lands equally fertile with those of the Malais, their agriculture would be equally neglected: necessity alone could force the plough into their hands.

In my last discourse I endeavoured to give you an idea of the most interesting modes of local agriculture which came under my observation: my principal object, however, was to enable you to remark, that in every country, in every quarter of the world, the state of agriculture depends entirely on the established laws, and, consequently, on the manners, customs, and prejudices from which these laws derived their origin. I now proceed.

THE

THE POWER OF AGRICULTURE.

ORIGIN OF THE KINGDOM OF PONTHIAMAS.

Departing from the peninsula of Malacca, and the islands of the Malais, towards the north, I fell in with a small territory called *Cancar*, but known, on the marine charts, under the name of *Ponthiamas*. Surrounded by the kingdom of Siam, where despotism and depopulation go hand in hand, the dominions of Camboya, where no idea of established government subsists; and the territories of the Malais, whose genius, perpetually agitated by their feudal laws, can endure peace neither at home nor abroad: this charming country, about
 fifty

fifty years ago, was uncultivated, and almost destitute of inhabitants.

A Chinese merchant, commander of a vessel which he employed in commerce, frequented these coasts. Being a man of that intelligent reflective genius, which so characteristically marks his nation, he could not, without pain, behold immense tracts of ground condemned to sterility, though naturally more fertile than those which formed the riches of his own country : he formed, therefore, a plan for their improvement. With this view, having first of all hired a number of labourers, some Chinese, others from the neighbouring nations, he, with great address, insinuated himself into the favour of the most powerful princes, who, for a certain
subsidy,

subsidy, assigned him a guard for his protection.

In the course of his voyage to Batavia, and the Philippine islands, he borrowed from the Europeans their most useful discoveries and improvements, particularly the art of fortification and defence : with regard to internal police, he gave the preference to the Chinese. The profits of his commerce soon enabled him to raise ramparts, sink ditches, and provide artillery. These preliminary precautions secured him from a coup de main, and protected him from the enterprizes of the surrounding nations of barbarians.

He distributed the lands to his labourers, without the least reservation of any of those duties or taxes known
by

by the names of service or fines of alienation ; duties which by allowing no real property, become the most fatal scourge to agriculture, and is an idea which revolts against the common sense of every wise nation. He provided his colonists, at the same time, with all sorts of instruments proper for the labour and improvement of their grounds.

In forming a labouring and commercial people, he thought, that no laws ought to be framed, but those which nature has established for the human race in every climate : he made these laws respected by obeying them first himself, and exhibiting an example of simplicity, industry, frugality, humanity, and good faith : — he formed, then, no system of laws—he did more—he established morals.

His

His territories soon became the country of every industrious man, who wished to settle there. His port was open to all nations. The woods were cleared; the grounds judiciously laboured, and sown with rice; canals, cut from the rivers watered their fields; and plentiful harvests, after supplying them with subsistence, furnished an object of extensive commerce.

The barbarians of the neighbourhood, amazed to see abundance so suddenly succeed to sterility, flocked for subsistence to the magazines of Ponthiamas; whose dominions, at this day, are considered as the most plentiful granary of that eastern part of Asia; the Malais, the Cochin-chinese, the Siamese, whose countries are naturally

naturally so fertile, considering this little territory as the most certain resource against famine.

Had the Chinese founder of this colony of mercantile labourers, in imitation of the sovereigns of Asia, established arbitrary imposts ; if by the introduction of a feudal system, of which he had examples amongst the neighbouring nations, he had vested in himself the sole property of the lands, under the specious pretence of giving them away to his colonists ; if he had made luxury reign in his palace, in place of that simplicity which distinguished his humble dwelling ; had he placed his ambition in a brilliant court, and crowds of fawning slaves ; had he preferred the agreeable to the useful arts, despising the industrious, who labour the ground
with

with the sweat of their brow, and provide sustenance for themselves and their fellow creatures ; had he treated his associates as slaves ; had he received into his port strangers in any other shape than as friends ; his fields had still been barren, his dominions unpeopled ; and the wretched inhabitants must have died of hunger, notwithstanding all their knowledge of agriculture, and all the assistance they could derive from the most useful instruments either for tilling or sowing their grounds. But the sage Kiang-tse, (the name of this judicious Chinese) persuaded that he should be always rich, if his labourers were so, established only a very moderate duty on all the merchandize entered at his port ; the produce of his lands appearing to him sufficient to render him powerful and great. His integrity,

grity, his moderation, and his humanity made him respected. He never wished to reign; but only to establish the empire of reason. His son, who now fills his place, inherits his virtues as well as his possessions: by agriculture, and the commerce he carries on with the produce of his lands, he has become so powerful, that the barbarians, his neighbours, stile him king, a title which he despises. He pretends to no right of sovereignty, but the noblest of all, that of doing good; happy in being the first labourer, and the first merchant of his country, he merits, as well as his father, a title more glorious than that of king—*the friend of mankind.*

E

How

How different such men from those conquerors so celebrated, who amaze and desolate the earth ; who, abusing the right of conquest, have established laws, which, even after the world has been delivered from these tyrants, has perpetuated, for ages, the miseries of the human race.

CAMBOYA AND TSIAMPA.

To the northward of Ponthiamas we find the countries of Camboya and Tsiampa. They are naturally fertile, (Camboya in particular) and appear, in former times, to have been well cultivated ; but the government of these two little states, having no settled form, the inhabitants being perpetually employed in destroying tyrants, only to receive
others

others^l in their place, have abandoned the culture of their grounds. Their fields which might be covered with rice, with herds, and with flocks, are deserts; and the natives are reduced to feed on a few wretched roots, which they gather from amidst the brambles, which overspread their lands.

Travellers are surpris'd to find, at a little distance from the wretched canton of Camboya, the ruins of an old city, built with stone, the architecture of which has some resemblance to that of Europe. The neighbouring fields too still preserve the traces of ridges: every thing shews that agriculture and the other arts have once flourished there; but they have now disappeared, with the nation who cultivated them. Those

who at present inhabit this country have no history, no tradition even, which can throw the faintest light upon the subject.

COCHIN-CHINA.

The Cochin-chinese, who border on Camboya to the north, observing the lands of this kingdom desolate and abandoned, some years ago took possession of such tracks as were most convenient, and have there introduced an excellent culture. The province of Donnay, usurped in this manner from Camboya, is at present the granary of Cochin-china. This kingdom, one of the greatest in Eastern Asia, about one hundred and fifty years ago, was inhabited by an inconsiderable nation, barbarous and savage, known by the name of *Loi*, who,

who, living partly by fishing, partly on roots, and the wild fruits of the country, paid little regard to agriculture.

