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A
Particular Account

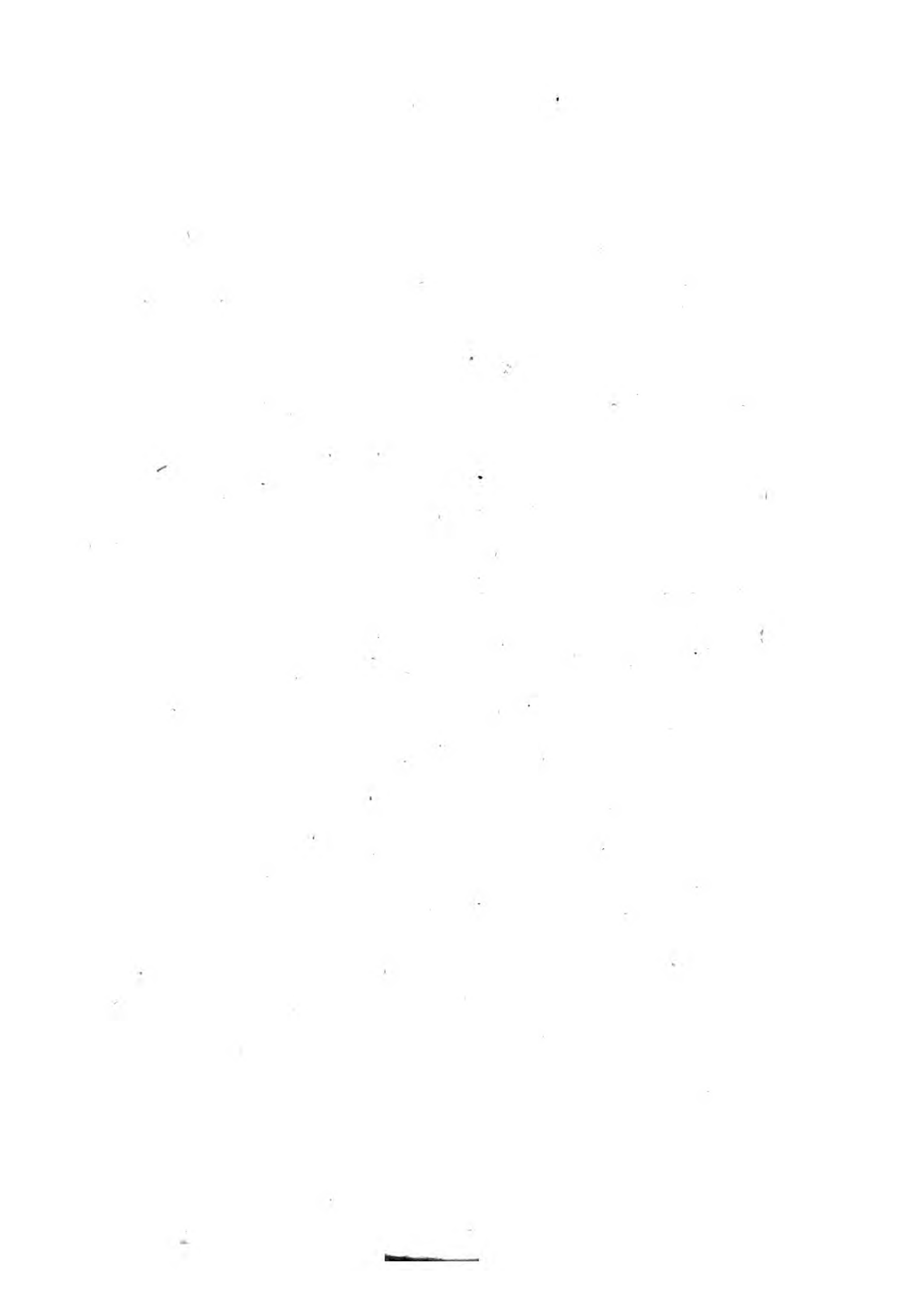
OF THE

EMPEROR of *CHINA'S*

G A R D E N S

Near *PEKIN.*





A
Particular Account
OF THE
EMPEROR of *CHINA'S*
G A R D E N S

Near *PEKIN*:

I N

A LETTER from F. ATTIRET, a *French*
Missionary, now employ'd by that Emperor to
Paint the Apartments in those Gardens, to his
Friend at *Paris*.

Translated from the *French*,
By Sir *HARRY BEAUMONT*.



L O N D O N:
Printed for R. DODSLEY, in *Pallmall*; and sold by
M. COOPER, in *Pater-noster-Row*.

M.DCC.LII.

