

are found covering the sides of the hills at least fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, and they are not met with at all at a low elevation on the same hills. The *Polyspora axillaris* grows in the same situations, and another plant, perhaps the most beautiful of all,—I mean the *Enkianthus reticulatus*. This plant is very highly prized by the Chinese. It flowers in February and March, about the time of their new year, and they then bring the branches down from the hills in great quantities for the decoration of their houses. The flowers are unexpanded when they are gathered, but by being placed in water they very soon bloom in the houses, and remain for more than a fortnight as fresh and beautiful as if they had been taken up with their roots in the most careful manner. Even the more beautiful amongst the native Orchids are only found at a considerable elevation. The tops of the highest hills are covered in the summer and autumn months with the purple *Arundina sinensis*, and the yellow *Spathoglottis Fortunei*.

The trees on the island are few, and generally in a stunted condition. The fir (*Pinus sinensis*) is common here, as it is all along the coast of China; *Cunninghamia sinensis* is rare on Hong-kong, although frequently met with on the main land; the tallow-tree is also indigenous, but no use is made of its fruit. Many kinds of the fig tribe are common, and one, the *Ficus nitida*, a kind of banyan, sometimes forms a very ornamental tree. Several species of bamboo seem to grow very well, and in the

situations where they are found are strikingly ornamental.

The only trees to the cultivation of which the Chinese pay any attention are the fruit-bearing kinds; and in some places there are very fair orchards containing the Mango, Leechee, Longan, Wangpee, Orange, Citrons, and Pamelows.

Although there are many more species of shrubs and trees indigenous to Hong-kong, yet after all the island has a barren and desolate appearance. The nature of the soil will always be a great barrier in the way of any improvement in this state of things; but even this, to a certain extent at least, may be overcome by the liberality of the Government, or even by the energy and taste of private individuals, and Hong-kong or Victoria may become in a few years very different from what it now is. We have only to look at what has been done as an earnest of what may follow. Trees lately planted are already growing beautifully in the grounds of Messrs. Dents, the Honourable Major Caine, Messrs. Jardine, and Messrs. Matheson, and at Mr. Stewart's, a considerable way up the hill.

The island is not rich in indigenous animals. I have frequently seen wild goats feeding in the most inaccessible parts of the rocky crags; there are also deer and foxes, but these are extremely rare. The only animals of the feathered tribe one meets with are, two or three species of king-fishers, some small singing birds and a few wood-pigeons where there are any trees or bushes to shelter

them. The main land is much better stocked with birds. From thence the natives bring to the market large quantities of pheasants, partridges, quail, ducks, teal, and sometimes woodcocks and snipes. These birds are seldom seen wild amongst the mountains of Hong-kong, and when they are, they have only accidentally strayed from the main land. Luckily for the poor Chinese, their waters are much more productive than the land, and an inconceivable variety of fish is daily brought to the markets, and forms, with rice, the staple article of their food.

There are numerous fine quarries of granite along the coast, from which the stone has been obtained for the new town of Victoria. Much of the granite in different parts of the island is in a state of decay, and some ingenious persons have fancied that to this may be ascribed the prevalence of that malignant disease called the "Hong-kong fever," which has baffled medical skill, and carried hundreds to the tomb.

The autumnal months, August, September, and October, are most unhealthy. In 1843, when I first visited the island, it was in a lamentable condition. A place called the "West Point," where some barracks stood, and which was to all appearance as healthy as any other, proved fatal to the greater part of a detachment of our troops quartered there. The mortality was such, that Lord Saltoun, then commander-in-chief, was obliged to remove the wretched remnant, and ordered the barracks to be

pulled down.* The "Wang-nai-chung," that "happy Valley" already noticed, was another most unhealthy spot. One of my fellow-passengers, Mr. Dyer, and his partner, who came out with high hopes of succeeding in business under the new regulations, went to live in this place, where, in a few days, they were seized with fever, and in a few more they had both gone to "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." In other parts of the island, which were at that time considered more healthy, fever prevailed to a great extent. Among those who were carried off, and whose death caused the greatest regret, were Major Pottinger and the Honourable J. R. Morrison, Chinese interpreter, son of the celebrated Dr. Morrison. The former had been only out for a few days, and was on the point of returning home with despatches for the Government. Many other instances might be mentioned; but these are sufficient to show the deplorable condition of our new settlement at this time; and so malignant and fatal was this disease, that few who were seized ever recovered.

