

A FRENCH GARRISON AT BANGKOK IN 1687-88.

The Portuguese text and English translation of the letter whereby
Phaulkon agreed to admit French troops into Bangkok,
presented with a commentary

by

E. W. HUTCHINSON.

The article entitled *Four French State Manuscripts*, which was published in vol. XXVII, pt. 2. of the *Journal of the Siam Society*, contains an account of the circumstances which led King Louis XIV of France to despatch a military expedition to Siam. The present article, after briefly recapitulating these circumstances, is concerned with Phaulkon's reception of that expedition, as revealed in a letter which he wrote on October 3rd, 1687 to Tachard, who arrived ahead of the expedition, in order to arrange for its admittance into Bangkok.¹

A copy of that letter has recently come to light amongst the unclassified manuscripts at the Oriental Library in Tokyo, and is reproduced below with a translation. The manuscript, which is a copy, is in Portuguese.² With it is a letter in French signed by Phaulkon and addressed to the Jesuit, La Chaise, in Paris, dated November 20th, 1686; also a long but incomplete account in French by the Jesuit, De Bèze, concerning Phaulkon's fall. These documents were formerly in the possession of the late Dr. G. E. Morrison (at one time correspondent of *The Times* in Peking). In the year 1917 Dr. Morrison's library was purchased by Baron Iwasaki, who removed it to

¹ This opportunity is taken to correct the last word of line 23, on p. 190, which should be 1687, and not 1686.

² The superscription in French is as follows:—

*Lettre de Mr. Phaulkon au P. Tachard par la quelle il lui promet
l'execution de tout ce que le Roy a desiré de luy.*

Japan, where its contents were placed in the Oriental Library, Toyo Bunko, at Tokyo.

It is uncertain how these papers, which would belong naturally to Jesuit archives, came into Dr. Morrison's possession: it is suggested that he may have purchased them from some antiquarian in Europe, who in turn had acquired them after the precipitate departure of the Jesuits from Rome in 1870, when many of their less valuable papers were left behind by them and dispersed.

In 1915 Mr. Adey Moore of *The Bangkok Times* received a letter from Dr. Morrison who stated that he possessed certain papers which concerned the history of Siam in the xviiith century. Armed with this information the writer went in 1936 to Tokyo where the papers were discovered, thanks to the initiative and zeal of Miss Fumiko Sakaki, (the Librarian's assistant at Toyo Bunko), and photostat copies were obtained.

It may be assumed from the superscription in French of our copy of Phaulkon's letter of October 3rd, 1687 that the copyist was a Frenchman. The original may well have been taken to France by Tachard in 1688 and the copy made there for the archives of the Jesuits. If Tachard kept the original, it doubtless perished with him when he died in 1712 at Chandanagor in India. I am much indebted for his generous assistance in the translation to Mr. Jean Burnay, who furthermore transcribed the photostat copy of the MS. Thanks too are due to Dr. J. de Campos, who helped with the translation, and checked the transcription. In his opinion the corruptions in the text may be ascribed to the copyist's ignorance of Portuguese.

It will be recalled that Bishop Pallu, the pioneer of French evangelisation in Siam and China, was responsible for arousing the interest which King Louis took for a short time in Siam. The Bishop's last visit to Siam in 1682 occurred at a moment when King Narai was anxiously looking for some counterpoise to the ascendancy of the Dutch in the East, which he felt was a menace to the independence of Siam. It so happened that in 1678 a young Greek adventurer, Constantine Gerakis—better known as Constant Faulcon, Monsieur Constance, or Phaulkon—who had served the English East India Company for some years as a seaman, followed the Company's Agent, Burnaby, to Siam.

He had there obtained rapid promotion under Burnaby, who, shortly before the Bishop's arrival had encouraged him to exchange into the service of the Treasury, where Burnaby expected Phaulkon would be useful to the Company's interests, for which reason—combined with his fluency in Siamese—he was accepted by the Bishop as interpreter at the Audience granted to the latter by King Narai in 1682. Siamese and Portuguese were the languages employed at the Audience,—the Bishop knowing no English, and Phaulkon no French. Phaulkon appears to have attracted King Narai's attention at that Audience, for thereafter he advanced so rapidly in the royal favour that during 1686 and 1687 his influence with King Narai was all powerful, leading ultimately to the downfall of them both in 1688.

