with nothing to distinguish its character from the other dwellings save the sign-*board* of an inn in these parts — viz., five red hoops and a scoop of basketwork suspended from a pole. At four o'clock in the afternoon we were preparing our breakfasts, and we required no tonic to give us an appetite.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD-FASHIONED TOWN — MUTILATED FEET OF CHINESE WOMEN — AN INSPECTION AND ITS RESULT — THE DEFORMITY CONSIDERED A PROOF OF GENTILITY — CHINESE DOGS — TOWN SCAVENGERS — LOSING OUR WAY — CHANGE IN COSTUME — COMFORTABLE DRESS — WARM CLOTHING — ENORMOUS BOOTS — A CHINAMAN'S WARDROBE — CHINESE PIGS AND THEIR TREATMENT — SINGULAR DELICACIES — A SUSPICIOUS INN, AND ITS OCCUPANTS — THE OPIUM-SMOKER — USE OF THAT DRUG — ITS EFFECTS EXAGGERATED.

ONLY one brief hour was allowed us to recruit; at its termination, without changing our costume, we started off again to make another score of miles.

The time we had purposed accomplishing the journey in was very limited; we knew not what was before us, and the means of returning to Tien-tsin again were very doubtful. We wavered between taking the chance of meeting a small trading vessel ready to start from New-Chwang — one of the five northern ports opened to our trade — chartering there a junk, and trusting to wind and weather to find our way across the Gulf in about a fortnight, or having to ride back the way we were now going. We were afraid of overstaying our leave, and therefore thought it best to hurry on while progress was possible.

The way was dull enough and the evening was lowering; the villages looked very *triste* and lonely in the midst of so much water and sloppy ground, but in fine days they must have worn a much merrier aspect.

A large old-fashioned town—all Chinese towns are old-fashioned, but this one appeared more so than any we had yet seen — was passed through.

It looked as quiet as if all the inhabitants had gone to

bed, but possessed good houses built of stone and brick, neatly finished off, and the almost flat roofs tiled or thatched with straw. Lots of courtyards, gardens, and trees, with wide uncared-for streets dividing them, threw the houses rather out of the way, so that few of the inmates saw us pass. There were some large shops, but no business was being transacted, owing perhaps to the wet; this had also suspended the labours of the workmen at an open-air theatre, that was in process of being rigged up and fitted out by the aid of a cart propped horizontally on two legs in the centre of an open space. A few boards were laid across its sides for the struts and strides of the wandering wearers of the sock and buskin, and a millet-stalk framework screened three sides of the stage from view, whereon a table and two stools did duty as stage furniture.

Where a group of willows grew before a wide doorway, and partially formed an arbour, shielded from the rain by their overlapping branches, a female assembly was being held. It was our bad fortune to render its dissolution necessary, and to scare the blooming maids and withered matrons almost into hysterics—if such a civilised complaint has yet made its appearance in the flowery land—as they waddled off their several ways on their pettitoes with the most lamentable stumpiness.

Here is another of those morbid fancies that, balanced against the more reasonable fashions and tastes of the people of this country, far outweighs them all, and outrages the common sense of every rational foreigner. Give them credit to the full for the good traits they possess; call them the most industrious of beings on the globe, the most promising and improvable of all eastern nations; laud to the utmost those institutions which, we are told to believe, have guided them through long ages, and permitted them to see the glimmer of a modern world and a new civilisation, and to hold intercourse with a new race of men some twenty

centuries younger and yet more advanced in whatever pertains to human greatness, and then show us these Ægipanes—these females with the mutilated feet, who walk as we used to imagine 'puss in boots' must have done; and our admiration is suspended.

We can hardly say a word in favour of any people, who would, for an hour even, force the tenderest and fairest of creation into such an appalling amount of suffering, deformity, and inconvenient helplessness. Look at these poor creatures

Extremes of Fashion.

now scuttling away in as bad plight as if some inhuman monster had amputated their feet from the ankles, balancing themselves with extreme difficulty, supported by the walls, or clinging to anything that may in the least aid them in progression and prevent their downfall; while they move their stiffened legs and plant their wasted heels and crushed toes, which are hid in doll-like shoes, smaller than any we ever saw at Canton, Shanghai, or even Peking, just as a

Chelsea pensioner would do if he tried to walk with two wooden substitutes for his nether limbs, without a staff,—then say what any other family of the human species could show to equal such a sight.

We drop civilisation and turn to Savagedom, but can find no equivalent wilful barbarity. The flattened head, the sawn or chipped teeth, the nose or lips deformed by heavy rings, or the ear-lobes pierced and widened to such dimensions that they serve as wallets, cannot fitly be compared to this fashion in the sad spectacle it affords, and the utterly abject condition of the women who are subjected to it.

Some people may point to the stays of occidental lands, but the very worst cases of tight-lacing can never induce effects so deplorable as those which astonished us for many months after our arrival in the country. It is impossible to look at a crippled woman treading on the very extremity of the dwarfed heels of her shoes, with the atrophied ankles and instep wound up in stripes of cotton cloth, making only a few inches at a step, with the arms swaying and body ungracefully erect, without a strong feeling of pity for her misfortune, and without showering maledictions on the heads of those wretches who introduced the villanous practice, and those rulers who permit it to be perpetuated.

Ah, Le-how-choo, a heavy load of blame lies at your tombstone, if what tradition says be true, that you, in the early days of the Five Dynasties, commanded your beautiful concubine and slave, Yaou, to tie up her feet in unyielding rolls of silk, so that their natural perfections might be obliterated to suit your depraved wish, and the matchlessly formed instep and toes be transformed into a repulsive stump, supposed to vie in shape with the new moon!

Curiosity impelled me once to be one of a party in examining an uncovered foot. The young woman was not at first very ready to remove the shoe and the collection of bands around the limb to satisfy the strange request we

made, but a few dollars quickly dissipated her reticence, and also induced another to increase the exhibition. It was no treat. The removal of the bandages was like the exhumation of a half-decomposed body, and made our party close their mouths and hold their nostrils, much to the augmented astonishment of the young ladies, while we stretched our necks to see all as quickly as possible.

No toe was visible but the big toe; the others had been doubled under the sole, with which, after weeks of suffering and excruciating pain, they had become incorporated, and were not to be distinguished from it, except by the number of white seams and scars that deeply furrowed the skin. The instep was sadly marked by the vestiges of large ulcers that had covered its surface, consequent on the violence used to bend it up into a lump; and, in form as well as colour, was like a dumpling; while the limb from the foot to the knee was withered and flaccid as that of one long paralysed. The display was repugnant in every way—we fled, and have been careful ever since to be absent when any more of these living mummies were about to be unrolled.