A Tonquinese prince, unsuccessful in a war he carried on against the king of Tonquin, (under whom he enjoyed an office somewhat resembling the *maires de palais*, under the Merovingian race of the kings of France) retired with his soldiers and adherents across the river which divides that kingdom from Cochin-china. The savages, who then possessed this country, fled before these strangers, and took refuge among the mountains of Tsiampa. After a long war with their old enemies, who pursued them, the Tonquinese fugitives remained at length peaceable possessors of the country known un-

der the name of Cochin-china : it extends about two hundred leagues from north to south, but narrow and unequal from east to west. They then applied themselves entirely to the cultivation of rice, which, being the ordinary food of the inhabitants of Asia, is to them an object of the greatest importance. They separated into little cantonments, and established themselves on the plains, which extend along the banks of the rivers.

The fertility of the soil, which had lain long uncultivated, soon recompensed their labours by abundance ; population increased in proportion to the culture ; and their cantons extended in such a manner, that all the plains of this vast country being put into a state of improvement, they were tempted to make encroachments

ments on those of Camboya, which were in a manner totally abandoned. I never saw any country where the progress of population was so remarkable as in Cochin-china, which must be attributed not only to the climate, and the fertility of the soil, but to the simplicity of their manners, to the prudence and industry of the women as well as the men, and to the variety of excellent fish, which, with rice, is their ordinary food.

CULTURE OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF
RICE IN COCHIN-CHINA.

The Cochin-chinese cultivate six different kinds of rice: the *Little Rice*, the grain of which is small, oblong and transparent; this is by far the most delicate; it is generally ad-

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ministered to the sick ; the *Great Long Rice* is that whose form is round : the *Red Rice*, so called, because the grain is envelopped in a husk of a reddish colour, which adheres so closely, that it requires a very uncommon operation to separate it. These three kinds are produced in the greatest abundance, and form the principal subsistence of the natives. They require water, it being necessary to overflow the grounds where they are cultivated.

They raise also two other sorts of dry rice, which grow in dry soils, and, like our wheat, require no other watering but what they receive from the clouds. One of these species of rice has a grain as white as snow ; when dressed it is of a slimy viscous substance ; they make of it different
kinds

kinds of paste, such as vermicelli. Both these kinds form a considerable article in their commerce to China. They cultivate them only on the mountains and rising grounds, which they labour with the spade. They sow these grains as we do wheat, about the end of December or beginning of January, when the rainy season ends; they are not above three months in the ground, and yield a plentiful crop.

I am induced to believe, that the culture of this valuable grain would succeed extremely well in France. In the years 1749 and 1750 I often travelled over the mountains of Cochinchina, where this rice is cultivated; they are very high, and the temperature of the air cold: in the month of January, 1750, I observed

that the rice was very green, and above three inches high, although the liquor in Reaumur's thermometer was only about four degrees above the freezing point.

I carried some quintals of this grain to the Isle of France, where it was sown with success, and produced a greater crop than any other species. The colonists received my present with the greatest eagerness, as, exclusive of its superior increase, it has a finer taste, is attended with less trouble, there being no necessity for overflowing the fields; and, as it ripens fifteen or twenty days sooner than the other kinds, it can be reaped and secured before the hurricane season, which frequently makes dreadful havock with their later harvests. The other kinds of rice, being of a
flower

flower growth, require their grounds to be laid under water, after the manner of the natives of the Coromandel coast * ; but our colonists pay so little attention to agriculture, that they have never hitherto introduced it.

One might have imagined, that the advantages flowing from the cultivation of dry rice, would have engaged the colonists to attend to it with the greatest care ; and that, from the Isle of France, it might have been with ease introduced into Europe : but I have in vain endeavoured to procure it from this island ; those to whom I have applied, have sent me only common rice, which demands water and warmth. The culture of dry rice has,

* See page 39.

has, like every other species of agriculture, been abandoned to the unexperienced ignorance of slaves, who have mixed all the different kinds together, in such a manner, that the rice of Cochin-china being ripe long before the others, the grains have dropt from the ears before they were reaped, and the species, in this manner, has been, by degrees, entirely lost in that island. Would any traveller, whom business or curiosity might lead to Cochin-china, send over but a few pounds of this excellent grain, he would deserve our warmest acknowledgments.

The Cochin-chinese cultivate the common rice nearly in the same manner with the Malabars on the Coromandel coast. After having twice ploughed their ground, they sow
the

the rice in a little field which has been well laboured with the spade; the surface of this little field they just cover with water, to the height only of a few lines; and as soon as the rice is about five or six inches high, they harrow over their large fields, and overflow them with water; then pulling up the rice-plants in the feed-plots, transplant them into these grounds, thus prepared, in small parcels of four or five stalks, about the distance of six inches the one from the other. Women and children are generally employed in this work.

The Cochin-chinese have no machine for overflowing their grounds, nor have they any occasion: their plains, from one end of the kingdom to the other, are commanded by
a chain

a chain of high mountains, plentifully supplied with springs and rivulets, which naturally overflow the grounds, according as their course is directed.

They cultivate likewise different kinds of grains, such as the mahis, millets of different sorts, several species of the French bean, potatoes, yams, and a variety of roots proper for the subsistence of men and animals. But the culture of most important advantage to them, next to the rice, is the sugar-cane; and no country in Asia produces it in greater abundance than the Cochin-china.

SUGAR-CANES.

The sugar-canes of this country are of two kinds: the first grows thick and tall, the joints at a considerable
distance

distance from one another, the colour always green, the juice abundant, with very little of the salt in it. This species of cane is in general use for feeding and fattening of cattle; and experience teaches them, that no kind of food fattens sooner or better the human species, as well as animals, than this sugar-cane, eat while green, and the sugar which is extracted from it.

The second species is smaller in every respect, with its joints approaching nearer together: when ripe it assumes a yellow colour; and contains less water, and more salt, than the other.

The Cochin-chinese, when preparing the ground for the sugar-cane, turn it up to the depth of two feet;
this

this operation is performed with a plank. They then plant joints or eyes of the cane, three and three together, in a horizontal position, in the same manner almost as they plant vines in several provinces of France. These slips are planted chequer-wise about eighteen inches deep in the ground, distant six feet from one another; this operation they perform near the end of the rainy season, in order that the slips may be sufficiently watered, till such time as they have taken root. During the first six months, they give them two dressings with a kind of pick-axe, in order to destroy the weeds, and preserve a moisture about the roots of the canes, by heaping the earth around them.