In 1680 King Narai had already despatched Phra Phipat on a mission to France to enlist the support of that country against the Dutch. That embassy never arrived, having been lost off the Cape; and it was not until 1684 that Siam became a matter of interest in France, when two Siamese Envoys visited the French Court, escorted by Fr. B. Vachet, a member of the French missionary force in Siam. Vachet appears to have spoken well of Phaulkon in Paris and to have impressed La Chaise, the King's Confessor and a Jesuit, with the idea that Phaulkon (a friend of the Jesuits) might be useful in Siam as an Agent for France whose policy was then directed by Jesuits. The result was that Vachet and his charges travelled back to Siam with an imposing Embassy from King Louis to King Narai: its object was to find means whereby the military support of France, which King Narai desired as protection against the Dutch, might be given in such a way as to serve both the interests of Catholicism and of France.

The ambassador, Chevalier de Chaumont, appears to have considered that his mission would be achieved if he persuaded King Narai to adopt the Catholic Faith of King Louis, whose ally he would then qualify to become. On approaching Phaulkon he found him zealous for Catholicism, but opposed on grounds of expediency to any change of religion by the King of Siam until the new religion had been accepted by a majority of his subjects. The tenacity with which Chaumont and Phaulkon each maintained his individual point of view led to friction between them. Meanwhile, Phaulkon confided to one of the Jesuit astronomers who had come out with Chaumont—Fr. Guy Tachard—a plan of his own for effecting the conversion of Siam

through the influence of Frenchmen who were to be chosen and trained in France for a career in Siam as officials under Phaulkon's control. Tachard was to return to France at once and submit the plan to Louis through La Chaise.

At the end of November, shortly before he was due to set sail again for France, Chaumont at last consented to discuss material in place of religious subjects with Phaulkon, who then offered a base at Singora together with extra-territorial and evangelistic facilities, subject to certain reservations and to King Louis' consent. Chaumont, in the hope of winning King Narai's conversion by a last generous gesture, suggested spreading the report of an alliance between Siam and France when he called at Batavia. Phaulkon, as Siam's representative, could thus claim that the honours of the diplomatic encounter were all his own. He sealed his triumph by obtaining the loan from Chaumont of a naval engineer, Chevalier de Forbin, who much against his will was detained in Siam to modernise the fortifications of Bangkok. He also detained Tachard's five Jesuit colleagues to serve the Observatory in course of construction at Lopburi instead of sending them to China, as originally intended.

The early days of 1686 following Chaumont's departure were probably the time of Phaulkon's greatest power; but even then the clouds were gathering for the storm which was to destroy him two and a half years later; for the sudden access to great power made of the former seaman a despotic martinet, hated by all. Forbin, having incurred Phaulkon's displeasure, discovered that his food had been poisoned, and suspected Phaulkon. Two English seamen were imprisoned and starved until they yielded to Phaulkon's demand for nails from their cargo consigned elsewhere. Another one, when ill-treated, appealed to the French Bishop; whereupon the French missionaries were reprimanded for disrespect to the King's Minister: their sympathy was further alienated by the support given by Phaulkon against them to the Jesuits who were still reluctant to acknowledge the French Bishop's ecclesiastical supremacy. During the summer of 1686, certain Macassar refugees in Siam joined with the discontented elements in the native population and staged a revolt which was only suppressed after hard fighting in which Phaulkon all but lost his life. Forbin in Bangkok was hard put to it to drive off the rebels, and left Siam in disgust at the end of 1686.

Again, a quarrel of long standing between Phaulkon and his previous masters, the English East India Company, became embittered during 1686 through the action of his port agent at Mergui, Samuel White, who with Phaulkon's consent raided the shipping in the Bay of Bengal under pretext of retaliation for injuries inflicted upon White by an Indian trade-official in Golconda. The East India Company at Madras, as a near neighbour of Golconda, suffered both materially and morally from the effect of the consequent piracies which were carried out by Englishmen in White's pay.³ The result was that King James II. of England issued a proclamation in July 1686, recalling all Englishmen in Siamese service. In the following November, Phaulkon showed appreciation of the menace implied in that proclamation by suggesting to La Chaise in his letter of November 20th, 1687 that the French should occupy Mergui. In the following spring, two English warships sailed from Madras for Mergui under command of Capt. Anthony Weltden, who was commissioned to arrest White with his accomplices, and to occupy Mergui pending exaction of compensation from Siam for theirs and for Phaulkon's misdeeds. Although Phaulkon was lucky in that Weltden miscarried, nevertheless in September 1687 he had every reason to expect that Weltden's failure would be avenged by the whole available power of England in India.

