

two and a half in its greatest breadth. The strait which separates it from the main land is, in some places, barely a mile in breadth, while at others it is five and six miles broad. The bay of Hong-Kong cannot probably be surpassed by any in the world, not only by reason of the infinite number of ships which it can accommodate, but also of its safe anchorage from typhoons, compared with any other harbour in China, and the depth of water close to the land, which along the greater part of the bay is sufficient for a seventy-four to float at a distance of a cable's length from shore. From this circumstance alone, the island must prove a possession of enormous value as a commercial acquisition. Magnificent granite quarries are found all over the island, so that warehouses on any scale can be built close to the water's edge, and wharfs with ease thrown out, which will enable ships to approach for the purpose of loading and unloading. There is at all seasons an abundant supply of fresh water procurable on the island.

In other respects this new colony possesses but few advantages. Its northern side is formed

by a connected ridge of mountains, the highest of which is about 2000 feet above the level of the sea. Except in a few spots, these mountains are barren and uncultivated; formed by black projecting masses of granite, the intervals giving shelter to herbage and brush-wood. There are no trees of any size; and unlike the generality of mountainous districts, it possesses but a few valleys, and these not of any extent. The mountains, for the most part, fall perpendicularly into the sea, thus leaving but little space for building at their base. The interior and south side is chiefly formed by level and undulating land, and appears to be far better adapted for private residences than on the north side. Here, too, there are some very fine bays, the chief of which are Ty-tan and Chuck-pie-wan. At the former place a military post has been established. The latter place, which is removed about five miles from Ty-tan, forms a very convenient and well-sheltered site for building dock-yards, &c. Partridge, quail, and snipe, have been found on the island; and in the jungle, pheasants and deer have been seen. The population, on our first

taking possession, was barely 1000, but it is now daily increasing, and already numbers upwards of 10,000. Opposite to the north-eastern extremity of Hong-Kong, and across the bay, is the town of Cowloon, a small fortified Chinese position, from which the fleet derive supplies in abundance. A peninsula of considerable size, with only a few Chinese hamlets upon it, extends from the town of Cowloon in a south-easterly direction. This mostly consists of rich level ground, and would prove of inestimable value to us, were it to become an appendage to our present possessions. The appearance of Hong-Kong is anything but prepossessing; and to those who have hitherto resided upon it, the climate has proved far from salubrious. There is a good deal of rank vegetation on the face of the hill, the ground on which, after a heavy fall of rain, becomes elastic and boggy. On the Cowloon side of the bay the atmosphere is at all times more pure, and the changes of temperature less sudden; indeed, altogether it appears a far more likely and preferable spot to form a settlement than on the Hong-Kong side. At present

it has been decided that this peninsula is to be considered as neutral ground.

In order to facilitate the permanent adjustment of affairs, it was agreed, on the part of our Plenipotentiary and the Imperial Commissioner, that a meeting should be held, at which both parties should come attended by their respective guards of honour. The 27th of January was the day fixed for the interview, on which day Captain Elliot proceeded in the *Nemesis* steamer, attended by sixty picked men of the Royal Marines, and a number of officers of the army and navy. On the bank of the river, near the second bar, Keshen received and regaled our Plenipotentiary and suite at a splendid banquet prepared for the occasion, at which, in addition to the usual luxuries of the Chinese on such occasions, the tables groaned with a profusion of Highland mutton, venison, grouse, and other European delicacies, among which hock, champagne, and cherry brandy formed no small part. This cunning statesman appears to have discovered the right road to an Englishman's heart; and as will be supposed, after a feast of this de-