Twelve,

Twelve, and sometimes fourteen, months after the plantation, they gather the first crop. By this time the canes, though planted at the distance of six feet, become so bushy that it is impossible to enter the field, without the assistance of a hatchet to clear your way.

The canes being cut, and tied up into bundles, are carried to the mills, in order to extract their juice. I shall not here describe the form of these machines, which resemble in a great measure those of the West-Indies: instead of water, they employ horned cattle or mules to set in motion the two cylinders, between which the sugar-canes are pressed. These engines have been described by numbers of travellers.

The

The juice being extracted, they boil it some hours in large kettles, in order to evaporate part of its water : it is then transported to the neighbouring market, and sold in that condition. Here ends the industry and the profits of the Cochin-chinese planter. The merchants purchase the juice, which resembles pure water ; they boil it again, throwing into the kettles some alkaline substance, such as the ashes of the leaves of the musa or bananier, and shell-lime ; they are acquainted with no other ; these ingredients throw up a thick scum, which the refiner carefully skims off : the action of the alkali hastens the separation of the salt from the water, and, by the force of ebullition, reduces the juice of the cane to the consistence of syrup. As soon as this
syrup

fyrup begins to granulate, they decant it into a great earthen vefsel, where they cool it about an hour; when a kind of cruft, ftill foft, and of a yellowifh colour, appears on the furface of the fyryp; they lofe not a moment then to empty it into a vefsel of a conic fhape, which they call a *form*. Without this intermediate operation of cooling the fyryp, it would harden into a mafs, and not being granulated, would confequently want one effential quality of fugar.

Thefe fugar-cones, or forms, in Cochin-china, are, like thofe of our Weft-India colonies, of baked earth, about three feet high, pierced at their narrow extremities, and contain in general about forty or fifty pounds of fugar. Thefe *forms*, when full,
are

are placed on another earthen vessel, the mouth of which is proportioned to receive the narrow end of the cone, and must be large enough to contain the coarse syrup, which distils from the sugar, through some straw which imperfectly stops up the little opening in the bottom of the *form*.

When they suppose the syrup has acquired the consistence of salt in every part of the cone, they then proceed to whiten and purify it. They dilute, in a trough, a fine sort of whitish clay, with such a quantity of water as, when thus prepared, prevents it from having too much consistence; with a truel they then lay it upon the surface of the sugar to the thickness of about two inches, in the void space left at the top of the form by the condensing of the
sugar,

sugar, after purging itself of the coarser syrup or melasses. The water contained in the clay penetrating by degrees into the mass, washes it, and carries off insensibly the remaining syrup, and every foreign particle that adheres most closely to the sugar. When the clay hardens, they replace it with a fresh quantity, diluted as the first: this operation, which lasts about twelve or fifteen days, is the same here as in our West-India colonies. Some refiners of Cochin-china, however, have another method. In place of clay, tempered thus with water, they cut into small pieces the trunk of the musa or bananier, which they place upon the sugar: the trunk of this tree is very watery; the water of the detergent quality; and distills from the fibres, which

which envelope it, in very small drops. Those who follow this method pretend, that the operation is thereby rendered less tedious, and that the sugar acquires a finer colour.

The process of the Cochin-chinese, in refining their sugar, goes no further: they are unacquainted with the stoves in use in the West-Indies. After having clayed their sugars sufficiently, they sell them in the public markets, particularly to the Chinese, and other strangers, who are invited to their ports by the moderate price of this commodity, which is cheaper at Cochin-china than any where in India.

The white sugar of the best quality is generally sold at the port of Faifo,
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in exchange for other merchandize, at the rate of three piaftres (about fourteen fhillings) the Cochin-china quintal, which weighs from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds French*. The trade in this commodity is immense. The Chinefe alone, whose lands do not produce enough for their own confumpt, purchafe annually from Cochin-china above forty thousand barrels, weighing about two thousand pounds per barrel.

This country, it fhould be obferved, which produces this commodity in fuch abundance, and at fo low a price, being a new kingdom, ought to be confidered, in fome meafure, as a colony : it is worthy obfervation too,

* Ninety - one pounds eight ounces French make one hundred pounds Englifh.

too, that the sugar-cane is there cultivated by free men, and all the process of preparation and refining, the work of free hands. Compare then the price of the Cochin-chinese production with the same commodity which is cultivated and prepared by the wretched slaves of our European colonies, and judge if, to procure sugar from our colonies, it was necessary to authorize by law the slavery of the unhappy Africans transported to America. From what I have observed at Cochin-china, I cannot entertain a doubt, but that our West-India colonies, had they been distributed without observation amongst a free people, would have produced double the quantity that is now procured from the labour of the unfortunate negroes.

What

What advantage, then, has accrued to Europe, civilized as it is, and thoroughly versed in the laws of nature, and the rights of mankind, by legally authorizing in our colonies the daily outrages against human nature, permitting them to debase man almost below the level of the beasts of the field? These slavish laws have proved as opposite to its interest as they are to its honour, and to the laws of humanity. This remark I have often made.

Liberty and property form the basis of abundance, and good agriculture: I never observed it to flourish where those rights of mankind were not firmly established. The earth, which multiplies her productions with a kind of profusion, under the hands of the free-born labourer,

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seems

seems to shrink into barrenness under the sweat of the slave. Such is the will of the great author of our nature, who has created man free, and assigned to him the earth, that he might cultivate his possession with the sweat of his brow; but still should enjoy his liberty.

The Cochin-chinese, exclusive of the sugar-cane, employ themselves in the culture of a variety of other productions, of great importance both to their interior fabrics, and external commerce.

They cultivate the cotton-tree, the mulberry, the pepper, the varnish-tree, the date, the tea, the indigo, and the saffron, together with a plant peculiar to the country, called *Tsai*, which, being fermented like indigo, fur-

furnishes in great plenty a flower of a green colour, which in dying, gives a durable tincture of a fine emerald colour. This plant would undoubtedly be a most valuable present to our West-India colonies.

I must at present decline entering into a description of the various processes attending these different cultures. They will afford subject for some future memoirs.