At that moment, when Phaulkon's need for support from France was acute, Tachard suddenly arrived from Batavia where he had transhipped into a fast boat from the fleet in which he had set sail from Brest on 1st March. That fleet consisted of several ships carrying 636 soldiers with officers under the command of General Desfarges. The Siamese Envoy to France, Kōsā Pan, accompanied by his interpreter, Abbé de Lionne, who had gone to France the year before with Chaumont to negotiate the alliance, returned to Siam with Desfarges, who also brought out two Plenipotentiary Envoys from King Louis to King Narai, Messrs Simon de La Loubère, a Barrister-Diplomat, and Claude Cébéret du Boullay, a Director of the French East India Company.

The instructions carried by La Loubère and Cébéret begin with the words :—

It is His Majesty's pleasure that Fr. Tachard be deputed to make the following proposal to Lord Constant, namely that the King of Siam

³ A detailed account of the affair is given in *Siamese White* by Maurice Collis. London, 1936.

should authorise the appointment of a French Governor at Bangkok, responsible to himself; also that he admits a French garrison to this town, permitting it to erect fortifications as a protection from the attacks of his neighbours and of the Dutch.

The following is added:—

If any change should have occurred in the sentiments of the King during the period that has elapsed since Fr. Tachard left Siam, and if no hope remains of negotiating with success, in that event H. M. is determined to force an entry into Bangkok.⁴

A comparison of these instructions with the earlier State Paper, entitled *Observations on trade for the instruction of the King's Envoys*,⁵ reveals a progressive hardening of French policy towards Siam up to March 1687, when the expedition sailed. Chaumont's failure to dazzle Siam with his display of grandeur into offering more than a few concessions of dubious value caused vexation in Paris, which must have been enhanced by the ridicule to which La Bruyère had publicly subjected the idea of converting a foreign King to the religion of France, when a similar idea entertained by foreigners regarding King Louis would have been treated as the phantasy of a lunatic. Impatience was felt at the fruitless exchange of missions, and there was a determination that La Loubère's mission should end the series by bringing back some material equivalent for the alliance offered by Chaumont to Siam.

When the *Observations* were first drafted, the idea of an occupation of Bangkok appears to have been mooted but not finally to have been decided upon, since the word *Bancok*, as the town to be occupied by the troops, has been written in by a second hand in two at least of the three places where it occurs.

The allegation subsequently made in France that Phaulkon had already offered Bangkok to the French is unlikely, if only for the reason that had Phaulkon contemplated posting the troops there, instead of in Singora—the base proposed for them originally—it would hardly have been necessary for Tachard to obtain an assurance from him before they disembarked that they would be made welcome in Bangkok: the necessity for Tachard's visit before the troops arrived loses much of its significance if he was merely to arrange de-

⁴ Archives coloniales, Paris, quoted by Etienne Gallois, *L'expédition de Siam*, Paris, 1850.

⁵ *JSS*, xxvii (2), pp. 227 & seq.

tails for their reception, already agreed upon in principle: lastly the possibility that the French might have to apply pressure in order to persuade Phaulkon to implement a promise which at that moment was so obviously advantageous to himself is inconceivable, assuming that he ever made such a promise.

His letter of October 3rd, 1687 to Tachard by its involved and formal phraseology covers up the picture of a crisis which undoubtedly occurred before the French troops landed. Phaulkon's consent to their landing is granted at the end, upon terms dictated by himself. If it gives no direct expression to the feeling of relief which anyone in Phaulkon's then desperate position must have felt at the arrival of soldiers who could be used to support him, that relief may perhaps be inferred from the lengthy reasoning with which Phaulkon begins by reconciling the French demands with the dictates of his own conscience, and from the answer he gives in advance to accusations of disloyalty towards King Narai which he anticipates will be made against him.