It is an extraordinary circumstance that the further north one goes, the more universal the odious fashion becomes. At Tien-tsin, in the Chinese portion of Peking, and in some of the larger towns we have visited, a woman or a female child with unmutilated feet was never seen, unless by some very rare chance, and then they were supposed to be Tartars (as the diamond eyes at Lanchow for example). But the amazing thing is, the devotion of the fair sex in the rural districts to the disabling custom. Everyone had the Pandean hoof as scrimply developed as if she were competing for the leadership of the *beau ton* in this respect, regardless of the state of inefficiency into which she was thrown. She is unfit to work out of doors or in the courtyard without some prop, and must manage household affairs in a very unbecoming and toddling way—evidence sufficient, one would be inclined

to say, to open the eyes of the frugal toiling husband to the vanity and vexation, besides loss, caused by his wife's pride.

From the merchant's favourite dame to the old beggar-woman and her child in the reeking *purlieus* of the lowest parts of the town, where a trifle must be hard to gain, all bow to the self-imposed punishment, though for what reason they know not. It is the fashion—their mothers and grandmothers did it, and so must they; did they leave their feet untampered with and unswathed, they would be like the outside barbarians. In short they look upon it as the mark of a polished nation, and those who have it not are held in low esteem.

A lady at Hongkong informed me that once she had two native female domestics, one with cramped, the other with natural feet, and that they were always quarrelling about these articles. She who was able to move about her work readily grumbled at the other because she had in consequence more than her share of labour, and hesitated not to tell the other that her lame toes were the cause; the fashionable sister, who always assumed haughty airs towards the plebeian because of the 'golden lilies,' * would effectually silence her for a few minutes by declaring in the sweet-sounding *lingo*, 'Ah, why for you so talkee me? My mudda (mother) number one woman: hab makee me alla plopa (all proper).'

I cannot understand why, when the conquering Tartars introduced, or rather stuck on the Chinese heads the stamp of their potency, in the whimsical tail or tress which they themselves wore, they did not abolish the thoroughly Chinese institution of the small foot, or make their own women adopt it. In all likelihood their acute judgment at that time showed them the deteriorating effects of a practice that would soon reduce the robust and active female population of their clans into weak silly toys, fit only to be nursed, and therefore unworthy of such a manly race.

* The name for crippled feet.

If the one extremity of the body is held sacred to an inviolable and unalterable custom, its antipodes at any rate is not; for just as two of the alarmed gossips limp through a door in front of us, we see that their manner of twisting up the hair differs widely from that followed in the country we have passed through. Here it is dressed and gummed in the form of an ingot of sycee silver, which is something in shape like a cream jug, or an oval cup wide at top and narrow at the bottom, with a piece scooped out of the edge at each side, and with bright-coloured flowers fastened by, or stuck about skewers and pins, that stand out like porcupine quills. Though their necks be ever so dirty, and their faces not much better, yet the hair must be as exquisitely trimmed and plastered, according to the local rage, as that on a wax model seen in a London barber's shop window.

It was a great relief to pass quietly through a town, and miss the clatter and din that had attended our progress hitherto. If the rain had made us unhappy one way and retarded our advance, it at any rate drove the mob from our path and allowed us to pass on much more pleasantly than if the brawling voices of countless throats had gathered behind and before us.

Only a troop of the common dogs of the country—outcast wanderers that they are—gave us a parting salute of savage barkings before the last houses in the outskirts had been passed, and then tore away into the lanes and fields when a whip was shaken at them.

It is somewhat curious to find this breed of the *Canis familiaris* so widely diffused over the world, and abounding in every corner in China that one chances to put foot in. Closely allied to the Pariah dog of India, the savage pests of Cairo and Egypt generally, those of Syria, and those snarling droves which we have been so often obliged to pelt off with stones by moonlight, in the narrow streets of Stamboul,—the Pariah dog of North China is, like them, allowed to breed

and to infest the towns and villages free from disturbance, to congregate on the plains or in the fields during the day, or to kennel in the graveyards; while at night they prowl about the streets like our scavengers at home, sweeping off the quantities of filth and trash that strew the thoroughfares. Though the Chinese have no religious scruples with regard to the dog, like the Hindoos and Mohammedans, yet the animal is neglected by them, and neither made a companion of, nor yet employed in any capacity, unless as a watch-dog, or in a very mild kind of sport which I may speak of hereafter. It is slightly different from the southern Chinese nomad, which White, in his 'Natural History of Selborne,' describes very accurately; bearing an outward likeness to the Highland sheep-dog of Scotland, and to those painted on the tomb of Roti at Beni Hassan twenty-three centuries before the Christian era. It is surprising that the breed should so long retain its characteristic form and peculiarities amid the vicissitudes of climate and neglect, and the introduction of other varieties, to which at Tien-tsin and Peking a free intermixture of other races had given birth.

Uncared for by the Chinese, hunted by Europeans, to whom it proves an endless source of annoyance by its nocturnal howlings, barkings, and noisy fights, and covered with mange and sores, the service it renders is yet great; for without it and the pig, as sanitary agents, heaven only knows what the Central Flowery Land would become in a short time. Its mission is a most disgusting one, and we would rather see this faithful and devoted friend of man cared for by the family, than find it the devourer of their filth, and the object of their disregard.

The work is gone through in a systematic manner; every dog having its allotment in a certain district of a town from which it must not intrude upon that of others, without the penalty of being half worried. Their tastes, as may be inferred, are not over nice, for they hesitate at no kind of diet.

Can anyone who has seen these canine vultures in the deserted villages in the neighbourhood of Peking a few days after an engagement, forget the sensation of horror he experienced, when inadvertently he startled a swarm of them from feasting on the body of a dead Chinaman in some lonely spot?

The streets and the houses contain mongrels as innumerable as those of any English town. We have seen dogs lodged and fed with some care, probably in consequence of their scarcity and value as pets. Among these the turnspit, the pugheaded lap-dog. and the delicate toyish Japanese poodle have been recognised; but more interesting than all, is the Shantung terrier from the province of that name, and which, for affection, tender sagacity, and purity of breed, is equal to the finest Skye terrier, to which it bears a very striking, if not complete resemblance.

These latter are very scarce and dear, and when obtained a European has great difficulty in gaining their friendship. From the long soft bluish-white hair that conceals their bodies and almost obscures their eyes, the Chinese call them the 'silken-haired dogs.' There is another variety brought from Mantchuria for hunting purposes—a sort of hybrid hound as tall as our greyhound, and in some points resembling it, but so deficient in the sense of smell, and so slow-paced, as to be almost useless to Europeans.

On departing from this town, the roads, which lay in many places very low, were like mill-dams, and entirely precluded any hopes of getting through them without some accident; so we struck off into bypaths and devious tracks, with our faces still determinedly looking to the north-east—our course for that part of the Great Wall we must penetrate, if we are to reach it at all—trusting to our driver to find gaps in the millet through which he might get our humble equipage. The two mules tore at their work, the driver shouted and turr-ed, our ponies shuffled away, and we

covered four or five miles in as wild a storm of wind and rain, thunder and lightning, as the most ardent lover of nature in her angry moods could seek for.