* Before leaving China, I had occasion to visit this spot of ground—the grave of many a brave soldier. A fine road leading round the island, for the recreation and pleasure of the inhabitants, passed through the place where they had been buried. Many of their coffins were exposed to the vulgar gaze, and the bones of the poor fellows lay scattered about on the public highway. No one could find fault with the road having been made there; but if it was necessary to uncover the coffins, common decency required that they should be buried again.

The only advice the doctors gave, was at once to leave the island and fly to Macao.

The south side of Hong-kong was at this time considered much more healthy than the north, where the new town of Victoria was being built. The prevailing opinion amongst the inhabitants then was that the town ought to have been placed on the south side, which had the advantage of being exposed to the refreshing breeze of the south-west monsoon, from which the north was in a great measure shut out by the range of mountains. This theory, however, was soon disproved, for latterly the troops stationed at Aberdeen, on the south side, have suffered more than those in Victoria.

My own observation has led me to the following conclusions :— Much of the sickness and mortality, doubtless, proceeded from the imperfect construction and dampness of the houses in which our people were obliged to live when the colony was first formed; and a great deal may be also attributed to exposure to the fierce and burning rays of the Hong-kong sun. All the travellers in the East, with whom I had any conversation on the subject, agreed, that there was a fierceness and oppressiveness in the sun's rays here, which they never experienced in any other part of the tropics, even under the line. I have no doubt that this is caused by the want of luxuriant vegetation, and the consequent reflection of the sun's rays. The bare and barren rocks and soil reflect every ray that strikes them; there are no trees or bushes

to afford shade, or to decompose the carbonic acid, and render it fit for the respiration of man, and thus the air wants that peculiar softness which makes it so agreeable even in hot tropical climates.

If these are the principal causes of the mortality in our new colony, the remedy will of course be apparent to every one. Already a great improvement has taken place in the houses of the merchants, and in the barracks of the soldiers, and the results have been most satisfactory. But the colonists must not stop at this stage in their improvements. Let the Government and the inhabitants use every means in their power to clothe the hill-sides in and around the town with a healthy vegetation; let them plant trees and shrubs by the road-sides, in gardens, and in every place available for such purposes; and then I have no doubt that Victoria will be quite as healthy as Macao. No one can approve of the selection of Hong-kong as a British settlement; but that part of the business being irremediable, we must make the most of our bargain.

The native population in Victoria consist of shopkeepers, tradesmen, servants, boat-people, and Coolies, and altogether form a most motley group. Unfortunately there is no inducement for the respectable Chinese merchant to take up his quarters there, and until that takes place we shall always have the worst set of people in the country. The town swarms with thieves and robbers, who are only kept under by the strong armed police lately established. Previous to this, scarcely a dark

night passed without some one having his house broken into by an armed band, and all that was valuable being carried off or destroyed. These audacious rascals did not except the Governor even, for one night Government House was robbed; and another time they actually stole the arms of the sentries. These armed bands, sometimes a hundred strong, disappeared, as they came, in a most marvellous manner, and no one seemed to know whence they came or whither they went. Such attacks are fortunately now of rare occurrence. In all my wanderings on the island, and also on the main land hereabouts, I found the inhabitants harmless and civil. I have visited their glens and their mountains, their villages and small towns, and from all the intercourse I have had with them, I am bound to give them this character. But perhaps the secret of all was, that I had nothing for them to take, for I was always most careful not to have anything valuable about me, and my clothes, after scrambling amongst the rocks and brushwood, were not very tempting even to a Chinaman.