In consenting to admit the troops into Bangkok, Phaulkon makes no secret of his feelings of resentment towards the Envoys for employing his own emissary, Tachard, as a go-between, instead of approaching him direct. Since he states that Tachard had offered to show him in confidence the text of his instructions, it is probable that Phaulkon was aware that the French were prepared—if need be—to use force, and that his pride was hurt by the lack of confidence in him which it implied,—a fact which the French, to do them justice, had hoped to conceal, by sending to him his friend Tachard to arrange the negotiation smoothly.

The result was unfortunate. Phaulkon chose to regard the request for an assurance of a good reception for the troops as a personal affront to himself. He avenged the wound to his self-esteem by demanding from the troops an oath of allegiance sworn to himself as King Narai's representative. The French Envoys were all for resisting these terms when Tachard presented them, but the latter found an ally in General Desfarges who refused to fight with troops demoralised and sick after a voyage of six months through the tropics. The Envoys therefore gave in with a bad grace, and Phaulkon had his way; but the distrust and ill-feeling on both sides survived their departure and contributed to the fiasco of 1688.

Tachard's subsequent record is not a flattering one, and suggests the suspicion that had he been an abler and a better negotiator, the disasters of the following year might have been mitigated. Admittedly Phaulkon was difficult to handle; but the French troops arrived at a moment when he undoubtedly must have welcomed their presence. Phaulkon was notorious for the gratitude he showed his benefactors no less than for his facility in making enemies. It might be thought that a friend, such as Tachard appeared to be, would have been able to win his confidence and represent the French Envoys to him in the guise of benefactors bringing him the very protection he needed to shield him from dangers both foreign and internal, and so forge a bond between them and him as strong as that which attached him in sentiment to the Jesuits, because of his conversion by one of them. Tachard however, as revealed in his own journal, was on bad terms himself with La Loubère, and so far from composing Phaulkon's quarrel with the Envoys—not to mention preventing it at the start—he appears to have embittered it and to have acted throughout as Phaulkon's evil genius.

Manuscript Document at the Toyo Bunko Library in Tokyo entitled:—

Lettre de Mr. Phaulkon au P. Tachard par la quelle il lui promet l'exécution de tout ce que le Roy a désiré de luy.

The Portuguese text followed by an English translation.

Text:

(1) De M^r Constance au P. Tachard.

Meu R.^{do} Padre

Eu tenho bẽm considerado o que V. R. me represento tocante os Desejos Reaes de Sua Majestade Christianissima verdadeiramente dignos de sua Grandeza e Gloria. De minha parte alem das obrigaçõens que Sua Majestade me tem encarregado com seos Reaes faouores e honras as que deuo a Nosso Senhor por Suas infinitas misericordias e merces tão obuias ao mundo que não necessita da minha confirmação senão in forma de gratidão que meos desenhos por a propagação da fé catholica Romana e defenza della nesso Reyno concorda muyto com os de Sua Maj. X.^{ma} sem cujo patrocínio e Real mão esso certo he

impossivel pois verdadeiramente eu estou persuadido que Nosso Senhor tem feito essa eleição de Sua Maj. X.^{ma} como o primogenito de Sua Santa Igreja per tão grande obra daqual depende e tem hum grande prospectiuo á inteira conuerção desse Oriente que não necessita mais instancias a persuadir a V. R. nisso que a consideração do instrumento della (2)⁶ e supposto isto julga V. R. em que bom caminho estas cousas são. Mas como o serviço de Nosso Senhor neste mundo está muito conforme a Justiça, direito e verdade conuem fazer certas reflexões sobre o que a mudança do governo em frança que Deos dilata muyto por sua infinita misericordia, pode producir aos discursos do mundo que não conhece minhas intenções e particularmente os dos maleuolos.