We had been plashing half stupefied through bewildering thickets of tall-stalked grain that did not shelter us in the least from the torrents that fell, and had got far into the wide plain, without a single landmark or prospect of a village. Seeing beyond as much of what lay before us as a twelve feet wall would permit, we were satisfied that if a night in such a situation was to be spared us, it was high time to enquire for some place where we might lay our heads. But not a soul was to be seen. The attendant Ma-foo was inconsolable; and the carter incomprehensible. After wheeling down footpaths to the right and left, our guide grew confused and pulled up, confessing that he did not know the way. He had led us into an inextricable wilderness of green crops, where we stood completely puzzled and lost; there was no obliging divinity to help us out of the labyrinth, and a canopy above showered down never-ceasing water-spouts from a source as black as Lucifer's dress waistcoat.

A brief consultation was held; a dive was made by one of us through the water-laden barrier towards where the main road ought to be; and about half a mile's pursuit of the treacherous strip of brown earth, led to a group of huts. A long series of interrogations was necessary before our latitude and longitude could be fixed, and in an hour afterwards we were picking and plunging along what was said to be the main road. It might have been an aqueduct or a canal in ruins for anything we saw to the contrary. I resolved never again to forsake the genuine line of country, let it be ever so hazardous.

The floods from the mountains rushed across us like mill-streams, gurgling over the thick rocky *débris*, like the bubbling gasp of dozens of drowning men; the roadside houses standing lonely and closed, looked so many *morgues* or haunted buildings; and the people striding past in the

gloom, without condescending to proffer a nod, a smile, or even a stare, but rather averting their heads, might readily have been mistaken for ghosts; while every tree seemed to have a head-cage lashed round its trunk under the dripping bowed-down branches that mourned for the fate of the victims.

'Twas a dismal evening, with the whole of visible nature gasping under an acute dropsy and all but moribund. Never did I feel less sentimental, seldom more destitute. At last the rain almost ceased as a better sort of a ditchy road opened up — though the sky was still inky — and peasants and tramps began to come out and resume their toil or travel. Some of the latter appeared to be nearly as saturated as ourselves, and a few were miserable in the extreme, so far as outward signs went, but were lively enough, at times cackling out a cheerful snatch of some old-world ditty, and shouldering their meagre all on the shaft of a lance, a hoe, or a walking-stick, as if they were supremely happy, paddled *on, they reminding us that*

> 'The needy traveller, serene and gay,
> Walks the wide heath, and sings his toils away.'

An odd change has taken place in the clothing department of the better class of wayfarers and villagers, which we cannot omit jotting in our note-books, as, if not smacking keenly of novelty, it certainly does of economy.

Almost everybody out of China knows how a Southern Chinaman is dressed; how his long flowing and wide robes, though of a different cut rather, are after the fashion of the East Indians, the Turks, Persians, and Egyptians, and all those people who, inhabiting warm relaxing regions, require room and freedom in their apparel during the indolent and sedentary lives they pass for so many months in the year. And we have all had our laugh at the ridiculously-shaped bedgownish coat that almost sweeps the ground, the dang-

ling sleeves which hide the hands and slovenly depend about a foot beyond the finger-ends, and the clumsy shoes that look more like coal-scuttles than articles to protect the feet and allow of free locomotion.

After a few months in the country, however, our preconceived notions suffered greatly from the daily attacks made on them, and before a winter had quite passed away we saw cause to alter them altogether. I now think that, with all our modern civilisation and advancement, the Chinese are more appropriately dressed, so far as ease, comfort, and necessity are concerned, than the Western nations, and that their fashions are founded on a wiser philosophy and a sounder reasoning than our own.

In his ordinary or holiday suit of the lightest cotton, crêpe, or silk materials, made up loosely, and without imposing any restraint on the movements of the body or on the free circulation of air beneath its ample width, the Chinaman looks a far less uncomfortable being than the Englishman who, in summers scarcely less oppressive than those of China, condemns himself to imprisonment in a cloth garment of the scantiest proportions, in which he performs nearly all the duties of life.

Induce a Chinaman if you can to sheath his limbs and body in a *rig-out* of black buckskin, cut, buttoned, and braced so tight that he can scarcely move or breathe; wedge his faultless small feet into a pair of black leather boots, thrown two or three inches off the natural horizontal level of the sole by high heels; put his liberty-loving neck in unrelenting *limbo* by a stiffened band of linen, over which you must wind another starched bandage as closely and as securely tied in front of his windpipe as if he had suffered a fracture of some one of the cervical vertebræ; carefully fit on his long taper fingers and over his perspiring palms, the dressed epidermis of a rat, a cat, or a kid, so prepared as to be impervious to the air; then launch him into a ball-room

on a sultry July evening, cause him to jump, wheel, and skip over the slippery floor at the rate of ten miles an hour in near approximation to an elderly lady, rather stout and calorific, whom he must aid in going 'the pace,' and if you are not directly guilty of the poor mortal's death, never man was. 'Tortured to death' would assuredly be the verdict of a jury of his countrymen, and that, too, by savages or madmen.

The adaptability of the Chinese costume for summer wear is no less so for the severe cold of northern winters. Its essential parts in hot weather are a loose jacket, or long gown, worn over a pair of lower limb covers,—a little wider than knickerbockers to be sure, but made on the same principles of freedom and comfort,—the bottoms are confined by stockings or socks, and the legs extend from the ankle to the knee (for how many centuries have our friends worn this new and most commendable fashion of other lands ?), and the feet wear the damp-repelling thick-soled cool shoes.

In winter when the thermometer falls below zero, and the wind is bitingly sharp, a great change takes place in the character and quality of these garments, and though their houses are not at all adapted for this season, by their devices in the way of clothing, they manage to maintain an agreeable and healthy warmth and defy the chilly rigours of the day or night.

With the richer classes this is done by means of expensive furs brought from the mountains and forests of Mongolia, Mantchuria, and Siberia ; and if one can judge by the exhibitions of these luxuries in the shops of Tien-tsin and Peking, the supply must be a large and profitable one. Of these the sable appears to be the most highly prized, as it is, perhaps, the most valuable ; but a good deal of patience and skill is shown in making up the superior robes from several kinds of fur of various colours into fantastic patterns;

while the more abundant grey squirrel and ermine are also favourites, though used more to line female dresses.

The silver fox, deer, and antelope tribes furnish a large proportion of the soft skins worn by the middle classes, all being beautifully prepared and quite equal to those exported to England and sold in the best shops.

But the great flocks of sheep and lambs beyond the Wall give by far the largest share of warm apparel to the poorer people, in the unlimited supply of perfectly preserved black or white wool-covered skins: even the meagrely haired pelt of the unborn lamb is pressed into use and forms one of the dressiest, as it is one of the highest-priced, articles of winter attire. The robes and tunics of the wealthier portion of the community are either made of satin, silk, or Russian cloth, and lined with these heat-retaining mediums, or are altogether composed of furs, inside as well as out.