The soil in general, of Cochin-china, is excellent, and they cultivate it well. Their mountains in general are fallow, as population is not even sufficiently considerable for the cultivation of all the plain grounds they have taken possession of in Camboya: these mountains produce, however, the eagle or aloes-

wood, which is the most precious perfume in the world; the sapan-wood, the same with that of Brasil; and the cinnamon, in small quantities indeed, but much superior in quality to that of Ceylon.—The Chinese pay three or four times more for it than for that which the Dutch import from that island. They have several sorts likewise of admirable wood for joyner and cabinet-work, particularly the rose-wood; the tea-wood is excellent for building, and is preferred to all others in the construction of the royal galleys, having every property that can be wished for either for beauty or solidity. From their mountains also, and from the forests with which they are covered, they procure ivory, musk, wax, iron, and gold in great abundance. These
moun-

mountains too are full of game, such as deer, antelopes, wild goats, peacocks, pheasants, &c. The chase is free to all, but dangerous from the number of tygers, elephants, rhinoceros, and other carnivorous and destructive animals, with which the forests abound.

The sea, which washes their coasts, as well as the rivers, are well supplied with excellent fish. Every one has the liberty of fishing; and in this the Cochin-chinese take great delight. I have already observed, that they live chiefly on fish and rice.

Their domestic animals are, the horse for the road, the buffalo for labour, and the cow, the hog, the goat, the goose, the duck, and hens of various kinds, for the table. These

animals thrive extremely well, and are in great abundance. The king alone reserves to himself the exclusive right of breeding elephants for the war; and this is a reservation which no man envies him. He maintains generally four hundred of them; he could maintain four thousand men at a much less expence. The Cochinese have few good fruits; the pine-apple, and oranges of different kinds, are the best their country produces. They do not cultivate the vine, though it is one of the native productions of their lands. They are but indifferently provided with pulse. In a word, their orchards and their gardens are very inconsiderable. They attach themselves to the more essential branches of agriculture.

Although

Although this art is not yet arrived at that degree of perfection in Cochin-china, to which it might be carried, with the advantage of such an excellent foil, yet the manners of the people being very favourable, it flourishes greatly. The Cochin-chinese are gentle, hospitable, frugal, and industrious. There is not a beggar in the country ; and robbery and murder absolutely unknown. A stranger may wander over the kingdom, from one end to another, (the capital excepted) without meeting the slightest insult : he will be every where received with a most eager curiosity, but, at the same time, with great benevolence. I have here remarked a custom singular indeed, but expressive of their goodness of heart. A Cochin-chinese traveller, who has

not money sufficient to defray his expences at an inn, enters the first house of the town or village he arrives at: no body inquires his business; he speaks to none, but waits in silence the hour of dinner; so soon as the rice is served up, he modestly approaches, places himself at table along with the family, eats, drinks, and departs, without pronouncing a single word, or any person's putting to him a single question: it was enough they saw he was a man, a brother in distress; they asked no further information.

The six first kings, founders of this monarchy, governed the nation as a father governs his family; they established the laws of nature alone; they themselves paid the first obedience to them. Chiefs of an immense
family

family of labourers, they gave the first example of labour ; they honoured and encouraged agriculture, as the most useful and honourable employment of mankind. They required from their subjects only a small annual free-gift, to defray the expence of their defensive war against their Tonquinese enemies.

This imposition was regulated, by way of poll-tax, with the greatest equity. Every man, able to labour the ground, paid in to the magistrate, on account of the prince, a small sum proportioned to the strength of his constitution, and the vigour of his arm ; and nothing more. It was under their reign, that this nation multiplied so surprisngly, in consequence of the plenty furnished by the culture of their fields. Whilst they reign-

ed, the treaties entered into, on the banks of the river which separates Tonquin from Cochin-china, between the chiefs of their family and those who followed them in their retreat, were most religiously observed. It is to this reciprocal fidelity that Cochin-china owes its present flourishing state, with regard to power, population, and agriculture. Their successor, who now reigns, inherits their goodness of heart, but has the weakness to suffer himself to be governed by his slaves. These have acquired the art of separating the interest of the prince from that of his people. They have inspired him with the thirst after personal riches. The vast quantity of gold which they have dug from the mines, during this reign, has already proved detrimental to industry and agriculture. In the

the palace it has been productive of luxury and corruption, its never-failing attendants.

This prince has been insensibly led to despise the simple habitations of his ancestors. He has built a superb palace, a league in circumference, surrounded by a wall of brick, on the model of that of Peking. Sixteen hundred pieces of cannon, mounted around the palace, announce to the people the approaching loss of their liberties and rights.

He found a necessity too for a winter palace, a summer palace, and an autumn palace. The old taxes were by no means sufficient to defray these expences; they were augmented; and new impositions devised, which, being

ing no longer voluntary contributions, could not be levied but by force, and tyrannical oppression. His courtiers, who found their interest in the corruption of their prince, have given him the title of *King of Heaven* : *Vous Tsoi*, hearing himself often so styled, at length thought he might assume it — “ Why,” addressing himself one day to me, “ don’t you “ come oftener to pay your court to “ the *King of Heaven* ?”

These designing sycophants, who guard every avenue to the royal ear, have had the address to over-awe the ordinary administration of justice ; and, taking advantage of exemption from punishment, have pillaged the labourers, and filled the provinces with oppression and distress.

All along the high roads I have seen whole villages newly abandoned by their inhabitants, harrassed by fruitless toil, and never ending exactions, and their fields, in consequence, falling back to their first uncultivated state.

In the midst of all this growing disorder, the prince, whose mind has been surprized by fawning flatterers, and who alone is ignorant of the villainy of those around him, still preserves a respect for the manners of his ancestors; he does not, indeed, like his forefathers, give an example of personal labour, but still his desire is to protect agriculture.

I have

I have seen him, at the commencement of the new year, preside, with all the simplicity of his predecessors, at the general assembly of the nation, which is annually held on that day, in the open field, in order to renew the reciprocal oath for observation of the primordial contract, which established him father of his people, at the same time that they invested him alone with the power, the noblest indeed of all, of making his people happy.

When he speaks of his subjects, he calls them still by no other name than that of his children. I have seen him too assist, like a simple individual, in the annual assembly of his family, according to the ancient
usage

usage of the nation ; an assembly where the most aged always preside, without regard to the dignities of those of younger years. This, however, seemed to me only a formality venerable from custom ; for what is man, where the *King of Heaven* appears ?

Corruption, it is true, has not yet infected the general body of the people ; they still preserve their primitive manners : it is hitherto confined to the palace, and the capital : its source, however, is too elevated to prevent its poisoned streams from flowing to the plains. It is from the great that the corruption of a people ever derives its origin.