V. R. me representa que os desejos de Sua Maj. consistem em tres pontos. O Primeiro a segurança da Religião: o Segundo o Serviço de Sua Maj. de Siam: e o Terceiro o Commercio nos quaes V. R. se explica. Quanto he por a segurança da Religião dise que seria mister de fortificar hum lugar muyto importante no Reyno de Siam affim que em caso de mudança do gouerno a Christandade não fosse exposta aos insultos dos maleuolos, e a ser totalmente destruida, que não parece a Sua Maj. X.^{ma} hum lugar mais (3) conueniente que a Cidade de Bancok, e assi pede a Sua Maj. de Siam que confia a guarda desta praça aos officiaes e soldados que Sua Maj. X.^{ma} manda a esse fim, e que permite de a fortificar na maneira de Europa pera o serviço da dita Maj. de Siam, e que Sua Maj. X.^{ma} manda por essa conueniencia tropas officiaes Ingenheiros & pera servir a dita Maj. de Siam de qual maneira que quiser. Quanto he o commercio que os sojeitos de ambas as partes sua Maj. X.^{ma} folgaria muito que Sua Maj. de Siam seu bom amigo lhe desse meynos pera assegurar os francezes em seu commercio em caso de guerra com Hollanda porque os hollandezes são senhores de todos os caminhos que conduzem pera o Reyno de Siam e que não duuida que sua Maj. pera grande amizade entre essas duas Coroas dispora as cousas de tal sorte que os sojeitos de frança ficão segurados e que Sua Maj. X.^{ma} per os anisos que tem acha que se o porto de Merguy fosse gouernado na mesma maneira que pede o de Bancok, esto particular ficara bem prouido.

Nestas explicações de V. R. Eu obseruo tres Pontos.

⁶ The figures in brackets appearing in the Portuguese text and English translation indicate the pages of the original MS.

1º. A grande piedade de Sua Maj. X.^{ma} per a (4) propagação da fé Catholica aoqual fim alem das inconueniencias de tão grande distancia de terra e os perigos que são representados, sua Maj. X.^{ma}, tão grande he Seu Real animo e zelo per o serviço de Deos que expos seus vassallos e thesouros reaes per soccorrer todo quanto podia succeder, e entretanto obriga Sua Maj. meu Senhor com finezas muy dignas de tão grande Monarca que são que no mesmo tempo preserua essa praça de tão grande importancia desse Reyno per o serviço e defensa d'elle, e presenta seus vassallos em paga per o serviço que Sua Maj. meu Senhor seruire de os occupar.

2º. Que Sua Maj. considero quam inconueniente era de expor tropas francezas em praças fortificadas na maneira deste Oriente; e assi dictado per as reaes amizades e preseruação do Reyno de Seu amigo meu Senhor resolueo de mandar jngenheiros pera fortificar a seus gastos o que conuem a esse fim.

3º. Como os Reynos de Sua Maj. meu Senhor são tão dilatados e per os quaes tem tantas intradas nelles de sorte que preseruando a hum sem outro pode ser a causa (5) de muytas inconueniencias e inquietudes a paz e tranquillidade de esses Reynos, como tambem o soccorro reciproco de suas tropas que sem isso hauia de ser desemparado, sua Maj. X.^{ma} apunto o porto de Merguy per o segundo, come mais importante daquella banda, e com isto verdadeiramente asseguro o commercio que he tão reciprocamente benefical a essas duas Coroas.

E assim Sua Maj. X.^{ma} assegura a propagação da fé prouisionalmente soccorre Sua Maj. meu Senhor com arte experiencia e força per qualquer occasião que pode se offerecer. Isto qualquer verdadeiramente affeiçãoado á honra de Sua Maj. meu Senhor preseruação de suas praças de importancia e pouo ha de julgar que forão os verdadeiros e vnicos motiuos que tem dictados a Sua Maj. X.^{ma} essa disposição. Porem V. R. bem sabe que a era em que estamos he muy peruersa é muy apta de fazer montes de nada, e nada de montes, e confirmando sua supposição com as circunstancias que a presente juntura de tempo permite de as honras e mercez que Sua Maj. X.^{ma} foy seruido de me fazer determinar que eu foy leuado a Infamia de perder a lealdade que deuo a el Rey meu Senhor em conselharle de entregar suas praças á (6) forças alheias sem nenhuma occasião cousa que nunca hauia eu de fazer per ganhar tudo o mundo. Poes sabe V. R. que Deos nosso Senhor foy seruido de me leuar em hum caminho começando per o principio de minha vida com diuersas maneiras de occurencias até me trazer no posto