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ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
PUBLIC.

*I*t is now above half a Century,
since the French have been pub-
lishing a Collection of the Letters
of their Missionaries; from all the
most distant Parts of the World. This
Collection is already grown very vo-
luminous.

luminous. The famous Pere du Halde was the Person who had the chief Hand in making and publishing it. There were but Eight Volumes that had appeared before he undertook the Care of it, which was in the Year 1711; and he carried it on, in Eighteen more, to the Year 1743: when the Death of that Father, and some other Incidents, occasion'd an Interruption of the Work, for about Six Years. It was resum'd in 1749, by F. Patouillet; who then publish'd the 27th Volume. The following is a Translation of the First Letter in that Volume; and is perhaps as curious, as any one in the whole Collection.

[1]



A
LETTER

FROM

A *French Missionary in China.*

Pekin; Nov. 1, 1743.

S I R,



T was with the greatest
Pleasure that I received
your Two last Letters;
one of the 13th of *Octo-*
ber, and the other of the 2d of *No-*
vember, 1742. I communicated the

B very

very interesting Account of the Affairs of *Europe*, which you gave me in them, to the rest of our Missionaries; who join with me in our sincere Thanks. I thank you too in particular for the Box full of Works in Straw, and Flowers, which came very safe to me: but I beg of you not to put yourself to any such Expence for the future; for the *Chinese* very much exceed the *Europeans*, in those kinds of Works; and particularly, in their * Artificial Flowers †.

* These are chiefly made of Feathers; colour'd, and form'd, so exactly like real Flowers, that one is often apt to forget one's self, and smell to them. The famous *Signora Vannimano*, at *Rome*, (so many of whose Works in this kind are continually brought Home by our Gentlemen who travel to that City,) at first learn'd her Art from some which were sent from *China*, by the Jesuits; as a Present to the then Pope.

† Here is a Page or two omitted, as relating only to their private Affairs.

We

We came hither by the Command, or rather by the Permission of the Emperor. An Officer was assign'd to conduct us; and they made us believe, that he would defray our Expences: but the latter was only in Words, for in Effect the Expence was almost wholly out of our own Pockets. Half of the Way we came by Water; and both eat, and lodg'd in our Boats: and what seem'd odd enough to us, was; that, by the Rules of Good-breeding received among them, we were not allow'd ever to go ashore, or even to look out of the Windows of our Cover'd-boats to observe the Face of the Country, as we pass'd along. We made the latter Part of our Journey in a sort of Cage, which they were

4 A L E T T E R

pleas'd to call a Litter. In this too we were shut up, all Day long; and at Night, carried into our Inns; (and very wretched Inns they are!) and thus we got to *Pekin*; with our Curiosity quite unsatisfy'd, and with seeing but very little more of the Country, than if one had been shut up all the while in one's own Chamber.

Indeed they say, that the Country we passed is but a bad Country; and that, tho' the Journey is near 2000 Miles, there is but little to be met with on the Way that might deserve much Attention: not even any Monuments, or Buildings, except some Temples for their Idols; and those built of Wood, and but one Story high: the chief Value and
Beauty

from C H I N A. 5

Beauty of which seem'd to consist in some bad Paintings, and very indifferent Varnish-works. Indeed any one that is just come from seeing the Buildings in *France* and *Italy*, is apt to have but little Taste, or Attention, for whatever he may meet with in the other Parts of the World.

However I must except out of this Rule, the Palace of the Emperor of *Pekin*, and his Pleasure-houses; for in them every thing is truly great and beautiful, both as to the Design and the Execution: and they struck me the more, because I had never seen any thing that bore any manner of Resemblance to them, in any Part of the World that I had been in before.

I should

6 A L E T T E R

I should be very glad, if I could make such a Description of these, as would give you any just Idea of them; but that is almost impossible; because there is nothing in the Whole, which has any Likeness to our manner of Building, or our Rules of Architecture. The only way to conceive what they are, is to see them: and if I can get any time, I am resolv'd to draw some Parts of them as exactly as I can, and send them into *Europe*.

The Palace is, at least, as big as * *Dijon*; which City I chuse to name to you, because you are so well ac-

* A handsome City in *France*; and the Capital one, in the Province of *Burgundy*; between Three and Four Miles round.

quainted

from C H I N A. 7

quainted with it. This Palace consists of a great Number of different Pieces of Building; detach'd from one another, but disposed with a great deal of Symmetry and Beauty. They are separated from one another by vast Courts, Plantations of Trees, and Flower-gardens. The principal Front of all these Buildings shines with Gilding, Varnish-work, and Paintings; and the Inside is furnish'd and adorn'd with all the most beautiful and valuable Things that could be got in *China*, the *Indies*, and even from *Europe*.