When it shall have infected every rank ; when the foundations of agriculture,

culture, liberty and property, already attacked by the great, shall be overthrown ; when the profession of the farmer shall become the most contemptible, and the least lucrative, what must be the fate of agriculture ? Without a flourishing agriculture, what must be the fate of those multitudes, fostered under its wing ?— What must be the fate of prince and people ?—It will resemble that of the nation who possessed the country before them ; perhaps that of the savages, who yielded it to that nation : of them there are no remains, but the ruins of an immense wall, near the capital, which appears to have been part of a great city : it is of brick, and of a form very different from what is to be seen in the other countries of Asia : no history, however,

no

no tradition has preserved the memory of the builders.

Upon the whole I conclude, from the general corruption which threatens the manners of the Cochin-chinese, that agriculture is on the decline, and that whatever efforts they may make to support it, it has now passed its meridian, and must infallibly degenerate.

C H I N A.

I now approach the period of my travels. Departing from the coasts of Cochin-china, and directing my course towards the north-east, I proceeded for China, which the Cochin-chinese call, with great respect, *Nuse d' ai Ming*—*the Kingdom of the Great Lumi-*

Luminary. After some days navigation, before there was any appearance of land, I perceived along the horizon a forest of masts, and soon after an innumerable multitude of boats, which covered the surface of the water. These were thousands of fishermen, whose industry drew from the deeps subsistence for numbers. The land now began to rise to my view ; I advanced to the mouth of the river, still amidst crowds of fishers, throwing out their lines on every side. I entered the river of Canton ; it is peopled like the land ; its banks lined with ships at anchor ; a prodigious number of small craft are continually gliding along in every direction, some with sails, others with oars, vanishing often suddenly from the sight, as they enter the numberless

less canals, dug with amazing labour, across extensive plains, which they water and fertilize. Immense fields, covered with all the glory of the harvest, with stately villages rising to the eye on every side, adorn the remoter view, whilst mountains, covered with verdure, cut into terraces, and shaped into amphitheatres, form the back ground of this noble landscape.

I arrive at Canton, where new subjects for admiration arise; the noise, the motion, the crowd augments; the water, as well as land, being every where covered with multitudes. Astonished at the amazing appearance, I inquire into the numbers of inhabitants of this city and suburbs; and, after comparing different accounts, find that they must amount
at

at least to eight hundred thousand souls. My surprize, however, is greatly increased, when I learn, that, to the northward of Canton, about five leagues up the river, is a village named *Fachan*, which contains a million of inhabitants, and that every part of this great empire, extending about six hundred leagues from north to south, and as much from east to west, was peopled in the same proportion.

By what art can the earth produce subsistence for such numbers? Do the Chinese possess any secret art of multiplying the grain and provisions necessary for the nourishment of mankind? To solve my doubts I traversed the fields, I introduced myself among the labourers, who are in general easy, polite, and affable, with
some

some share of learning, and knowledge of the world. I examine, and pursue them through all their operations, and observe that their secret consists simply in manuring their fields judiciously, ploughing them to a considerable depth, sowing them in the proper season, turning to advantage every inch of ground which can produce the most inconsiderable crop, and preferring to every other species of culture that of grain, as by far the most important.

This system of culture, the last article excepted, appears to be the same that is recommended in all our best authors, ancient and modern, who have wrote on this subject ; our common labourers are acquainted with it ; but how much must our European farmers be surprized, when they are
in-

informed, that the Chinese have no meadows, natural nor artificial, and have not the least conception of fallowing, never allowing their lands the slightest repose.

The Chinese labourer would consider meadows, of every denomination, as lands in a state of nature; they sow their lands all with grain, and give the preference to such grounds as we generally lay out in meadows, which, lying low, and being properly situated with respect to water, are consequently by far the most fertile. They affirm, that a field sown with grain, will yield as much straw for the nourishment of cattle, as it would have produced of hay, besides the additional advantage of the grain for the sustenance of man, of which they can spare too, in plentiful

tiful seasons, a small portion for the animal creation.

Such is the system adhered to from one extremity of their empire to the other, and confirmed by the experience of four thousand years, amongst a people, of all the nations in the world, the most attentive to their interest.

That which must render this plan of agriculture the more inconceivable to Europeans, is the idea of their never allowing their lands to lie one season unlaboured. Those who for some years have endeavoured, with such public-spirited zeal, to re-animate amongst us this neglected art, have considered, as the first and most important object, the multiplication
of

of artificial meadows, to supply the defect of natural ones, for the fattening of cattle ; without once venturing to think of suppressing the mode of fallowing the grounds, however far they carried their system of increasing the number of artificial pastures.

This system, which appears the most plausible of any they have projected, and is received with the greatest partiality by our farmers, is, nevertheless, contradicted by the constant experience of the greatest and the most ancient land-labouring nation in the world, who regard the practice of meadows, and fallowing grounds, as an abuse, destructive of plenty and population, which are the only important objects of agriculture.

A Chinese labourer could not but smile, if you informed him, that the earth has occasion for repose at a certain fixed period of time : he certainly would say, that we deviated greatly from the point in view, could he read our treatises ancient and modern, our marvellous speculations on agriculture : what would he say, if he saw our lands, part of them fallow, part of them employed in useless cultures, and the remainder wretchedly laboured ? What would he say, what must be his feelings, if, in travelling over our fields, he observed the extreme misery and barbarism of their wretched cultivators ?

The Chinese lands, in general, are not superior to ours : you see there,

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as with us, some excellent grounds, others middling, the rest bad ; some soils strong, others light ; lands where clay, and lands where sand, gravel, and flints every where predominate.

All these grounds, even in the northern provinces, yield annually two crops, and in those towards the south often five in two years, without one single fallow season, during the many thousands of years that they have been converted to the purposes of agriculture.

The Chinese use the same manures as we do, in order to restore to their grounds those salts and juices, which an unintermitting production is perpetually consuming. They are acquainted with marl ; they employ also

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to common falt, lime, afhes, and all forts of animal dung, but above all that which we throw into our rivers : they make great ufe of urine, which is carefully preferved in every houfe, and fold to advantage : in a word, every thing produced by the earth is re-conveyed to it with the greateft care, into whatever fhape the operations of nature or art may have transformed it.

When their manures are at any time fcarce, they fupply the deficiency, by turning up the ground, with the fpade, to a great depth, which brings up to the furface of the field a new foil, enriched with the juices of that which defcends in its room.