em que estou agora; de sorte que eu vendo as diuersas vanidades de este mundo desprezasse tudo e tratasase só do que contem a sua gloria (que muyto concorda com os desejos de Sua Maj. X.^{ma}) pois que quere hum particular mais que chegar a vniuersa administração de tantos Reynos que são sojeitos a el Rey meu Senhor e nomeação de todos os postos destes Reynos da Corte e de estado, e gozar da mais intima graça e fauor de hum tão beneuolo Senhor que he certo (meu Padre) meu pay proprio não hauiã de me tratar com tanta tendreza. Supposto isso creio que me posso prometter que nenhum homem de discurso e consideração me ha de calumniar e de outra parte eu estou seguro do contrario dos maleuolos entre os quaes pezame de dizer que tem alguns francezes come V. R. bem sabe mas essas cousas sempre forão subditas de(7)minha consideração as vnicas armas que eu vsei contra taes e assim não são motinos pera me impedir em negocios dirigidos ao seruiço de Deos nosso Senhor donde Sua Maj. meu Senhor e seus successores podem lograr muytas felicidades, e esso pouo dilatado, muyta paz e quietação nesta vida e gloria na outra.

V. R. me disse que os Senhores enuiados extraordinarios de Sua Maj. X.^{ma} o tinhão enuiado pera vir tratar comigo sobre estas cousas per Suas Ex.^{as} ter a segurança antes de desembarcar e que lhe tinhão dado instruções a esse fim as qu(9)aes V. R. per a confiança que tem em mim me offereceo de mostrar. Meu R.^{do} Padre Instruções leuão duas qualidades a primeira poder e a segunda direção, ambas prouisionaes. tocante ao primeiro eu fico certo do poder de V. R. de vir tratar comigo per a carta de M.^r de Seignelay da parte del Rey Seu Senhor data em Versailles aos 22. januiet 1687. e bastaua a honra que Sua Maj. me faze nisso pois authorisou meu proprio enuiado per tratar e concluir comigo. E tocante a direção que eu per breuidade ajuntarei com a causa della que era de ficar seguros antes (8) de se desembarcar infera o que me pesa de diser da pouca confiança que Suas Ex.^{as} tem em nos o qual não conduze bem com os fauores de Sua Maj. baixo de Sua Real mão e referido pera V. R. Verdade que he a verdadeira maneira que as politicas dictão, mas não as da confiança e amizade podia se corresponder a esta politica. porem considerando as grandes obrigações que eu tenho a nosso Senhor a cujo seruiço essas cousas são dedicados e o respeito da direção de Sua Maj. X.^{ma} supposto que Sua Maj. X.^{ma} e Seus Successores nos assegurão em nossa fidelidade e lealdade que deuetemos primeiramente a Deos e a Sua Maj. de Siam meu Senhor e grande beneficiador nos

por esto prometto a Sua Maj. X.^{ma} com toda sinceridade de procurar que Sua Maj. meu Senhor conceda tudo quanto vo V. R. me tem representado de Sua parte com toda brevidade possivel. Mas aduirto a V. R. de dizer a Suas Ex.^{as} que da parte de Sua Maj. X.^{ma} ordenão os officiaes dos Barquos e das tropas que desembarcando em Bancok per se refrescar e curar os enfermos entretanto que se da o posse da guarda da gua(r)nição que se comportem com muyta circospeição em todas maneiras desorte que ninguem (9) tinha motino de queixa principalmente nestes principios e que Suas Ex.^{as} façam hum justrumento dos particulares artigos que estas tropas tem per seguir nossas ordens, e per segurança que ninguem outro fora de Sua Maj. e de nos os possa commandar (o qual sera a condição no juramento que darão a Sua Maj.) pera nos vera examinar e concluir, de sorte que estas tropas com toda pressa tomão posse e assim en concluso Isso pelo presente dado en Nossa Caza ao terceiro de Outubro de mil e seiscentos e oitenta sete De V. R. Muito humilde Seruidor e ben I(r)mão.

Signé C Phaulkon/.

Translation:

From Mr. Constant to Fr. Tachard.

My Reverend Father,

I have reflected well upon the matters Your Reverence has laid before me touching the royal plans of His Most Christian Majesty, which indeed are worthy of his greatness and renown.