The satin is more generally preferred, and one long vestment of this, called the 'Pou-dza,' with its heavy lining, reaches almost to the heels, and is fastened over the right breast by buttons and loops. It has several long slits in the skirt at the sides and back, to give room in walking in the bulky clothing underneath, or to allow of the tails being tucked up in riding or sitting. It is the gala toga of the well-to-do man, only to be used on grand occasions, when his arms will be flourished about in the long sleeves, and the unsightly cuffs trimmed so elaborately with brown sable, and which contain the usual pocket equipment of a European, will be flapping about below his hands, protecting them from the cold. Outside of this, in very cold days, is the 'Toudza,' a shorter and wider covering, lined or composed altogether of a more weighty fur, with wide sleeves barely reaching beyond the elbows.

The head is covered by a quilted satin cap with a wide everted brim, which is faced with sable, the pelage of the sea-otter, or that of the premature lamb, the crown being surmounted by

silk fringe, and, if an official, the button or ball. At other times a small satin skull-cap is worn with a red ball of silk on the top, and a pendent tassel of the same, with a large pearl, a coloured stone, or the character for longevity worked in gold thread, in front; and sometimes a turn-down collar of velvet or fur lies low on the neck of the dress.

With the exception of the 'Shua-dza,' or large black satin boots with massive whitened soles, which encase the feet and legs, this is all that can be seen of a Tien-tsin worthy as he walks along, or is carried in his chair on a winter's day, the very picture of contentment and good nature. When compelled to move about on very cold days, another sort of cap, thickly quilted, is used; and as it is furnished with a fur-covered lap, this is folded down over the brow and ears in a very snug way: and we know that underneath their outer clothing, many jackets may lurk comfortably, and that at least one pair of voluminous silk trousers—thickened to the size of bolsters by a cotton wadding—are doing their duty.

The middle classes, that is those who are dressed in an intermediate style as regards quality of materials, do not differ much in the cut of their over-coats from the higher ranks; but the satin is often exchanged for cloth, or even cotton, in everyday wear; and the costly furs for cheaper ones, or for fine sheepskins, while the Tou-dza of the mandarin is curtailed in its proportions to become the 'Ma-gwa' of the inferior.

Poor people, such as those we are now among, are glad to take any warm clothing they can get, and their ingenuity provides them with habiliments qualified to meet all emergencies. They have recourse to the skins of sheep, dogs, wolves, and even of cats, but place their chief reliance on the thickly quilted blue cotton 'meanmow,' coats and trousers of the same material increased to bulky dimensions by being padded loosely about the body, while the legs are additionally

fortified by the 'tau-koo' or leggings of thick stuff pulled on over the trousers; as they wrap tightly round the ankles, and reach nearly to the body, and are secured by tapes to the sash round the waist, which sash sufficiently holds jacket and trousers close to the person without restraining or confining the movements of body or limbs, at the same time that it adds much to the comfort of the wearer.

It would be difficult to guess the number of suits of clothes covering the exterior of an out-of-doors Chinese during one of the severest days in January; but it must be something extraordinary, and in many cases consists of the whole of his wardrobe. A certain old fellow not far from our quarters in Tien-tsin, who made a small fortune by selling charcoal, coal-dust balls, and warm water to the servants, assumed an alarming size in the depth of winter. From being a spare sort of chap he had suddenly reached the dimensions of a Falstaff around his corporation, until at last he could scarcely get in at the door of the booth he had fitted up for himself. In February the weather began to be less severe; the sun made itself slightly felt at midday; the ice on the river was becoming 'slushy,' and the stout old gentleman then began the slow process of collapse, becoming small by degrees, if not beautifully less, as the temperature increased. Before the ice had quite disappeared from the shady recesses of the Peiho's banks the sun came out in a blaze, and one hot morning in March we found that he had regained his modest outline, and was once more equipped with but a pair of ordinary blue bags on the nether limbs. The superfluous garniture, instead of being left on the ground near his haunts, like the exuviæ of the serpent, was intrusted to the custody of his uncle at the sign of the Dragon's Head.

All endeavour to protect the head during the winter by some means or other, and generally employ felt-caps of various shapes for that purpose; and thick felt or sheepskin socks to guard their toes are in constant use. The felt made

by the Northern Chinese is excellent. Besides its employment in this way as an article of dress by the lower orders, it is universally prized as matting for the 'kangs,' both in summer and winter: so far as we could learn, indeed, this is the only material to the manufacture of which the wool of the sheep is devoted.

Immense sheepskin cloaks—the woolly side in—are also worn when occasion requires, either as an invulnerable outer defence in the streets, or as a blanket by night. People from the country, bringing in produce to Tien-tsin, present a very primitive almost savage, appearance muffled up in these coarse wraps; with a great dog, goat, or wolf-skin cap burying their heads and three-fourths of their faces in its shaggy depths, leaving scarcely anything else to be seen but a dense fringe of icicles depending from their moustaches.

One thing worthy to be remembered, with regard to the northern costume, is this—that however much the body and limbs may be wrapped up in clothes and warm materials, the neck is always—according to our observation—left exposed to the weather, no matter how cold it may be. This apparent neglect seems to be the means of keeping them free from coughs and colds during a very inclement season, and may also secure them a tolerable immunity from 'Lou-peng,' or phthisis, which, in answer to our enquiries, we were told is known here, though somewhat rare. The ears of all classes are especially defended from the risk of frost-bite by curious little capsular appliances of silk or cotton, neatly embroidered and fitting exactly on the auricular conch, called 'urh-tau,' or ear-covers, lined with squirrel or rabbit-skin, and retained in their places by a thin connecting cord that passes round the chin or the upper lip.

The aim of every Chinaman, in summer, is to keep himself as cool and unhampered by clothing as possible. In this he succeeds admirably, and in a way that would excite the envy of the inhabitants of other countries. In winter his whole

attention is devoted to maintaining the limbs and body in a genial temperature, by means of the materials so bountifully to be found near them.

He seems to attach far more importance to keeping the body warm by judicious clothing than by heated apartments or stoves; and in this way possibly escapes those annoying influenzas and catarrhs so prevalent in countries where warm air is adopted, and where less attention is paid to the evil effects of high temperatures within doors and low without. People who remain for hours in a superheated apartment, and then sally out inadequately fortified by non-conducting wrappers against a rigorous degree of cold, must greatly disarrange the circulatory system.

The Chinaman feels changes of weather as much as any other man, perhaps more so, but he has the wisdom to watch, and be prepared for them. For instance, in hot weather the labourers are obliged to toil as at any other time, during which they perspire copiously. Under their thin cotton jackets they wear a capital sort of reticulated shirt, made either of cord alone, wrought something like a fishing net, or with portions of the smooth stem of a fine grass strung on the cord, to make it pleasanter to, and less apt to be moistened by, the skin. Over this the cotton covering lies, but it never touches the body; while the air passes readily through, evaporation goes on naturally, the surface is kept in its normal condition, and the dangers of a saturated vestment are obviated. What a quaint yet simple design, one too that the thoughtful European has not imagined! Perhaps it may follow the use of knickerbockers.