Without meadows the Chinese maintain a number of horses, buffaloes, and other animals of every species necessary for labour, for sustenance, and for manure. These animals are fed, some with straw, others with roots, beans, and grain of every kind. It is true, they have fewer horses, and horned cattle, in proportion, than we have, yet it is not necessary that they should have more.

The whole country is cut into canals, dug by the industry of the inhabitants, extending from river to river, which divide and water this vast empire, like a garden. Travelling, transporting of goods, almost every species of carriage is performed on these canals, with great ease, and
small

small expence : they don't even use horses to drag their boats ; every thing is done by the sail or the oar, which they manage with singular dexterity, even in going up the rivers. Where any kind of labour can be performed, at a moderate price by men, it is a maxim with them never to employ animals. In consequence of this, the banks of their canals are cultivated almost to the water's edge ; they lose not an inch of ground : their public roads resemble our foot-paths ; their canals, however, are infinitely more useful than highways : they convey fertility every where, and furnish the people great part of their subsistence in fish. — There is no comparison between the weight which can be transported in a boat, and that which can be conveyed

veyed by any kind of land-carriage ;
no proportion between the expence.

The Chinese are still less acquainted with the use, or rather the luxury of chariots, and equipages of every kind, which crowd the principal cities of Europe. The horses necessary for these, assembled in thousands in our capitals, consume the produce of numberless acres of our best grounds, which, if cultivated with grain, would afford subsistence for multitudes, who are dying of hunger. The Chinese wish rather to maintain men than horses.

The emperor and chief magistrates are carried through the cities by men, with safety and with dignity ; their march is sedate and majestic, it threatens not with danger those who
walk

walk on foot : they travel in a kind of galleys, fafer, more commodious, equally magnificent, and lefs expensive than our land equipages.

I have before obferved, that the Chinefe lofe not an inch of ground. They are very far, therefore, from allotting immense parks, of the fineft ground, for the maintenance alone of deer, in contempt of the human race. The emperors, even thofe of the Tartar line, have never hitherto dreamed of forming thefe parks ; ftill lefs the grandees, that is, the magiftrates and the learned : fuch an idea could never find place in the mind of a Chinefe. Even their country houfes, and boxes of pleasure, prefent nothing to the eye all around, but ufe-ful cultures, agreeably diversified,

That which constitutes their principal beauty, is their delightful situation, judiciously improved, where, in the disposition of the various parts which form the whole, there every where reigns a happy imitation of that beautiful disorder of nature, from whence art has borrowed all her charms.

The most rocky hills, which, in France, and other places of Europe, they turn into vineyards, or totally neglect, are there compelled, by dint of industry, to produce grain. The Chinese are acquainted, indeed, with the vine, which here and there they plant in arbours; but they consider it as a luxury, and the wine it produces as an unnecessary superfluity: they would imagine it a sin against humanity, to endeavour to procure,
by

by cultivation, an agreeable liquor, whilst, from the want of that grain which this vineyard might have produced, some individual perhaps might be in danger of perishing of hunger.

The steepest mountains, even, are rendered accessible : at Canton, and from one extremity of the empire to another, you observe mountains cut into terrasses, representing, at a distance, immense pyramids divided into different stages, which seem to rear their heads to heaven. Every one of these terrasses yields annually a crop of some kind of grain, even of rice ; and you cannot withhold your admiration, when you behold the water of the river, the canal, or the fountain, which glides by the foot of the mountain, raised from terrass to terrass, even to the summit, by

means of a simple portable machine, which two men with ease transport and put in motion.

The sea itself, which seems to threaten the solid globe it furrounds, has been compelled, by industry and labour, to yield part of its dominions to the Chinese cultivator.

The two finest provinces of the empire, Nanking and Tché-kiang, formerly covered with water, have been united to the continent some thousands of years ago, with an art infinitely superior to that which is so much admired in the modern works of Holland.

The Chinese had to struggle with a sea, whose natural flux from east
to

to west urges it continually towards the coasts of these two provinces; whilst the Dutch have had nothing to oppose but a sea, which, by the same natural motion, always avoids their western shores.

The Chinese nation is capable of the most stupendous works; in point of labour I never observed their equals in the world. Every day in the year is a working day, except the first, destined for paying reciprocal visits, and the last, which is consecrated to the ceremonial duties they pay to their ancestors.

An idle man would be treated with the most sovereign contempt, and regarded as a paralytic member, a load to the body of which he made a part; the government would
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in no manner permit it. How opposite from the ideas of other Asiatics, where none are admitted to any degree of estimation, but those who, from their situation in life, have nothing to do! — An ancient emperor of China, in a public instruction, exhorting the people to labour, observed, that if in one corner of the empire there was one man who did nothing, there must, in some other quarter, be another who suffers on that account, deprived of the necessaries of life. This wise maxim is fixed in the breast of every Chinese; and, with this people so open to reason, he who pronounces a wise maxim pronounces a law.

Behold, gentlemen, a slight sketch of the general picture of Chinese agriculture, with the peculiar genius of that
that

that people for this art. The limits of my discourse will not permit me at present to enter into a detail of the different cultures I have seen in this country : I shall only observe, that they are such as abundantly supply all the wants, and conveniencies of the most populous nation in the world, and furnish with their superfluity, an important article for foreign commerce.

From these observations it is obvious, that agriculture flourishes in China more than in any other country in the world : yet it is not to any process peculiar to their labour, it is not to the form of their plough, or their method of sowing, that this happy state, and the plenty consequent on it, is to be attributed ; it must chiefly be derived from their
mode

mode of government, the immovable foundations of which have been laid deep, by the hand of reason alone, coeval almost with the beginning of time; and from their laws, dictated by nature to the first of the human race, and sacredly preserved from generation to generation, engraved in the united hearts of a great people, not in obscure codes, devised by chicanery and deceit.—In a word, China owes the prosperity of her agriculture to the simplicity of her manners, and to her laws, which are the laws of nature and reason.

This empire was founded by labourers, in those happy times when the laws of the great Creator were still held in remembrance, and the culture of the earth considered as the noblest of all employments, the most
worthy

worthy of mankind, and the general occupation of all. From *Fou-bi* (who was the first chief of this nation, some hundreds of years after the deluge, if we follow the version of the Septuagint, and in this quality presided over agriculture) all the emperors, without exception, even to this day, glory in being the first labourers of their empire.