Since the island of Hong-kong has been ceded to England, the foreign population in it has been much changed. In former days there were only a few mercantile establishments, all known to each other, and generally most upright and honourable men. Now people from all countries, from England to Sydney, flock to the Celestial country, and form a very motley group.

Viewed as a place of trade, I fear Hong-kong will be a failure. The great export and import trade of Southern China must necessarily be carried on at Canton, as heretofore, there being at present, at least, no inducement to bring that trade to Hong-kong. It will, nevertheless, be a place of great importance to many of the merchants, more particularly to those engaged in the opium trade; and will, in fact, be the head-quarters of all houses who have business on the coast, from the facilities of gaining early information regarding the state of the English and Indian markets, now that steam communication has been established between this country and the south of China. Moreover, with all its faults, its importance may yet be acknowledged in the event of another war. Our countrymen cannot have so entirely forgotten the kind of protection which used to be afforded them by the Portuguese at Macao, as to make them wish to be put in the same circumstances again; and it is of no little importance to know that their lives and property are safe under the British flag, which has

. . . . "braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze."

CHAP. II.

LEAVE HONG-KONG FOR AMOY.—OPIUM STATION AT NAMOA.—LIBERTY THE ENGLISH ENJOY THERE.—CHINESE POPULATION, AND THEIR MODES OF LIVING.—A NEW ADMIRAL MAKES NEW LAWS.—CHERRY-BRANDY ALTERS HIS VIEWS.—THE ACCOUNT WHICH, AS IN DUTY BOUND, HE SENDS TO PEKING.—NATURAL TUNNEL THROUGH CHAPEL ISLAND.—AMOY.—REMARKS ON ITS TRADE.—TRAVELS IN THE COUNTRY AMONGST THE PEOPLE.—THE WANT OF A TAIL.—THE HILLS.—ISLAND OF KOO-LUNG-SOO.—EFFECTS OF WAR.—STRANGE ROCKS.—UNHEALTHY NATURE OF THE ISLAND.—BOTANY AND BIRDS.—VISIT TO ONE OF THE CHIEF MANDARINS.—HIS HOUSE AND GROUNDS.

I LEFT the pleasant bay of Hong-kong on the 23d of August, and sailed for Amoy. As we came out of the harbour by the western entrance, and rounded the south side of the island, I had an excellent view of the little town of Chuckchew, and the military station established there. The town, or village, for it is but a small place, is pleasantly situated on the shores of a deep bay, and fully exposed to the refreshing breezes of the south-west monsoon, and is generally considered much more healthy than the town of Victoria, on the opposite side of the island.

It was now my lot to be seized with that dreadful fever, which I have already noticed as so prevalent in our new settlement at this time. I lay

in a very precarious state for several days, without the means of procuring medical aid; but the sea air probably did more for me than any thing else, and, under Providence, was the means of saving my life. After encountering a strong gale of wind which we rode out in a deep bay for three days, we at last reached the opium station at Namoa.

Namoa is the name of a small island about half way between Hong-kong and Amoy, and is well known as one of the stations where the contraband trade in opium is carried on between foreign vessels and the Chinese smugglers. At this time I was fresh from England, and full of all the notions which we form there of the sacredness of the Chinese empire. I then thought that, although I might perhaps get a view of the celestial country, no barbarian feet would be allowed to pollute the sacred soil. Great was my surprise and pleasure when I found the captains of vessels wandering about all over the island unmolested. They had made roads to a considerable extent, and had built a cottage as a sort of smoking lodge when they landed in the evenings for recreation. They had also erected stables, and had small Chinese ponies for riding all over the island; in fact, they seemed quite the lords of the soil, and were not subjected to the least annoyance from the natives.