In this neighbourhood the inhabitants appear to have discarded all the silks, cottons, and cunning webs, and move about as if they challenged the densest thunder shower that ever poured from the sky, with nothing over their yellow skins but a mantle—a regular thatch—a first-rate waterproof of rushes—more homely and primitive, but more suited

to such a country than any that Mackintosh could turn out—plaited so artfully, and so neatly, that not a drop of moisture can get through.

There they go, with great-brimmed straw hats on their heads, and these bristly envelopes over their backs, like so many porcupines walking on their hind-quarters, with their legs bare, and only a pair of straw sandals to preserve their soles from the sharp stones. In the south, the

A Pig-driver.

poor make a cloak from the bracts of the palm, and it does tolerably well; but here there is no palm, only rushes and straw. Though the Northerners don't care for, or dread, the rain half so much as the Southerners, their fabrics are better made, and more convenient than those of palm leaves.

Working onwards, we came across some strangely clad Gurths—thralls of some Sinensian Cedric—walking at the

rate of about a mile an hour behind large droves of pigs, but without a dog, and armed only with a long whip, that always lay at rest over their shoulders, their charge being lean and willing enough to get along without any need of a stimulus from behind. These lusty drovers had also divested themselves of the cottons wherewith they had left their last night's quarters, rolled them up in a bundle slung over the shoulder, and looked cool and dry underneath a great yellow square of oiled paper pulled about them.

What can I say concerning those porkers waddling through the mire in black lines on their way to fair or market, except that they are average samples of the North China pig? They can have but a remote relationship to the Oriental wild boar, said to be the progenitor of the domestic hog of China, or to that dainty little, obese, white or black, fine-skinned animal of the South, which has been bred and eaten by the son of Ham for the last forty-nine centuries! There is as great a difference between them as exists between the savage unreclaimed boar of the forest, and the agricultural pets of prize notoriety. If they were seen in an out-of-the-way wilderness or jungle, grubbing at the roots of trees, nothing could save them from instant immolation by the hunter, who would pronounce them very ugly specimens of wild pig. They are as gaunt as a hungry wolf; of a bluish-black colour; wearing an arched back, sharp as the keel of a clipper ship; sides as flat as a door, with hip bones projecting from them like the eaves of a house; long lanky legs, too short to keep the pendulous belly from the ground; and a long tapering snout of the most formidable dimensions, corresponding with the great, unsightly, slouching ears that conceal their little eyes stuck almost at their roots. These brutes are as ferocious to meet, and as disagreeable to look at, as any member of the family to which they belong; and when they elevate the tapir-like mane of strong bristles, with which they are plentifully

provided all over the body, it is difficult to make oneself believe that they have been more than a few months removed from their native wilds.

They are much in want of a foreign alliance, and a proper amount of care in breeding to remedy the defective forms they have acquired, or retained. They lead degenerate lives everywhere here, nothing is done in the way of improving or ameliorating their condition, and assuredly their habits are, even for pigs, most degradedly filthy.

A good constitution they must possess, or else they never could sustain the harsh treatment and neglect they meet with during their lives. The starvation, worrying from competitive dogs, the kicks and blows of passengers, and the summers' meltings succeeded by the winters' freezings, have all to be undergone before the great angular spaces about their ribs have collected a little fat, and their huge bones have attracted a minimum proportion of muscle. The butcher then interposes, and puts an end to their miserable career.

There is no danger of their skins being inflamed and blistered by the sun, as we have seen those of some little nurslings at home, who had incautiously left their styes at midday when it was a little warm, and suffered for their indiscretion. The cuticle, besides being black, is as thick almost as that of the hippopotamus or rhinoceros, and rendered quite impregnable under their thicket of bristles to any assaults from the hot rays. In winter, nature has not forgotten them, for in addition to the coarse capillary covering, a thick undergrowth of fine hair grows close to the body, and acts the part of a hair shirt during the whole season: we have seen this even in the autumn.

I cannot forget the embarrassment and surprise into which a pig, that had been brought by a native to sell, threw a group of soldiers and sailors on the beach at Talienwhan Bay, as the troops were disembarking. It was a very

small one, and far from handsome. It lay in the sand with its legs thrust out in a state of trepidation at the strange and rather noisy crowd that knelt about it, quizzed it, and fingered its external organs unmercifully. For a minute or two I was rather perplexed with the novelty, but made out what it was at last. The majority of the spectators called it all kinds of odd and rather impressive names. One said it was a 'young hant-eater, the same wot he 'ad seen once t' at some unpronounceable place in South America. Another declared it was a sort of 'porkypine,' and brushing his hair the wrong way, referred to Johnny, the pig's guardian, it that was n't the way it went. Another declared it to be a rough-haired badger.

When told that it was a pig, and when a smart tap on its nose had elicited a squeal and a grunt, there was great laughing at the expense of the naturalists. One of them, however, had presence of mind enough to draw attention to the soft hair I have just mentioned. 'If that there hanimal wor a pig,' he observed, sagaciously, 'there could be no use sayin' "All cry and no wool," as the d—l said when he wor a shearin' the sow.'

Happy must be the lives of these rambling country grubbers, with gardens and fields to steal through now and then, where a sumptuous meal of fresh vegetables may give them a welcome change of diet, contrasted with the hard fate of their town congeners, who live from snout to mouth day after day without an opportunity of obtaining a morsel beyond the allotted quantity and quality found in the ditches, cesspools, and sinks of garbage and nastiness belonging to the public and private promenades of a town. Every street and corner has its due complement of these labourers scouring about for the public good, barking, grunting, snarling, and squealing the livelong day, and even going so far as to dispute the right of way through their beat, or their claim on the pickings to be cleared away, with the men who,

armed as they are with a long-handled three-pronged fork, and a creel behind their backs, gather from before the noses of their rivals the 'sordida rura,' the flowery symbols of a flowery land, strewn everywhere in wanton luxuriance.

How, in the name of Epicurus, the Chinese can eat such foul-feeding pigs is incomprehensible. I remember reading some years ago, in a book on China by a naval officer, something to the effect that a Chinaman will eat everything but his own father, and while highly amused at their going so far and stopping at that trifling obstacle, I was rather incredulous. Readily now would I endorse his statement, after only having seen them masticate with fond delight their beloved scavengers.

I was once taken to a street in Canton by a crafty young elf, where I was shown a shop, the window of which was hung round and across with cooked animals in sufficient abundance to prove that a good trade was not incompatible with a secluded situation. I was rather exultingly told that one lot of the nicely browned morsels was cat, and another opposite, split up and skewered with an eye to effect, was 'number one' dog.

I had not been many days in China before I vowed to abstain from sausages, pork chops, even roast legs, bodies, heads or tails, or any single fragment of the terribly unclean animal, so long as I remained in the country; and every day's experience has strengthened instead of weakened my resolution, until now I am become as rigid a pig-hater as Jew or Mussulman, though I see that the Chinese live and thrive on such flesh.