The Chinese history has carefully preserved an anecdote of generosity in two of the ancient emperors, who, not perceiving among their children any one worthy to mount a throne, which virtue alone ought to inherit, named, as their successors, two simple labourers. These labourers, according to the Chinese annals, advanced the happiness of mankind, during very long reigns; their memory is
still

still held in the highest veneration. It is unnecessary to observe how much examples, such as these, honour and animate agriculture.

The Chinese nation has ever been governed like a family, of which the emperor is father: his subjects are his children, without any other inequality but that which is established by talents, and by merits. Those puerile distinctions of *noblesse*, and *plebeians*, *men of family*, and *men of mean birth*, are no where to be found but in the jargon of new people, still barbarous, who, having forgot the common origin of all men, insult without reflection, and debase the whole human race; whilst that nation whose government is ancient, dating its commencement with the first

first ages of the world, are sensible that all men are born equal, all brothers, all noble. Their language has not even hitherto invented a term for expressing this pretended distinction of birth. The Chinese, who have preserved their annals from the remotest times, and who are all equally the children of the emperor, have never so much as suspected an inequality of origin amongst us.

From this principle, that the emperor is father, and the people his children, spring all the duties of society, all the duties of morality, every virtue of humanity, the union of every wish for the common good of the family, consequently an attachment to labour, and above all to agriculture.

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This art is honoured, protected, and practised by the emperor, and the great magistrates, who generally are the sons of plain labouring men, whom merit has raised to the first dignities of the empire; and, in a word, by the whole nation, who have the good sense to honour an art the most useful to mankind; in preference to others more frivolous, and less important.

CEREMONY OF OPENING THE
GROUNDS.

On the fifteenth day of the first moon, in every year, which generally corresponds to the beginning of March, the emperor in person performs the ceremony of opening the grounds. This prince, in great pomp,
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proceeds to the field appointed for the ceremony : the princes of the imperial family, the presidents of the five great tribunals, and an infinite number of mandarins accompany him. Two sides of the field are occupied by the emperor's officers, and guards ; the third is allotted for all the labourers of the province, who repair thither to behold their art honoured and practised by the head of their empire ; the fourth is reserved for the mandarins.

The emperor enters the field alone, prostrates himself, and nine times strikes his head against the ground, in adoration of *Tien*, the God of heaven ; he pronounces, with a loud voice, a prayer appointed by the tribunal of rites, invoking the blessing of the almighty sovereign on his labour, and
on

on the labour of his people, who form his family; he then, in quality of sovereign pontiff of the empire, sacrifices a bullock, which he offers up to heaven, as the source of every blessing: whilst they cut the victim in pieces, and place them on the altar, they bring to the emperor a plough, in which are yoked a pair of bullocks, magnificently adorned. The emperor then, laying aside his royal robes, takes hold of the handle of the plough, and turns up several furrows the whole length of the field; then, with a complaisant air, having delivered the plough to the mandarins, they successively follow his example, emulating one another in performing this honourable labour with the greatest dexterity. The ceremony concludes with the distribution of money, and pieces of stuff, among
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the labourers there present ; the most active of whom finish the remaining labour, in presence of the emperor, with great agility and address.

Some time after, when they have sufficiently laboured and manured their grounds, the emperor repairs again, in procession, and begins the sowing of the fields, always accompanied with ceremony, and attended by the labourers of the province.

The same ceremonies are performed, on the same days in all the provinces of the empire, by the viceroys, assisted by all the magistrates of their departments, in presence of a great number of the labourers of their respective provinces. I have seen this opening of the grounds at Canton, and never remember to have beheld
any

any of the ceremonies, invented by men, with half the pleasure and satisfaction with which I observed this.

THE ENCOURAGEMENTS OF
AGRICULTURE.

The Chinese agriculture has, at the same time, other encouragements. Every year the viceroys of the provinces send to court the names of such labourers as have chiefly distinguished themselves in their employments, either by cultivating grounds till then considered as barren, or, by a superior culture, improving the production of such lands as formerly had bore grain. These names are presented to the emperor, who confers on them honorary titles, to distinguish them above their fellow-labourers. If any man has made an
impor-

important discovery, which may influence the improvement of agriculture, or should he, in any manner, deserve more distinguished marks of regard than the rest, the emperor invites him to Peking, defraying his journey, with dignity, at the expence of the empire; he receives him into his palace, interrogates him with regard to his abilities, his age, the number of his children, the extent and quality of his lands; then dismisses him to his plough, distinguished by honourable titles, and loaded with benefits and favours.

Who is happiest, gentlemen, the prince who conducts himself in this manner, or the nation who is thus governed? Amongst a people where all are equal, where every one aspires
after

after distinctions, such encouragements cannot fail to inspire a love for labour, and an emulation for the cultivation of the ground.

ATTENTION OF THE CHINESE
GOVERNMENT.

The whole attention, in general, of the Chinese government, is directed towards agriculture. The principal object of the father of a family, ought to be the subsistence of his children. The state of the fields, in consequence forms the great object of the toils, the cares, and the solitudes of the magistrates. It may easily be conceived, that, with such dispositions, the government has not neglected to secure to the labourers that liberty, property, and indulgence

gence which are the great springs for the improvement of agriculture.

The Chinese enjoy, undisturbed, their private possessions, as well as those which, being by their nature indivisible, belong to all, such as the sea, the rivers, the canals, the fish which they contain, and the beasts of the forest : navigation, fishing, and the chase are free to every one ; and he who buys a field, or receives it by inheritance from his ancestors, is of course the sole lord and master.

The lands are free as the people ; no feudal services, and no fines of alienation ; none of those men interested in the misfortunes of the public ; none of those farmers who never amass more exorbitant fortunes, than when an unfavourable season has ruin-

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ed the country, and reduced the unhappy labourer to perish for want, after having toiled the year round for the sustenance of his fellow subjects ; none of that destructive profession, hatched in the delirium of the feudal system, under whose auspices arise millions of processes, which drag the labourer from his plough into the obscure and dangerous mazes of chicanery, and thereby rob him while defending his rights, of that time which would have been importantly employed in the general service of mankind.

THE IMPOSTS ESTABLISHED IN CHINA INVARIABLE.

In China there is no other lord, no other superior, who has power to levy taxes, but the common father of the family, the emperor. The bon-
zes

zes (priests of the sect of Fo-hi) accustomed to receive alms from a charitable people, would be very indifferently received, should they pretend that this alms is a right which heaven has bestowed upon them.

THE IMPOST CALLED THE TENTH.

