

MEMOIRS
AND
OBSERVATIONS

Topographical, } [Natural,
Physical, } [Civil,
Mathematical, } [and
Mechanical, } [Ecclesiastical.

Made in a late

JOURNEY
Through the
Empire of CHINA,

And Published in several Letters.

Particularly upon the Chinese Pottery and Varnishing; the Silk and other Manufactures; the Pearl Fishing; the History of Plants and Animals; with a Description of their Cities and Publick Works; Number of People, their Language, Manners and Commerce; their Habits, Oeconomy, and Government. The Philosophy of *Confucius*. The State of Christianity, and many other Curious and Useful Remarks.

By LOUIS LE COMTE Jesuit,
Confessor to the Dutchess of *Burgundy*, one of the Royal Mathematicians,
and lately Missionary into the Eastern Countries.

Translated from the Paris Edition, and illustrated with Figures.

The Second Edition very much Corrected, with the Addition
of a MAP of China, and a TABLE.

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Geo. Huddleston at the Black-moor's Head, near Exeter-Exchange
in the Strand. 1698.

Besides these Memoires, that fell into Father *Gobillon's* hands, the Father hath also taken several Journeys of three or four hundred Leagues into the very Heart of the Country, going sometimes toward the West, sometimes to the South, observing as much as possibly could be, the Longitude, and Latitude of the most remarkable Places. So that the Map that he hath drawn out, begins at present to supply us with a right Idea of the disposition, and situation of this vast Country.

Amongst the things that are most singular in that Country, one may observe a ridge of Mountains, that are extended so far into the Sea between the East and North, that it hath been, to this day, almost impossible for Mariners to know or to double its Cape; which makes some suspect that this part of *Asia* may peradventure be at this place contiguous to the firm Land of *America*. We have besides all this, made several Observations concerning the variation of the Needle upon Tides, upon the length of a single Pendulum, which may however contribute something to the Perfection of Arts and Sciences.

Yet these general Observations have not so much taken up our time but that we have spared some to examine what there is in the East, most curiously in the way of Natural Philosophy, Anatomy, and Botany.

Our Sojourning at *Siam* afforded us an opportunity, to view several particular Animals, which we seldom or never see in *Europe*; as for example the Elephant, the Nature of which we have described, as also its Docibleness, Strength, Courage, Dexterity, the interior, and exterior Contexture of all its Parts; together with divers other Properties, that the very People of that Country, that are accustomed to them, cannot chuse but admire.

There have we seen Tygres, much different from those that are sometimes to be seen in *France*, and other Countries; whether you look upon the colour, which

which is redish fallow, interlaced with large black streaks, or whether you respect the bigness, which sometimes is equal to the bigness of Horses; they call them *Royal Tygres*: those they call Water Tygres do exactly resemble a Cat. They live upon Fish, but do commonly live in Woods, or upon the Banks of Rivers.

There is likewise to be seen your *Rhinoceros's*, one of the oddest Animals in the World; in my Opinion, it hath some resemblance with a wild Boar, only it is a little bigger, the Feet of it somewhat thicker, and the Body more clouterly shaped; its Hide is covered all over with thick large Scales, of a blackish colour, of an extraordinary hardness; they are divided into little squares, or buttons, rising about a quarter of an inch above the Skin, in a manner like those of the Crocodile; its Legs seem to be engaged in a kind of Boot; and its Head wrap'd about behind with a flat Capuche, or Monks Hood; which made the *Portuguese* to call him the *Indian Monk*: its Head is thick and gross, its Mouth not wide; its Muzzle thrust out, and armed with a long thick Horn, that makes him terrible to the very Tygres, Buffalo's and Elephants.

But that which seems the most admirable in this Animal is its Tongue, which Nature hath covered with such a rough Membrane, that it differs but little from a Pile, so that it flees off the Skin of all that it licks. In a word, as we see some Animals here that make a good Ragoust of Thistles, whose little prickles tickle the Fibres, or the extremities of the Nerves of the Tongue; so likewise your *Rhinoceros*, takes delight in eating Branches of Trees, armed on all sides with stiff Thorns, I have often given it some of them, whose prickles were very hard and long, and I admired how cunningly and greedily it bended them inwardly, and champ'd them in its Mouth without doing them any harm. 'Tis true indeed, they sometimes drew blood of him; but that very thing made