For my part, in addition to the obligation laid upon me by His Majesty's royal favours and honours, my obligation to OUR LORD for his infinite pity and mercy is so clear for all the world to see, that no further word of confirmation from me is needed other than for me to say how thankful I am that my own plans for the extention and defence of the Catholic Faith in this kingdom agree so closely with those of His Most Christian Majesty. For without the support of his royal arm these plans of mine would certainly be impracticable; since of a truth it is my belief that OUR LORD in this has chosen His Most Christian Majesty, who is the elder son of His Holy Church, to carry out a work which is of the greatest importance, because on it depends no less a prospect than that of converting the whole of this East.

And so, I feel that in this undertaking no further pleas are needed to obtain the concurrence of Your Reverence, and all that remains is to explore the ways and means of giving effect to it (2).

And on this assumption may it please Your Reverence to observe how favourable is the posture in which the matter now stands. Since however, if we are to serve OUR LORD in this world, we must be just, straight, and true, it behoves me to make some reflections upon the possible consequences which the change in mind of the Government in France⁷ (whose greatness is the work of God's infinite mercy) may have upon the discourse of the world in general which knows not my desigus, and in particular upon the discourse of those who wish me ill.

Your Reverence represents to me that His Most Christian Majesty's desires come under three headings:— first, protection for the Faith: second, His Siamese Majesty's service: third, trade.

As to protection for the Faith, you say the fortification of some point of great importance in the kingdom of Siam would be required, so that, in case of a change in the Government, the Christian community may not be exposed to the insults of those who wish it ill and be completely annihilated: also, that no place appears to His Most Christian Majesty to be more (3) suited to this end than the town of Bancok: he therefore begs His Majesty of Siam to entrust the charge of this stronghold to the officers and soldiers sent by His Most Christian Majesty for this purpose, allowing them to fortify it in the European way for the service of the said Majesty of Siam, for whose convenience soldiers, officers, and engineers are despatched to serve the said Majesty of Siam in what way soever he may desire.

As to trading between the subjects of both parties, His most Christian Majesty would much appreciate it if his good friend the King of Siam would provide him with means whereby the French be protected in their trade in the event of war with Holland, since the Dutch are masters of all the routes leading to the Kingdom of Siam; and he doubts not that His Majesty, for the sake of the great friendship that exists between the two crowns, will so dispose it that the subjects of France may have nothing to fear; and His Most Christian

⁷ i. e. abandonment of the plan to accept the Siamese offer of Singora as a French base.

Majesty concludes from the reports he has that, if the harbour of Merguy were controlled in like manner to that solicited for Bancok, this item would be well provided for.

Upon this exposition furnished by Your Reverence I offer three observations:—

1°. My first concerns the great piety of His Most Christian Majesty (4) in spreading abroad the Catholic Faith; and to achieve this, the royal zeal of His Most Christian Majesty is such that, undeterred by the difficulties and dangers involved in the long journey, he stakes his vassals and his treasure upon the issue, regardless of the consequences; meanwhile, he lavishes favours full worthy of his greatness upon His Majesty, my master, for whose service and defence he protects this stronghold, which is of such vital importance for this kingdom; and in^s payment he offers his vassals for whatsoever services His Majesty, my master, may be pleased to employ them.

2°. Having observed the disadvantages attached to the stationing of French troops in places fortified according to the Oriental manner, and moved by his friendship for the kingdom of Siam and his desire to safeguard it for His Majesty, my master,—His Most Christian Majesty has resolved to send out engineers to construct appropriate fortifications at his own cost.

3°. Seeing the wide extent of territory ruled by His Majesty, my master, and the great number of entrances into it, which, if only one is protected without the other, may occasion (5) much prejudice to and anxiety regarding the peace and tranquillity of this realm, at the same time, as the sole means whereby one part of his forces may be able to render assistance to the other part, His Most Christian Majesty has named Merguy as the second harbour (to be occupied), being the most considerable on that coast: thereby he has truly assured the trade which is so mutually profitable to the two realms.

And thus His Most Christian Majesty simultaneously assures the propagation of the Gospel and at the same time supplies His Majesty, my master, with skilled, experienced, and powerful assistance to meet any occasion which may arise.

All who have truly at heart the honour of His Majesty, my master, and the security of his chief strongholds and people, will judge these to be the real and only motives inspiring this decision on the part of

^s text obscure.

