

object of competition, and why the nomination to it is purchased with great presents from the chief of the caravan, with whom it lies. When the time comes the *soi-disant* ambassadors forge public letters in the names of the kings whom they profess to represent, in which the Emperor of China is addressed in obsequious terms. The Chinese receive embassies of a similar character from various other kingdoms, such as Cochin-China, Sian, Leuchieu, Corea, and from some of the petty Tartar kings, the whole causing incredible charges on the public treasury. The Chinese themselves are quite aware of the imposture, but they allow their Emperor to be befooled in this manner, as if to persuade him that the whole world is tributary to the Chinese empire, the fact being rather that China pays tribute to those kingdoms.

Our Benedict arrived at Socieu in the end of the year 1605, and it shows how Divine Providence watched over him, that he came to the end of this enormous journey with ample means, and prosperous in every way. He had with him thirteen animals, five hired servants, two boys, whom he had bought as slaves, and that surpassing piece of jade; the total value of his property being reckoned at two thousand five hundred pieces of gold. Moreover both he and his companion Isaac were in perfect health and strength.

At this city of Socieu he fell in with another party of Saracens just returned from the capital, and these confirmed all that he had already been told about our fathers at Peking, adding a good deal more of an incredible and extravagant

finest quality; 340 horses; 300 very small diamonds; about 100 pounds of fine ultramarine; 600 knives; 600 files. This was the old prescriptive detail which none might change. The cost price of the whole might be some 7,000 crowns, but the Emperor's return present was worth 50,000 (p. 27; see also narrative from Busbeck in Notes to Essay at beginning of the volume).

These sham embassies, disguising trading expeditions, were of old standing in China, going back at least to the days of the Sung Emperors. (*Remusat, in Mem. de l'Acad., VIII, 77-78*).