Hundreds of Chinamen gather round this spot, where they have erected huts and a bazaar, or market, for supplying the shipping, and, what appears not a little strange to European eyes, when-

ever the ships move to any other anchorage in the vicinity, the whole of the inhabitants, houses, market, and all, move along with them, so easily do these individuals change about from one place to another. One of the captains informed me that it was in contemplation to leave that particular spot shortly, and that if I happened to visit it a day or two after this event, all the motley groups would be gone, and the place entirely deserted. Nor was this statement at all exaggerated, for on my return a few months afterwards, the change of station had taken place, and not a vestige of the little village remained: men, women, and children, with their huts, boats, and all that belonged to them, had followed the ships, and had again squatted opposite to them on the beach.

The different modes which these people have of obtaining a livelihood are really astonishing: with one of these I was particularly struck. There are boats of all kinds engaged in bringing off stock, such as ducks, fowls, and other things, to the ships, but one kind consisted only of five or six thick pieces of bamboo fastened together in the form of a raft, and with this the poor fellows paddled along with two oars, the water washing all over the raft, and frequently also over its contents. The fowls which some of these people brought off were in a most pitiable plight, and certainly could not exist long in such a state.

A few months after this time a complaint was made to Sir Henry Pottinger, then governor of

Hong-kong, by the Chinese authorities regarding this state of affairs at Namoa. It set forth that the subjects of her Britannic Majesty had built houses, made roads, and in fact were making another Hong-kong at the island of Namoa, which, according to the treaty, they had no right to do. The old Chinese admiral, who had shut his eyes to all these irregular proceedings, had been removed, and another, remarkable for his *prowess and bravery* in the suppression of piracy on that coast! had been appointed to this station, and it was the latter with whom the complaint originated. Sir Henry Pottinger acknowledged the irregularity of the proceeding, but blamed the Chinese authorities for allowing it for such a length of time, and claimed a period of six months to give time for the sale or removal of any articles the English might have on shore. This was agreed to on the part of the Chinese.

And now comes the part of the business which so nicely illustrates the peculiar character of the Chinese. When I visited Namoa, in October, 1845, I made enquiry regarding the state of affairs on shore, and found that a little civility, and a few bottles of cherry brandy, had wonderfully softened the good old admiral, and that a communication had been received stating that some little show of compliance was actually necessary: they must pull down the house, for example, but the stables and horses might remain as before, and the captains might go on taking their accustomed exercise and

recreation on the island, as they had been in the habit of doing. It was even hinted that no objection would be made to their putting up another cottage, if they chose to do so. In the mean time, a fine account had doubtless gone to Peking, showing how the barbarians had been driven from the island which they had dared to set foot upon; perhaps a battle had been fought, and a few of our ships and their crews taken and destroyed, which would give a certain amount of *éclat* to the affair. This is the way things are managed in China! Matters being in this state, I had no difficulty in prosecuting my botanical researches amongst the hills. These hills are of the same barren nature as those formerly noticed, and the natural productions, both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, resemble those of Hong-kong.

The island of Namoa is about fifteen miles long, and of irregular breadth; in some places about five miles. The principal town is situated on the northern side, having a very fine bay, swarming with fishing-boats; indeed the whole of the coasts of this celebrated country are studded with small sailing boats belonging to fishermen, who seem to be a most industrious and hard-working race of men; many of them in this island go perfectly naked, a practice which I have not observed so common in any other part of China.

Leaving Namoa, and sailing up the coast towards Amoy, the stranger is continually struck with the barren rocky nature of the coast, and in some parts

has a view of hills of sand, the particles of which, when a hurricane blows, mix with the wind, and whiten the ropes of vessels and render it most unpleasant to be in the vicinity. Here and there he has a view of what appear to be rather fertile plains amongst the hills, cultivated with sweet potatoes, rice, and the other staple productions of the country. On the top of the highest hills along the coast, and as far as the eye can reach inland, pagodas are seen towering, which serve as excellent marks to the mariner as he sails along the shores. As we approach nearer to Amoy we passed Chapel Island, remarkable for having a large natural tunnel right through its centre, which has a most striking and curious appearance when vessels come in a line with it. In the afternoon we anchored in the harbour of Amoy between that island and Koo-lung-soo.