This impost, which is not exactly the tenth part of the produce, is regulated according to the nature of the grounds : in bad soils it is perhaps only the thirtieth part, and so in proportion. This impost, however, of the tenth part of the produce of the earth, which belongs to the emperor, is the only tax on the lands, the only tribute known in China since the origin of the monarchy ; and such is the happy respect which the Chinese have for their ancient

customs, that an emperor of China would never entertain the most distant thought of augmenting it, nor his subjects the least apprehension of such augmentation. The people pay it, in kind, not to avaricious farmers-generals, but to upright magistrates, their proper and natural governors. The amount of this tribute, though apparently trifling, must be immense, when we consider that it is levied on every foot of ground of the most extensive and best cultivated empire in the world. This tax is paid with the greatest fidelity, as they know the purposes to which it is applied. They know, that part of it is laid up in immense magazines, distributed over every province of the empire, and allotted for the maintenance of the magistrates and
sol-

foldiery : they know, that, in the event of fcarcity, thefe magazines are open to all, and the wants of the people fupplied with part of that which was received from them in times of abundance : they know too, that the remainder of this impoft is fold in the public markets, and the produce of it faithfully carried to the treafury of the empire, the cuftody of which is intrufted to the refpectable tribunal of *Ho-pou*, from whence it never is iffued but to fupply the general wants of the family.

COMPARISON OF THE AGRICULTURE OF AFRICA AND ASIA WITH THAT OF CHINA.

Recollect, gentlemen, what I have said of the laws, the manners, and the customs of the different nations of Africa and Asia, the state of whose agriculture I have examined : compare nation with nation, and then judge, if the unfortunate Malabar, without property, subjected to the tyrannical government of the Moguls ; judge if a race of slaves, under the iron scepter of the despot of Siam ; judge if the Malais, ever turbulent, and fettered by their feudal laws ; judge, I say, if these nations, though possessing the finest grounds in the world, can possibly ever

ever make agriculture to flourish like the Chinese, governed as a family, and subjected to the laws of reason alone.—I shall again repeat, therefore, with confidence, that, in every country in the world, the fate of agriculture depends solely on the laws there established, on the manners of the people, and even on the prejudices which derive their origin from those laws.

What industry hath the inhabitants of the earth displayed, from one extremity of the globe to the other, in rendering themselves unhappy! Created to live in society, to cultivate the earth, and enjoy from their labour the infinite blessings of the great Creator, they had only to listen to the voice of nature, who would have taught them happiness below : in place
of

of which, they have strained their faculties in the invention of barbarous institutions, and perplexing legislations, which being ill adapted to the feelings of mankind, and discordant with that law which is engraved in every man's breast, their establishment could only be effected by force, deluging the world with blood ; and which, once established, have continued to desolate the earth, checking population, by the oppression of agriculture.

THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN EUROPE.

What an object for an attentive traveller, to observe the state of agriculture amongst the various people who divide the globe ! In Europe behold it at present flourishing, in a
country

country which, during many preceding ages was reduced to the necessity of begging subsistence amongst the neighbouring nations, who possessed a happier climate, and a greater extent of territory. During those ages of barbarism, their loss of liberty and right of property brought along with them the ruin of cultivation ; nor has she recovered those natural rights of mankind, and re-established the foundations of drooping agriculture, but through seas of blood, and outrages shocking to humanity.

IN AFRICA.

Africa, in general, whose regions, known to the ancients, were considered as the granaries of the world, now present nothing to the view but
grounds

grounds either intirely neglected, or wretchedly cultivated by the labour of slaves.

IN AMERICA.

South - America, covered with marshes, brambles, and woods, beholds her extensive tracks hardened even by the sweat of her labourers in chains. The northern regions of that quarter of the world are inhabited by inconsiderable tribes of savages, miserable, and without culture ; yet free, and, in consequence, less wretched perhaps than those nations who pretend to be civilized ; but who, being farther removed from the laws of nature, by the privation of those rights which she bestows, make ineffectual efforts to procure that happiness,

piness, which a good agriculture alone can produce.

IN ASIA.

The vast continent of Asia offers to your consideration, in one quarter, an immense uncultivated region, peopled by a race of banditti, more intent on plunder than the cultivation of their grounds ; in another, a great empire, formerly flourishing, and excellently laboured, now inhabited by the poor remains of a wretched people, perishing with hunger from the neglect of agriculture, and shedding their blood, not for liberty but for a change of tyrants. This charming fertile quarter of the world (the cradle of the human race) now beholds her lands in slavery, her labourers in chains, subjected either
to

to the blind despotism of unfeeling tyrants, or the destructive yoke of the feudal system.

But turn your eyes to the eastern extremity of the Asiatic continent, inhabited by the Chinese, and there you will conceive a ravishing idea of the happiness the world might enjoy, where the laws of this empire the model of those of other countries. This great nation unites under the shade of agriculture, founded on liberty and reason, all the advantages possessed by whatever nation, civilized or savage. The blessing pronounced on man, at the moment of his creation, seems not to have had its full effect, but in favour of this people, who have multiplied as the sands on the shore.

Princes,

Princes, who rule over nations ! arbiters of their fate ! view well this perspective ; it is worthy your attention. Would you wish abundance to flourish in your dominions, would you favour population, and make your people happy ; behold those innumerable multitudes which overspread the territories of China, who leave not a shred of ground uncultivated ; it is liberty, it is their undisturbed right of property that has established a cultivation so flourishing, under the auspices of which this people have increased as the grains which cover their fields.

Does the glory of being the most powerful, the richest, and the happiest of sovereigns touch your ambition, turn your eyes towards Pekin,
and

and behold the most powerful of mortal beings seated on the throne of reason :—he does not command, he instructs ;—his words are not decrees, they are the maxims of justice and wisdom ;—his people obey him, because his orders are dictated by equity alone.

He is the most powerful of men, reigning over the hearts of the most numerous society in the world, who constitute his family. — He is the richest of sovereigns, drawing from an extent of territory six hundred leagues square, cultivated even to the summits of the mountains, the tenth of those abundant harvests it incessantly produces : this he considers as the wealth of his children, and he husbands it with care.—To sum up all, he is the happiest of monarchs,
tasting

tasting every day the inexpressible pleasure of giving happiness to millions, and alone enjoying, undivided, that satisfaction which his subjects share—his children! all to him equally dear; all living like brothers, in freedom and abundance, under his protection.

He is called the son of *Tien*, as the true and most perfect image of heaven, whose benevolence he imitates; and his grateful people adore him as a God, because his conduct is worthy of a Man.

F I N I S.

