

“ for instance, are fit for use, he takes ten or twelve that he most approves, and plants them at least 100 yards from others that blossom at the same time. In the same manner he treats all his other plants, varying the circumstances according to their nature.”⁴⁷

In the great work on China published in the last century by the Jesuits, and which is chiefly compiled from ancient Chinese encyclopædias, it is said that with sheep “ improving the breed consists in choosing with particular care the lambs which are destined for propagation, in nourishing them well, and in keeping the flocks separate.” The same principles were applied by the Chinese to various plants and fruit-trees.⁴⁸ An imperial edict recommends the choice of seed of remarkable size; and selection was practised even by imperial hands, for it is said that the Ya-mi, or imperial rice, was noticed at an ancient period in a field by the Emperor Khang-hi, was saved and cultivated in his garden, and has since become valuable from being the only kind which will grow north of the Great Wall.⁴⁹ Even with flowers, the tree pæony (*P. moutan*) has been cultivated, according to Chinese traditions, for 1400 years; between 200 and 300 varieties have been raised, which are cherished like tulips formerly were by the Dutch.⁵⁰

Turning now to semi-civilised people and to savages: it occurred to me, from what I had seen of several parts of South America, where fences do not exist, and where the animals are of little value, that there would be absolutely no care in breeding or selecting them; and this to a large extent is true. Roulin,⁵¹ however, describes in Columbia a naked race of cattle, which are not allowed to increase, on account of their delicate constitution. According to Azara⁵² horses are often born in Paraguay with curly hair; but, as the natives

⁴⁷ ‘Communications to Board of Agriculture,’ quoted in Dr. Darwin’s *Phytologia*, 1800, p. 451.

⁴⁸ ‘Mémoire sur les Chinois,’ 1786, tom. xi. p. 55; tom. v. p. 507.

⁴⁹ ‘Recherches sur l’Agriculture des Chinois,’ par L. D’Hervey Saint-Denys, 1850, p. 229. With respect

to Khang-hi, see Huc’s ‘Chinese Empire,’ p. 311.

⁵⁰ Anderson, in ‘Linn. Transact.,’ vol. xii. p. 253.

⁵¹ ‘Mém. de l’Acad.’ (divers savants), tom. vi., 1835, p. 333.

⁵² ‘Des Quadrupèdes du Paraguay,’ 1801, tom. ii. pp. 333, 371.