As for the Pleasure-houses, they are really charming. They stand in a vast Compass of Ground. They have raised Hills, from 20 to 60 Foot high; which form a great
Number

8 A L E T T E R

Number of little Valleys between them. The Bottoms of these Valleys are water'd with clear Streams; which run on till they join together, and form larger Pieces of Water and Lakes. They pass these Streams, Lakes, and Rivers, in beautiful and magnificent Boats. I have seen one, in particular, 78 Foot long, and 24 Foot broad; with a very handsome House raised upon it. In each of these Valleys, there are Houses about the Banks of the Water; very well disposed: with their different Courts, open and close Porticos, Parterres, Gardens, and Cascades: which, when view'd all together, have an admirable Effect upon the Eye.

They go from one of the Valleys to another, not by formal strait Walks

from C H I N A. 9

Walks as in *Europe*; but by various Turnings and Windings, adorn'd on the Sides with little Pavilions and charming Grottos: and each of these Valleys is diversify'd from all the rest, both by their manner of laying out the Ground, and in the Structure and Disposition of its Buildings.

All the Rifings and Hills are sprinkled with Trees; and particularly with Flowering-trees, which are here very common. The Sides of the Canals, or lesser Streams, are not faced, (as they are with us,) with smooth Stone, and in a strait Line; but look rude and rustic, with different Pieces of Rock, some of which jut out, and others recede inwards; and are placed with so much Art, that you would take it to be the

C

Work

Work of Nature. In some Parts the Water is wide, in others narrow; here it serpentizes, and there spreads away, as if it was really push'd off by the Hills and Rocks. The Banks are sprinkled with Flowers; which rise up even thro' the Hollows in the Rock-work, as if they had been produced there naturally. They have a great Variety of them, for every Season of the Year.

Beyond these Streams there are always Walks, or rather Paths, pav'd with small Stones; which lead from one Valley to another. These Paths too are irregular; and sometimes wind along the Banks of the Water, and at others run out wide from them,

On

On your Entrance into each Valley, you see its Buildings before you. All the Front is a Colonnade, with Windows between the Pillars. The Wood-work is gilded, painted, and varnish'd. The Roofs too are cover'd with varnish'd Tiles of different Colours; Red, Yellow, Blue, Green, and Purple: which by their proper Mixtures, and their manner of placing them, form an agreeable Variety of Compartments and Designs. Almost all these Buildings are only one Story high; and their Floors are raised from Two to Eight Foot above the Ground. You go up to them, not by regular Stone Steps, but by a rough Sort of Rock-work; form'd as if there had been so many Steps produced there by Nature.

The Inside of the Apartments answers perfectly to their Magnificence without. Beside their being very well disposed, the Furniture and Ornaments are very rich, and of an exquisite Taste. In the Courts, and Passages, you see Vases of Brass, Porcelain, and Marble, fill'd with Flowers: and before some of these Houses, instead of naked Statues, they have several of their Hieroglyphical Figures of Animals, and Urns with Perfumes burning in them, placed upon Pedestals of Marble.

Every Valley, as I told you before, has it's Pleasure-house: small indeed, in respect to the whole Inclosure; but yet large enough to be capable of receiving the greatest
Noble-

from C H I N A. 13

Nobleman in *Europe*, with all his Retinue. Several of these Houses are built of Cedar; which they bring, with great Expence, at the Distance of 1500 Miles from this Place. And now how many of these Palaces do you think there may be, in all the Valleys of the Inclosure? There are above 200 of them: without reckoning as many other Houses for the Eunuchs; for they are the Persons who have the Care of each Palace, and their Houses are always just by them; generally, at no more than Five or Six Foot Distance. These Houses of the Eunuchs are very plain: and for that Reason are always concealed, either by some Projection of the Walls, or by the Interposition of their artificial Hills.

Over

Over the running Streams there are Bridges, at proper Distances, to make the more easy Communication from one Place to another. These are most commonly either of Brick or Free-stone, and sometimes of Wood; but are all raised high enough for the Boats to pass conveniently under them. They are fenced with Ballisters finely wrought, and adorned with Works in Relievo; but all of them varied from one another, both in their Ornaments, and Design.