Amoy is a city of the third class, seven or eight miles in circumference, and contains about 300,000 inhabitants. It is one of the filthiest towns which I have ever seen, either in China or elsewhere; worse even than Shanghae, and that is bad enough. When I was there in the hot autumnal months, the streets, which are only a few feet wide, were thatched over with mats to protect the inhabitants from the sun. At every corner the itinerant cooks and bakers were pursuing their avocations, and disposing of their delicacies; and the odours which met me at every point were of the most disagreeable and suffocating nature. The suburbs

are rather cleaner than the city ; but as it is not customary to use carriages of any kind in this part of China, the roads are narrow.

It is from this place and the adjacent coast that the best and most enterprising Chinese sailors come. Many, or rather most of those who emigrate to Manila, Singapore, and other parts of the straits are natives of Amoy and the coast of Fokien, and hence this place has generally been the head-quarters of the foreign junk trade. During the war it was remarked by our officers, that the merchants here showed more knowledge of English customs than those at other places did, and all were acquainted with our settlement at Singapore, and spoke highly of it.

Since this port has been thrown open several foreign merchants have established themselves, and the trade, although small when compared with that of the more northern port of Shanghai, is still considerable. Indian cotton, cotton twist, long cloths of English and American manufacture, and opium seem to be the principal articles of import, if we except the straits produce, which is chiefly brought in their own junks. Since the arrival of the British Consul the opium ships have been removed from the harbour, and now lie just outside its limits, where the Chinese smugglers are allowed to visit them with impunity.

Unfortunately for the trade at Amoy, the exports of which we are most in need—I mean teas and silk—are not so easily brought to it as to the

northern port of Shanghai. This, of course, will be much against Amoy; but nevertheless it may do a considerable portion of business in other ways. All sorts of coins are current here: dollars, rupees, English shillings and sixpences, Dutch coins, &c. &c., are all met with, and pass current by weight. Native gold, in bars, is sometimes brought in considerable quantities, to pay for the cotton and opium, and is, I believe, considered of a very pure quality.

During my stay here I was continually travelling in the interior, going sometimes a considerable distance up the rivers, and then landing, and prosecuting my botanical researches in the adjacent country. Frequently in these excursions I came unexpectedly upon small towns and villages, and generally walked into them without the least obstruction on the part of the natives; indeed, they seemed in most cases highly delighted to see me. When the day was hot I would sit down under the shade of a large banyan-tree, generally found growing near the houses, and then the whole village—men, women, and children, would gather around, gazing at me with curiosity not unmixed with fear, as if I were a being from another world. Then one would begin to examine my clothes, another would peep into my pockets, while several others were examining my specimens. The general opinion seemed to be that I was a medical man, and in a very short time I was surrounded with invalids of all

classes and ages, begging assistance and advice. The number of persons who are diseased in a Chinese village is really astonishing. Many of them are nearly blind, and a much greater number, in this part of the country at least, were affected with cutaneous diseases of the most loathsome description, originating probably in their peculiar diet, and dirty habits.

I was one day travelling amongst the hills in the interior of the island in places where I suppose no Englishman had ever been before. The day was fine, and the whole of the agricultural labourers were at work in the fields. When they first saw me, they seemed much excited, and from their gestures and language I was almost inclined to think them hostile. From every hill and valley they cried "Wylloc-Fokei," or "Wylloc-san-pan-Fokei," that is, "Be off to your boat, friend;" but on former occasions I had always found that the best plan was to put a bold face on the matter and walk in amongst them, and then try to get them into good humour. In this instance the plan succeeded admirably: we were in a few minutes excellent friends; the boys were running in all directions gathering plants for my specimen-box, and the old men were offering me their bamboo-pipes to smoke. As I got a little nearer to the village, however, their suspicions seemed to return, and they evidently would have been better pleased, had I either remained where I was, or gone back again. This procedure did not suit my plans, and