Towards dusk, when it was almost necessary to grope for the path, we fell amongst a drove of these brutes lying all about the banks and raised places, and to escape getting a tumble over some of them, we had almost planted our pony's feet on the body of the straw-coated driver, who rose up in alarm, and when he beheld us, stared as if about to scream.

His excitement calmed down at length, and he was able to tell us that there was an inn a few li ahead. He was going to sleep on the ground with his pigs until morning; no great hardship apparently for the hardy fellow.

The inn was like one of those establishments so often described in books of highway exploits as existing in the desolate places of England in the last century. It stood alone on a high bank, apart from a group of little houses. The latter looked up from the stagnant lakes of water encircling them like the heads of so many alligators. They formed the village of Yang-chow. Our hostel was a long low building, with a very low gateway to the courtyard, very small windows in front, and a narrow entrance to the visitors' portion of the house.

It was dark, yet there was noise enough for a riotous meeting of fake-away gentlemen, and there was also an impregnation of Samshu that tainted the air. It made the doubtful exterior seem more suspicious. In we must go, however, for we were saturated with water; while fatigue inadequately expressed the general aching we experienced, and our feet felt as if they were in poultices.

Ma-foo, muleteer, mules and ponies looked, as doubtless they were, done up for the day, and needing all the rest they could get to re-invigorate them for the morning. They had had a heavy day of it; indeed they must have thought it was never to terminate, while threading all manner of mystifying roundabouts, so they shouted and neighed until the landlord appeared with a train of waiters behind him. Joyfully surrendering the half-famished nags to the groom, we entered the house.

It consisted of one narrow dingy passage not less than fifty-seven feet in length, and far more like a robbers' cave, such as that described by Gil Blas, than a respectable resting-place for honest wayfarers. A large lamp, smoking and flaring, swung high up from the middle of the roof, and only

made the darkness at both ends more profound. But after a time our eyes got accustomed to the obscurity, and to the flickering light, and then it was partly possible to make out the dubious shelter to which our good fortune had guided us.

On each side of the long apartment stretched the usual mud and brick kangs covered with cane matting, on which reposed or squatted in all kinds of attitudes the nude figures of some forty or fifty travellers of a very humble degree in

The Inn of Yang-chow.

life, each with his journeying gear and his equipment safely packed up alongside of him, and his sword, matchlock, or lance within easy reach of his hand. A row of posts supporting the roof ran along the front of each couch, and on these hung saddles, bridles, and draught harness in orderly confusion, making the shade over the prostrate individuals more irregular and mysterious as they lay or reclined in twisted forms, their dark yellow skins showing anything but pleasant in the interrupted gloom that pervaded the place.

Fantastic piles of goods were huddled up among the rafters, while the earthen floor was encumbered with pack-saddles, panniers, and bags of grain.

At one end of the long shed was the kitchen in which moved the cook and his *aides*, busily engaged frizzling, frying, and stewing strong-smelling pork and stronger-smelling compounds fried in oil, with a sickly effluvium of garlic predominating. The evening was not very warm, yet the *chef* perspired and blew as he stirred, and tasted, and served out the odorous viands in little basins and bowls to the greasy urchins who were waiting to distribute them over the room.

This was not a very desirable performance to have under one's nose all night. Our host did not look the least put out of his way by the great *omnium gatherum* assembled under his roof, but flitted everywhere like a thorough man of business, with overwhelming suavity of manner for such an unpretending mansion. He carried us to the very opposite extremity from the cook-shop, and gratified us exceedingly by ushering us into two little rooms partitioned off from the main one, fitted with well-barred doors and windows, and tolerably clean. Into these first-class apartments the few things we had were carried, and gathered in a corner after the fashion of our fellow-guests, who were only separated from us by a very thin and fragile division of boards. When this was done came the cold water, then the tea, then dinner of the usual fare gladdened our eyes about nine P.M.; but during its preparation a most satisfactory change had taken place—our well-washed habiliments were flung aside, and replaced by a dry suit.

Scarcely ever was a hard bed so attractive, never came sleep so willingly, but many of the unthoughtful yellow-skins without had awakened from their first nap, gorged their paunches, and set to work to amuse themselves according to their wonted custom. Some smoked tobacco; others

played dominoes and cards, by the help of the faint light emitted from the saucer lamps; a few rattled dice out of a bowl within a few feet of us. Their earnest grunting voices sang out as each gambler dashed the cubes on the matting or a little stool, 'Hi yo le-o'—there is another lot of sixes. This medley disturbed our rest; and we sat a long time gazing out on the strange scene, and watching a sensual-looking young man indulging himself in the opium-pipe close to our door, regaling our sense of smell with the not disagreeable fumes of the burnt narcotic. He could not fail to see that his nocturnal orgie was the principal attraction in the room for the eyes of the strangers, though he proceeded to satisfy his craving for the drug with the greatest unconcern. Since we had entered the house, not an inmate of it appeared moved by sufficient curiosity to raise himself from his lair to visit us.

The opium-smoker lay with his face in our direction, his head raised a little by a wooden pillow, and his whole mind given up to the inhalation of the vapour, and replenishment of the bowl by small doses of the drug picked up and stuck on the pipe from time to time. As the quantity he had smoked began to act upon his system, his features kindled up from the solid composed state they had been in previously. After each instalment there was a longer interval, as if he wished to prolong the process; and he muttered away in a low tone to himself, while his black eyes sparkled vividly, and the heavings of his naked chest denoted increased breathing. Still he lay tranquilly in the same posture without any symptoms of uneasiness.

The prescribed quantity, to our gratification, was nearly expended. Once more he stretched out his strong muscular arm towards a little tray, on which were the implements employed to charge the 'smoking-pistol'—the long needle or wire with which the opium is lifted was again in requisition—the almost empty 'ka lan' or shell was hurriedly

scraped by it, and its contents, now changed from a treacly colour and consistency to that of a crumb of gingerbread, steadily carried to the 'yen-tau' or cup of the pipe, which bore a decided resemblance to a magnified gas-burner in shape, and in the small perforation in the centre of its top. The opium is placed on this little aperture, into which the needle is pushed to establish an opening between the interior of the vessel and the external air, then the skewer is thrown away, the open end of the 'yen-ti'—pipe-stem—is taken between the lips, the cup is carried down to the flame of the lamp, and the opium becomes faintly red as the deep inspirations of the now drowsy-looking man drew air and smoke into the lungs with a weak sputtering noise.

Suddenly it ceases; the pipe and the hand that held it drop together; the solitary carouse is over; the man of pleasure is overcome, and the object is attained, if not already passed by; for he lies so still that it would be difficult to believe that he was in anything but a profound trance or sleep, one so deep that the shouts and quarrels of those within a few inches of him fail to disturb the vision or rouse his stupefied senses.