Do not imagine to yourself, that these Bridges run on, like ours, in strait Lines: on the contrary, they generally wind about and serpentine to such a Degree, that some of them, which, if they went on regularly, would

from C H I N A. 15

would be no more than 30 or 40 Foot long, turn so often and so much as to make their whole Length 100 or 200 Foot. You see some of them which, (either in the Midst, or at their Ends,) have little Pavilions for People to rest themselves in; supported sometimes by Four, sometimes by Eight, and sometimes by Sixteen Columns. They are usually on such of the Bridges, as afford the most engaging Prospects. At the Ends of other of the Bridges there are triumphal Arches, either of Wood, or white Marble; form'd in a very pretty Manner, but very different from any thing that I have ever seen in *Europe*.

I have already told you, that these little Streams, or Rivers, are carried

on to supply several larger Pieces of Water, and Lakes. One of these Lakes is very near Five Miles round; and they call it a Meer, or Sea. This is one of the most beautiful Parts in the whole Pleasure-ground. On the Banks, are several Pieces of Building; separated from each other by the Rivulets, and artificial Hills above-mentioned.

But what is the most charming Thing of all, is an Island or Rock in the Middle of this Sea; rais'd, in a natural and rustic Manner, about Six Foot above the Surface of the Water. On this Rock there is a little Palace; which however contains an hundred different Apartments. It has Four Fronts; and is built with inexpressible Beauty
and

and Taste ; the Sight of it strikes one with Admiration. From it you have a View of all the Palaces, scattered at proper Distances round the Shores of this Sea ; all the Hills, that terminate about it ; all the Rivulets, which tend thither, either to discharge their Waters into it, or to receive them from it ; all the Bridges, either at the Mouths or Ends of these Rivulets ; all the Pavilions, and Triumphal Arches, that adorn any of these Bridges ; and all the Groves, that are planted to separate and screen the different Palaces, and to prevent the Inhabitants of them from being overlooked by one another.

The Banks of this charming Water are infinitely varied : there are no two Parts of it alike. Here you see

D

Keys

18 A L E T T E R

Keys of smooth Stone ; with Porticoes, Walks, and Paths, running down to them from the Palaces that furround the Lake : there, others of Rock-work ; that fall into Steps, contrived with the greatest Art that can be conceived : here, natural Terraces with winding Steps at each End, to go up to the Palaces that are built upon them ; and above these, other Terraces, and other Palaces, that rise higher and higher, and form a sort of Amphitheatre. There again a Grove of Flowering-trees presents itself to your Eye ; and a little farther, you see a Spread of wild Forest-trees, and such as grow only on the most barren Mountains : then, perhaps, vast Timber-trees with their Under-wood ; then, Trees from all foreign Countries ; and then, some
all

from C H I N A. 19

all blooming with Flowers, and others all laden with Fruits of different Kinds.

There are also on the Banks of this Lake, a great Number of Network-houses, and Pavilions; half on the Land, and half running into the Lake, for all sorts of Water-fowl: as farther on upon the Shore, you meet frequently with Menageries for different sorts of Creatures; and even little Parks, for the Chace. But of all this sort of Things, the *Chinese* are most particularly fond of a kind of Fish, the greater Part of which are of a Colour as brilliant as Gold; others, of a Silver Colour; and others of different Shades of Red, Green, Blue, Purple, and Black: and some, of all Sorts of Colours mixt together.

D 2

There

There are several Reservoirs for these Fish, in all Parts of the Garden ; but the most considerable of them all is at this Lake. It takes up a very large Space ; and is all surrounded with a Lattice-work of Brass-wire : in which the Openings are so very fine and small, as to prevent the Fish from wandering into the main Waters.

To let you see the Beauty of this charming Spot in its greatest Perfection, I should wish to have you transported hither when the Lake is all cover'd with Boats; either gilt, or varnish'd: as it is sometimes, for taking the Air ; sometimes, for Fishing ; and sometimes, for * Jufts, and Combats,

* I have seen of this sort of Jufts upon the Water, in our Parts of the World ; and particularly, at *Lions in France*. The Champions stand, as firmly as they are able, on the Prows of two Boats ;
and

from C H I N A. 21

and other Diversions, upon the Water: but above all, on some fine Night, when the Fire-works are play'd off there; at which time they have Illuminations in all the Palaces, all the Boats, and almost on every Tree. The *Chinese* exceed us extremely in their Fire-works: and I have never seen any thing of that Kind, either in *France* or *Italy*, that can bear any Comparison with theirs.