His Most Christian Majesty. The times however in which we live abound,—as Your Reverence well knows—with evil men, apt to make mountains out of molehills and molehills out of mountains. These men will buttress their innuendoes,—as present circumstances permit them to do—upon the fact of the honours and favours which His Most Christian Majesty has been pleased to bestow upon me; and they will have it that I have been guilty of the infamy of forsaking the loyalty I owe to the King, my master, in advising him to entrust his strongholds (6) without any good reason to the charge of foreign troops,—a thing I should never do, were it to gain the whole world. For Your Reverence knows that OUR LORD was pleased to bring me from my earliest days along a path strewn with all manner of vicissitudes up to the position I now hold today. It follows that having seen the many vanities of this world, there are none I do not despise, concerning myself solely with that which pertains to God's glory,—and His Most Christian Majesty's desires are in close accord with it. For what more can a subject ask than to attain complete control of the wide domains of my master, the King, with disposal of all the posts at Court and in the services, enjoying the closest friendship and favour of a master so kind,—believe me, Father,—that no parent of my own could treat me with greater tenderness.

This granted, I think I can count myself safe from misrepresentation on the part of any man of reason and reflection, but I am sure of the reverse from the evil-disposed. Amongst the latter I am sorry to say there are certain Frenchmen. Your Reverence is well aware of it; but⁹ (7) and thus I take no account of them in conducting affairs directed towards the service of God, OUR LORD, from which His Majesty, my master, and his successors may derive much happiness, and the inhabitants of this broad land much peace and quietness in this present life together with glory in the life to come.

Your Reverence tells me that His Most Christian Majesty's Euvays Extraordinary have sent you to come and confer about these matters with me for their certainty before coming ashore; further, that they have given you instructions to this effect, which, relying upon the confidence you repose in me, Your Reverence offered to show to me.

Two factors, my Reverend Father, are implicit in instructions,—namely, authority to act and direction; and both are of a provisional

⁹ text corrupt.

nature. As to the former, I am satisfied by the letter of Mr. de Seigneley (written on behalf of the King, his master, at Versailles on 22nd January, 1687) that Your Reverence has sufficient authority in coming to negotiate with me; and it is a great honour done me by His Majesty in empowering my own envoy to conclude negotiations with me. As to the scope of the instructions, I will be brief and say only that the recommendation to obtain assurances (8) before leaving the ships implies how little trust, I am sorry to see, their Excellencies repose in us, and how ill it accords with the favours of His Majesty, presented with his royal hand and brought out to me by Your Reverence.¹⁰ True, this may be the authentic procedure required by diplomacy, but it cannot be reconciled with the dictates of trust and friendship.¹¹

Mindful however of my great obligations to OUR LORD, to whose service the affair is devoted, and out of respect for the instructions of His Most Christian Majesty,—assuming that he and his successors confirm us in the faithful loyalty we owe first to God and then to His Majesty of Siam, my master and great benefactor,—we do hereby promise His Most Christian Majesty to obtain with the least possible delay the consent of His Majesty, my master, to all that Your Reverence has submitted to me on behalf of His Most Christian Majesty.

But I advise Your Reverence to tell their Excellencies they should issue orders on behalf of His Most Christian Majesty to the Officers of the ships and of the troops, where they come ashore to refresh themselves or to tend their sick before that the charge of the garrison can be granted to them, that they comport themselves in every case with great circumspection, so that (9) none may have motive for complaint, especially now at commencement: also, that their Excellencies draw up a formal document containing special instructions for the troops to follow OUR orders, so as to make sure that none other than His Majesty and ourselves have power to issue orders to them—(which will be the condition in the oath which they will swear to His Majesty)—for us to see, scrutinise and execute that document in such manner that the aforesaid troops may enter into occupation without delay.

¹⁰ i. e. the insignia of the Order of St. Michel.

¹¹ The text is corrupt: a word appears to be missing before "politicas."

And thus I conclude this for the present.

Given at our house on the third day of October one thousand six hundred and eighty seven by Your Paternity's most humble servant and good brother.

(signed) C. Phaulkon.

resp. vifus vous profierera de ce que quelques courtois
de ce pais. ce n'est rien en comparaison de ce que je voudrais
faire pour votre service étant a ud. Bancoup de respect
d'opime

Mon Reverend Pere

A Leveau le 20.
Novemb. 1688

vostre tres humble & tres
obeissant serviteur

C. Phaulkon

A Signature of Phaulkon.