He looked a sad strange figure in the foreground of that half-wild and novel tableau, stretched out on his back as if dead, the scarcely moving ribs testifying that he was not really so. The hand and the 'pistol' were still together where they had fallen, and the head resting on the stool showed the deep yellow features but imperfectly by the partial gleam of the half-extinguished lamp that stood near, illuminating but obscurely the corner where the victim reposed. It revealed the saddle and its load of effects laid up against the wall; the journeying wardrobe, wet and soiled, close to our partition; and the heavy odd-shaped sword within easy grasp of the nerveless hand; while the strong flaring blaze of the large lamp in the background threw marvellously weird-like lights and shadows through the long vista, and brought out

in grotesque relief the nude beings coiled up and laid out in sleep; the boisterous gamblers dressed and undressed, engrossed with their play, squatting or reclining in every conceivable way, as well as the miscellaneous agglomeration of all sorts of uncouth articles on beams, posts, and beds; all this gave one a vivid impression of a robbers' den, though the lingering aroma of the poppy's juice was rather out of place.

This was the first time I had seen the beginning and ending of an opium-smoker's orgie, and watched the gradual change throughout the whole of the stages, from excitement to stupefaction and somnolency. I was satisfied that it was a very quiet and unobtrusive way of getting dead drunk, however injurious it might be in the long run; and was productive of but little annoyance to the lookers-on.

At Singapore, at Hongkong, but more particularly at Tien-tsin, I had often peeped into the interiors of the opium-shops, fully prepared to meet with some of those fearful wrecks of humanity that rouse the sympathies and curdle the blood of our people at home, when described in pro-China speeches and books; but I beheld nothing more than what I have just described—in fact not so much, for the dens were seldom so agreeable as to be supportable for a period long enough to enable a visitor to see a votary take his allowance out—and everything, as orderly and peaceably as the most sober race of people could desire.

At Tien-tsin I made many enquiries, and haunted for some time a number of the shops in our vicinity, and gathered as much information as any stranger could well do under the circumstances. The number of the 'Yai-pian yan-pu' or opium-smoke shops then was about 300. These are places where opium can be purchased, seethed and prepared for immediate use, in small quantities, by people who use it in their own homes, and where it can be consumed on benches built up in the room usually set apart for that purpose in all these places. There are, besides, many wholesale establishments for the sale

of this article to the retail shops, but where it is not permitted to be used on the premises by customers.

The smoking-shops are generally in low, dirty, out-of-the-way streets and back alleys, and are kept concealed from view as much as may be compatible with the trade carried on in them. Ruinous hovels, regular dens, a degree or two more forbidding than our dram-shops in the 'slums' and lanes of large towns, and without sign-boards—for the vice, one would think, is tried to be kept a hidden one—'cribs' which would be passed without any suspicions as to their character by those who had not been told, are met with in every part of the Tien-tsin city and suburbs. You are threading your way through some sickening passage formed by gables and fronts, backs and corners of runagate and advancing houses, handkerchief to nose and mouth in one hand, and a strong stick for the benefit of the swarming curs in the other. You are exploring, looking out for novelty and adventure in any shape, but chiefly to study the manners and customs of the people. Every open door has had its share of your attention, every courtyard its scrutiny. Workshops have been entered, the mechanical operations criticised, and the salient characteristics noted. You leave, perhaps wiser, perhaps gratified; and continue your route with the usual disagreeables, until you come to a corner where a great round piece of brown paper clings to the wall, so like the colour of the wall itself, that you may have passed a dozen such without your eye catching their outline. You are on the trail; the scent is strong. You may be as certain of what is about the vicinity of that brown paper, as the North American Indian used to be when he saw a twig snapped from a bough, or a scrap of dress fixed on a thorny bush.

A 'howff' is near, and you search. There is no corresponding paper on any of the doors, and you penetrate farther into the maze, when you remember that a courtyard full of rubbish was passed, at the top of which stood a riddled

sort of bothy with the windows thickly patched with paper, and the door, well fitting, closed. You turn back, peep behind the courtyard gate, and discover another disc of whitey-brown.

Without any warning to those who may be inside, you advance to the door, and shove it boldly open. You will find a darkened room as soon as you close it behind you again, with a couple or so of tiny lamps burning in various places, making the darkness darker still, and reminding you of those lamps which superstition says are ever faintly gleaming in the old Roman sepulchres, and are only extinguished when these are opened to the light of day. You stand at the door-post for a minute or two, during which vision is slowly returning, and the proprietor or manager—though he would rather not see strangers enter his secluded abode—makes you welcome. Three or four dark masses are laid on the everlasting benches. They are labourers or some such members of a poor class taking their daily or afternoon dose, after the benefit of the morning one has passed off. Three have just begun, and the fourth is resigning himself to the dreamy sleep. That is all you can see; and you stay in the mixed flavoured dungeon for a few minutes, just to assure the landlord that you intended him a friendly visit.

The sight is a pitiable one—a sad one, but not so repulsive nor so heart-rending as that I once witnessed in what might be called a public-house on a summer's afternoon in Stamboul, where the opium-chewers were at work and going on like men possessed with demons, until they subsided into lumps of paralytic imbecility, fagging a year of nature in an hour; neither does it affect one half so much as the glare and the misery, the garish display and the ragged brutalised mob, the stir and commotion, the ribald and profane language, or the indecent quarrel and the savage bull-dog-like fight, that may, alas, too often be observed by the stranger who traverses our own land, and, who, at a distance—for we would advise

him not to enter—surveys the 'life' at the gin-palaces, the taverns, public-houses, dram-shops, and tap-rooms, decorated by their gay luminous show and superb fittings, to be found in all our great thoroughfares in manufacturing towns and cities, and providing plenty of occupation for the policeman, the jailer, and the hangman.

If opium-smoking is a great evil among the Chinese people —as it is, no doubt, yet they endeavour to hide it—they are ashamed of it—and it offends neither the eyes nor the hearing by obtrusive publicity. It is not made a parade of by night and by day; neither does it give rise to mad revels and murderous riots. Its effects on the health may be more prejudicial than our habits of alcohol-drinking, but yet it is hard to see any of these broken-down creatures that one reads about.

A strong opponent of opium-smoking, and a man who spoke the Chinese language thoroughly, took me to an opium-shop to see some of these examples, but the exhibition was what we should call a failure so far as the exposure of the unhealthy effects of the drug might be considered.

The room was filled with men of nearly all ages, and as robust-looking as the majority of their townsmen. They freely answered all questions, and the result was not particularly unfavourable to the reputation of the habit, compared with the number of lives sacrificed every year by the use of alcoholic liquors and the number of strong constitutions sapped by them in other countries.

We can recall to mind one old fellow, fifty-two years of age, who confessed that he indulged himself as often as he could afford it, which was always twice, often thrice a-day. His earnings daily were about two hundred and fifty cash as a coolie, and out of this he spent one hundred in opium. This man had taken it for twenty-two years, and left it off twice during that period—once voluntarily—when he was induced to begin it again at the instigation of his friends (?),

and the second time to allay the pangs of hunger after he had abstained from smoking for some months. Two boys—his sons—usually accompanied him, and remained in the shop while he was engaged with his pipe. How like the gin-shop family meetings!