The Part in which the Emperor usually resides here, with the Em-

with a Shield in their left Hands, and a blunted Spear in their Right. There is an equal Number of Rowers in each of the Boats, who drive them on with a great deal of Impetuosity. The two Combatants charge each other with their Spears: and often both, but almost always one or other of them, is driven backward on the Shock; either down into his Boat, or (which often happens) into the Water: which latter makes one of the principal Parts in this odd sort of Diversion.

press,

press, his * favourite Mistresses, and the Eunuchs that attend them, is a vast Collection of Buildings, Courts, and Gardens; and looks itself like a City. 'Tis, at least, as big as our City † of *Dole*. The greater Part of the other Palaces is only used for his walking; or to dine or sup in, upon Occasion.

This Palace for the usual Residence of the Emperor is just within the grand Gate of the Pleasure-ground. First are the Ante-cham-

* The Original says; “*les Koucifeys, les Feys, les Pines, les Kouci-gins, et les Tchangtsays* :” and informs us in a Note, that these are so many different Titles of Honour, for the different Classes of such of the Emperor's Mistresses, as are most in his Favour. I did not think it worth while to set down all these hard Names in the Text; and, perhaps, they might as well have been omitted even here.

† The second City for Size in the *Franche Comté*.

bers;

bers; then, the Halls for Audience: and then, the Courts, and Gardens belonging to them. The Whole forms an Island; which is entirely furrounded by a large and deep Canal. 'Tis a sort of Seraglio; in the different Apartments of which you see all the most beautiful things that can be imagin'd, as to Furniture, Ornaments, and Paintings, (I mean, of those in the *Chinese* Taste;) the most valuable Sorts of Wood; varnish'd Works, of China and Japan; antient Vases of Porcelain; Silks, and Cloth of Gold and Silver. They have there brought together, all that Art and good Taste could add to the Riches of Nature.

From this Palace of the Emperor a Road, which is almost strait, leads
you

you to a little Town in the Midst of the whole Inclosure. 'Tis square; and each Side is near a Mile long. It has Four Gates, answering the Four principal Points of the Compass; with Towers, Walls, Parapets, and Battlements. It has it's Streets, Squares, Temples, Exchanges, Markets, Shops, Tribunals, Palaces, and a Port for Vessels. In one Word, every thing that is at *Pekin* in Large, is there represented in Miniature.

You will certainly ask, for what Use this City was intended? Is it that the Emperor may retreat to it as a Place of Safety, on any Revolt, or Revolution? It might indeed serve well enough for that Purpose; and possibly that Thought had a Share in
the

the Mind of the Person, who at first design'd it: but it's principal End was to procure the Emperor the Pleasure of seeing all the Bustle and Hurry of a great City in little, whenever he might have a Mind for that sort of Diversion.

The Emperor of *China* is too much a Slave to his Grandeur ever to shew himself to his People, even when he goes out of his Palace. He too sees nothing of the Town, which he passes thorough. All the Doors and Windows are shut up. They spread wide Pieces of Cloth every where, that no body may see him. Several Hours before he is to pass through any Street, the People are forewarned of it; and if any should be found there whilst he passes, they would be
E handled

handled very severely by his Guards. Whenever he goes into the Country, two Bodies of Horfe advance a good Way before him, on each Side of the Road ; both for his Security, and to keep the Way clear from all other Passengers. As the Emperors of *China* find themselves obliged to live in this strange sort of Solitude, they have always endeavoured to supply the Loss of all public Diversions, (which their high Station will not suffer them to partake,) by some other Means or Inventions, according to their different Tastes and Fancies.

This Town therefore, in these Two last Reigns, (for it was this Emperor's Father who order'd it to be built,) has been appropriated for
the

the Eunuchs to act in it, at several times in the Year, all the Commerce, Marketings, Arts, Trades, Bustle, and Hurry, and even all the Rogueries, usual in great Cities. At the appointed Times, each Eunuch puts on the Dress of the Profession or Part which is assigned to him. One is a Shopkeeper, and another an Artisan; this is an Officer, and that a common Soldier: one has a Wheel-barrow given him, to drive about the Streets; another, as a Porter, carries a Basket on his Shoulders. In a word, every one has the distinguishing Mark of his Employment. The Vessels arrive at the Port; the Shops are open'd; and the Goods are expos'd for Sale. There is one Quarter for those who sell Silks, and another for those who sell Cloth; one Street for Porcelain, and another

for Varnish-works. You may be supply'd with whatever you want. This Man sells Furniture of all sorts ; that, Cloaths and Ornaments for the Ladies : and a third has all kinds of Books, for the Learned and Curious. There are Coffee-houses too, and Taverns, of all Sorts, good and bad : beside a Number of People that cry different Fruits about the Streets, and a great Variety of refreshing Liquors. The Mercers, as you pass their Shops, catch you by the Sleeve ; and press you to buy some of their Goods. 'Tis all a Place of Liberty and Licence ; and you can scarce distinguish the Emperor himself, from the meanest of his Subjects. Every body bauls out what he has to sell ; some quarrel, others fight : and you have all the Confusion of a Fair
about

about you. The public Officers come and arrest the Quarrellers; carry them before the Judges, in the Courts for Justice; the Cause is try'd in form; the Offender condemn'd to be bastinado'd; and the Sentence is put in Execution: and that so effectually, that the Diversion of the Emperor sometimes costs the poor Actor a great deal of real Pain.

The Mystery of Thieving is not forgot, in this general Representation. That noble Employ is assign'd to a considerable Number of the cleverest Eunuchs; who perform their Parts admirably well. If any one of them is caught in the Fact, he is brought to Shame; and condemn'd, (at least they go through the Form of condemning him,) to be stigmatiz'd,

tiz'd, bastinado'd, or banish'd; according to the Heinousness of the Crime, and the Nature of the Theft. If they steal cleverly, they have the Laugh on their Side; they are applauded, and the Sufferer is without Redress. However, at the End of the Fair, every thing of this Kind is restor'd to the proper Owner.

This Fair, (as I told you before,) is kept only for the Entertainment of the Emperor, the Empress, and his Mistresses. 'Tis very unusual for any of the Princes, or Grandees, to be admitted to see it: and when any have that Favour, it is not till after the Women are all retired to their several Apartments. The Goods which are expos'd and sold here, belong chiefly to the Merchants of
Pekin;

Pekin; who put them into the Hands of the Eunuchs, to be sold in reality: so that the Bargains here are far from being all pretended ones. In particular, the Emperor himself always buys a great many things; and you may be sure, they ask him enough for them. Several of the Ladies too make their Bargains; and so do some of the Eunuchs. All this trafficking, if there was nothing of real mixt with it, would want a great deal of that Earnestness and Life, which now make the Buffle the more active, and the Diversion it gives the greater.

To this Scene of Commerce, sometimes succeeds a very different one; that of Agriculture. There is a Quarter, within the same Inclosure,

closure, which is set apart for this Purpose. There you see Fields, Meadows, Farm-houses, and little scatter'd Cottages; with Oxen, Ploughs, and all the Necessaries for Husbandry. There they sow Wheat, Rice, Pulse, and all other sorts of Grain. They make their Harvest; and carry in the Produce of their Grounds. In a Word, they here imitate every thing that is done in the Country; and in every thing express a rural Simplicity, and all the plain Manners of a Country Life, as nearly as they possibly can.

Doubtless you have read of the famous Feast in *China*, call'd *The Feast of the Lanthorns*. It is always celebrated on the 15th Day of the first Month. There is no *Chinese* so poor

poor, but that upon this Day he lights up his Lanthorn. They have of them of all sorts of Figures, Sizes, and Prices. On that Day, all *China* is illuminated : but the finest Illuminations of all are in the Emperor's Palaces ; and particularly in these Pleasure-grounds, which I have been describing to you. There is not a Chamber, Hall, or Portico, in them, which has not several of these Lanthorns hanging from the Cielings. There are several upon all the Rivulets, Rivers, and Lakes ; made in the Shape of little Boats, which the Waters carry backward and forward. There are some upon all the Hills and Bridges, and almost upon all the Trees. These are wrought mighty prettily, in the Shapes of different Fishes, Birds, and Beasts ; Vases, Fruits, Flowers ; and Boats of different Sorts

F and

have very little Taste for ours. May I tell you what they say when they speak of it, or when they are looking over the Prints of some of our most celebrated Buildings? The Height and Thickness of our Palaces amazes them. They look upon our Streets, as so many Ways hollowed into terrible Mountains; and upon our Houses, as Rocks pointing up in the Air, and full of Holes like Dens of Bears and other wild Beasts. Above all, our different Stories, piled up so high one above another, seem quite intolerable to them: and they cannot conceive, how we can bear to run the Risk of breaking our Necks, so commonly, in going up such a Number of Steps as is necessary to climb up to the Fourth and Fifth Floors. “Undoubtedly, (said the

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“ Emperor *Cang-hy*, whilst he was
 “ looking over some Plans of our
 “ *European* Houses,) this *Europe*
 “ must be a very small and pitiful
 “ Country; since the Inhabitants
 “ cannot find Ground enough to
 “ spread out their Towns, but are
 “ obliged to live up thus in the
 “ Air.” As for us, we think other-
 wise; and have Reason to do so.

However I must own to you,
 without pretending to decide which
 of the two ought to have the Pre-
 ference, that the Manner of Build-
 ing in this Country pleases me very
 much. Since my Residence in
China, my Eyes and Taste are grown
 a little *Chinese*. And, between
 Friends, is not the *Duchess* of *Bour-*
bon's House opposite to the *Tuilleries*,
 extreme-

extremely pretty? Yet that is only of one Story, and a good deal in the *Chinese* Manner. Every Country has it's Taste and Customs. The Beauty of our Architecture cannot be disputed: nothing is more Grand and Majestic. I own too, that our Houses are well dispos'd. We follow the Rules of Uniformity, and Symmetry, in all the Parts of them. There is nothing in them unmatch'd, or displaced: every Part answers it's Opposite; and there's an exact Agreement in the Whole. But then there is this Symmetry, this beautiful Order and Disposition, too in *China*; and particularly, in the Emperor's Palace at *Pekin*, that I was speaking of in the Beginning of this Letter. The Palaces of the Princes and great Men, the Courts of Justice, and the Houses

38 A L E T T E R

Houses of the better sort of People,
are generally in the same Taste.

But in their Pleasure-houses, they rather chuse * a beautiful Disorder, and a wandering as far as possible from all the Rules of Art. They go entirely on this Principle, “ That
“ what they are to represent there,
“ is a natural and wild View of the
“ Country; a rural Retirement, and
“ not a Palace form'd according to all

* The Author of this Letter seems here to have form'd his Opinion, only from the Garden in which he was employ'd; for this is not universally the Case in the Pleasure-houses of the Emperor of *Cbina*. I have lately seen some Prints of another of his Gardens, (brought from that Kingdom, and which will very soon be publish'd here,) in which the Disposition of the Ground, Water, and Plantations, is indeed quite irregular; but the Houses, Bridges, and Fences, are all of a regular Kind. Those Prints will give the truest Idea, we can have, of the *Chinese* Manner of laying out Pleasure-grounds.

“ the

“ the Rules of Art.” Agreeably to which, I have not yet observ’d any Two of the little Palaces in all the grand Inclosure, which are alike, tho’ some of them are placed at such considerable Distances from one another. You would think, that they were form’d upon the Ideas of so many different foreign Countries; or that they were all built at random, and made up of Parts not meant for one another. When you read this, you will be apt to imagine such Works very ridiculous; and that they must have a very bad Effect on the Eye: but was you to see them, you would find it quite otherwise; and would admire the Art, with which all this Irregularity is conducted. All is in good Taste; and so managed, that it’s Beauties appear gradually, one after

after another. To enjoy them as one ought, you should view every Piece by itself; and you would find enough to amuse you for a long while, and to satisfy all your Curiosity.

Beside, the Palaces themselves (tho' I have called them little, in Comparison of the Whole,) are very far from being inconsiderable Things. I saw them building one in the same Inclosure, last Year, for one of the Princes of the Blood; which cost him near * Two hundred thousand Pounds: without reckoning any

* The Original says, *Soixante Ouanes*: and adds in a Note, that one *Ouane* is worth Ten thousand *Taëls*; and each *Taël* is worth Seven Livres and a Half; so that Sixty Ouanes make Four Millions and a Half of Livres. Which is equal to 196,875 Pounds Sterling.

thing

thing for the Furniture and Ornaments of the Inside; for they were a Present to him from the Emperor.

I must add one Word more, in relation to the Variety which reigns in these Pleasure-houses. It is not only to be found in their Situations, Views, Disposition, Sizes, Heights, and all the other general Points; but also in their lesser Parts, that go to the composing of them. Thus, for instance, there is no People in the World who can shew such a Variety of Shapes and Forms, in their Doors and Windows, as the *Chinese*. They have some round, oval, square, and in all Sorts of angled Figures; some, in the Shape of Fans; others in those of Flowers, Vases, Birds, Beasts, and
G Fishes;

42 A L E T T E R

Fishes ; in short, of all Forms, whether regular or irregular.

It is only here too, I believe, that one can see such Portico's, as I am going to describe to you. They serve to join such Parts of the Buildings in the same Palace, as lie pretty wide from one another. These are sometimes raised on Columns only, on the Side toward the House ; and have Openings, of different Shapes, thorough the Walls on the other Side : and sometimes have only Columns on both Sides ; as in all such as lead from any of the Palaces, to their open Pavilions for taking the fresh Air. But what is so singular in these Portico's or Colonnades is, that they seldom run on in strait Lines ; but make an hundred Turns and

Windings: sometimes by the Side of a Grove, at others behind a Rock, and at others again along the Banks of their Rivers or Lakes. Nothing can be conceiv'd more delightful: they have such a rural Air, as is quite ravishing and enchanting.

You will certainly conclude from all I have told you, that this Pleasure-place must have cost immense Sums of Money; and indeed there is no Prince, but such an one as is Master of so vast a State as the Emperor of *China* is, who could either afford so prodigious an Expence, or accomplish such a Number of great Works in so little time: for all this was done in the Compass of Twenty Years. It was the Father of the present Emperor who began it; and his Son now

only adds Conveniences and Ornaments to it, here and there.

But there is nothing so surprising, or incredible, in this; for besides that the Buildings are most commonly but of one Story, they employ such prodigious Numbers of Workmen, that every thing is carried on very fast. Above half the Difficulty is over, when they have got their Materials upon the Spot. They fall immediately to disposing them in Order; and in a few Months the Work is finish'd. They look almost like those fabulous Palaces, which are said to be raised by Incantment, all at once, in some beautiful Valley, or on the Brow of some Hill.

This

This whole Inclosure is called, *Ywen-ming Yven*, The Garden of Gardens ; or The Garden, by way of Eminence. It is not the only one that belongs to the Emperor ; he has Three others, of the same Kind : but none of them so large, or so beautiful, as this. In one of these lives the Empress his Mother, and all her Court. It was built by the present Emperor's Grandfather *, *Cang-by* ; and is called *Tchang tchun yven*, or The Garden of perpetual Spring. The Pleasure-places of the Princes and Grandees are in Little, what those of the Emperor are in Great.

* *Cang-by* began his Reign in 1660 ; his Son, *Yongtching*, succeeded him in 1722 ; and his Grandson, *Kien-long*, in 1735.

Perhaps

Perhaps you will ask me, “Why
“ all this long Description? Should
“ not I rather have drawn Plans of
“ this magnificent Place, and sent
“ them to you?” To have done that,
would have taken me up at least
Three Years; without touching up-
on any thing else: whereas I have
not a Moment to spare; and am
forced to borrow the Time in which
I now write to you, from my Hours
of Rest. To which you may add,
that for such a Work, it would be
necessary for me to have full Liberty
of going into any Part of the Gar-
dens whenever I pleas’d, and to stay
there as long as I pleas’d: which is
quite impracticable here. ’Tis very
fortunate for me, that I had got the
little Knowledge of Painting that I
have:

have: for without this, I should have been in the same Case with several other *Europeans*, who have been here between Twenty and Thirty Years, without being able ever to set their Feet on any Spot of this delightful Ground.

There is but one Man here; and that is the Emperor. All Pleasures are made for him alone. This charming Place is scarce ever seen by any body but himself, his Women, and his Eunuchs. The Princes, and other chief Men of the Country, are rarely admitted any farther than the Audience-Chambers. Of all the *Europeans* that are here, none ever enter'd this Inclosure, except the Clock-makers and Painters; whose Employments make it necessary that
they

they should be admitted every where. The Place usually assign'd us to paint in, is in one of those little Palaces above-mentioned; where the Emperor comes to see us work, almost every Day: so that we can never be absent. We don't go out of the Bounds of this Palace, unless what we are to paint cannot be brought to us; and in such Cases, they conduct us to the Place under a large Guard of Eunuchs. We are obliged to go quick, and without any Noise; and huddle and steal along softly, as if we were going upon some Piece of Mischief. 'Tis in this Manner that I have gone through, and seen, all this beautiful Garden; and enter'd into all the Apartments. The Emperor usually resides here Ten Months in each Year.

Year. We are about Ten Miles from *Pekin*. All the Day, we are in the Gardens; and have a Table furnished for us by the Emperor: for the Nights, we have bought us a House, near the Entrance to the Gardens. When the Emperor returns to *Pekin*, we attend him; are lodg'd there within his Palace; and go every Evening to the *French Church* *.

I think it is high time, both for you and me, that I should put an End to this Letter; which has carried me on to a greater Length, than I at first intended. I wish it may give you any Pleasure; and should

* Here follow 14 or 15 Pages in the Original which treat only of the Author's private Affairs, or of the Affairs of the Mission, without any thing relating to the Emperor's Garden; and are therefore omitted by the Translator.

50 A L E T T E R, &c.

be very glad if it was in my Power to do any thing more considerable, to shew you the perfect Esteem I have for you. I shall always remember you, in my Prayers; and beg you would sometimes remember me in yours.

I am,

With the greatest Regard,

S I R,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

A T T I R E T.