On being asked why he smoked opium, he could not give any satisfactory answer; and his sensations, while under the effects of it, were vaguely described as strength imparted to him, and the production of happiness to a degree he could not find words to express. When he required opium he did not feel well, and experienced a sensation as if his breast was being torn open. If it were possible, he said that he would gladly abstain from it, though he feared he could not voluntarily do so; but if confined in a room for several days, and plenty of food allowed him, he supposed he could then do without the smoke.

Another of my friends, also an anti-smoker, used to select cases of infirm-looking Chinese in the streets as objects who were succumbing to the narcotic; but unfortunately for his judgement, the greater portion of these disavowed having anything to do with the drug, and gave positive reasons for their sickness. If an impartial observer were to go the rounds of the three kingdoms, and direct his attention to the effects of strong drink and the spectacles it affords, and then do the same in China—of course I speak of the North more particularly, as I have had more ample opportunities of investigating this matter there than in the South, with regard to the opium question—I can almost safely predict at what conclusion he would arrive.

One occasionally meets with pictures for sale in the streets, in which are caricatures of emaciated creatures with terrible eagerness clutching the pipe as they lie in a dilapidated house, their clothes in rags, and their toes protruding through their worn-out shoes. And in one of the temples at Tien-tsin, where the Buddhistic pandemonium was represented in all

its horrors, and the punishments to be awarded the transgressors of Fo's precepts pourtrayed by plastic models with an almost supernatural talent in devising infernal tortures, the opium-inhaler is there represented awaiting his doom; yet in spite of these illustrations the custom is on the increase. It is a hidden vice, but Chinamen will tell you that every shop ought to or does pay a secret tax—a 'squeeze'—to the mandarins, and that the latter are kept well informed as to the number of new openings which take place, consequent on the flourishing state of business in the drug that briefly cheers, but deeply enervates.

A slave to the narcotic is perfectly well aware of his danger, and the enormity of the offence he is committing against his family and relations—in starving the one, and disgracing the other—but he looks with fear and contempt on a drunken European who reels and tumbles about in the street, kicks up brawls, and sheds blood, and wonders why, if the foreigner is determined to get rid of his senses for a time, he does not do so pleasantly and peaceably, instead of acting like a wild beast.

There is little use in a missionary preaching to the Chinaman about his evil propensity, when the man can point to the preacher's countrymen and ask if the 'samshu' is not worse than the opium; and if you showed him a print of Cruikshanks' Bottle, he would tell you—and perhaps you wouldn't quite disagree with him—that opium could never produce such a tableau. It is a vexed subject, as is teetotalism to many people elsewhere, and, as Chinese gambling might be, if viewed in the same light.

Let us quit the midnight amusements of a strange inn, and bolting with some care the passage door, seek our room. Before consigning ourselves, however, to repose, with the clatter outside still strong in our ears, the expediency of inserting five bullets in each of our revolvers was not overlooked, and the Japanese chopper was placed in the most

advantageous position under M.'s pillow, ready for a half-asleep. hack and thrust; for we reasoned that since the Chinese showed such a fancy for lethal weapons, and manifested so much prudence in their disposal at night, there could be surely no valid objections to our doing the same.

The house was an odd one, and quite out of the usual style we had as yet been accustomed to; the locality was not assuring, to say the least of it; and our fellow-guests were ten to one against us, should they turn out, as they undeniably appeared to be, rough and ready adventurers.

How futile it was, though, trying to keep awake! Despite all the banditti, highwaymen, robbers, and cut-throats—despite all imaginings of the little games the fleeced gamblers might be up to when they could play no longer; and in opposition to the thousands of mosquitos who did their best on the fresh rations they sung so lovingly over—with a bump at intervals from headstrong beetles who found their way in by the half-open window, and seemed anxious to share our bed—we forgot everything in the mysterious phenomena into which mind and body was gently drifted.

CHAPTER XV.

EARLY RISING IN CHINESE INNS — THE FERRY AT THE YANG-HÔ — THE TRAVELLED FLORIN — FLOODED ROADS — FEAR AND CURIOSITY — TRAVELLERS ON THE HIGHWAY — TUBERCLES OF THE WATER-LILY, AND ITS USES — ARROWWORT — A MARSHY REGION UNDER CULTIVATION — A CHINESE ALBINO.

LOUD thunder had been heard during the night, and never-ceasing flashes of lightning had glared over the room, without disturbing me; neither did the suspected ones in the hall of innocence and peace maraudingly drive us from our rest; but the rain, whisking and dropping with weary beat, was more effectual about five or six o'clock next morning, when all objects beyond the paper window looked cast down and carried a tearful expression about them, as they lay bathing and floating in the wet under an angry sky. A nice prospect, certainly!

The doors were released from their bolts, and a glance out at the long public room told nothing but that everybody had left long ago — even our vitiated opium-eater had rallied from his lethargic inebriation, and was off. The place where they had been, which looked so dramatic last night, was all but unrecognisable. It was as different as seeing the pit of a theatre when lighted up and crowded with a moving noisy audience, and viewing it again empty, dismal, and cold, in the starved daylight. There were the posts, the benches, the stools, and the wooden pillows; but all naked, bare, and dirty, with the black spider and scorpion-haunted beams above them, surrounded by mud-plastered walls, earthy, and not improved by some immoral illustrations — fit accompaniments to gambling and opium-smoking. The jailish-looking

windows levied a heavy tax on the light as it struggled to force its way through the blackened sheets of paper, and scarcely reached the unsightly hillocks on the unswept earthen floor.

The weather was vexatious, and the sun more so; but we were fain to be content and to wait the clearing up of the sky, which began about seven o'clock. Then we were ready to start, but not in the best humour exactly, as the Great Wall was yet a long day's journey from us, and it was to be reached before night. The bill was paid, the ponies saddled, and the luggage packed firmly in the cart, with the mules fidgetting to be on their way, when the grinning landlord, who expected to make sure of his paying customers for another day and night, obligingly broke the afflicting intelligence to us, in a straightforward way, that the Hô, or river, had risen to such a height that boats would be required before we could cross. We ascertained that we could entertain but faint hopes of transport for some hours.

Riding down to the foot of the steep bank on which the inn and the village stood, we found the Yang-hô foaming and tearing past us in a yellow flood, increased in dimensions from a fordable stream in fine weather to a torrent, through which it would have been folly to attempt to force our ponies.

But affairs did not look so desperate or hopeless as our host had represented them; for, at the other side and paddling about for hire, we discovered a washing-tub of a boat, moved and piloted by two men, who sculled across on our hailing them. How much would they ask to carry us to the opposite bank, with our baggage, and swim the ponies behind the skiff? A long deliberation ensued between the two men — in which all the villagers who had turned out busied themselves in giving an opinion. Their fare was only six thousand cash for the job — about thirteen shillings, for ferrying us across a river no wider than the Peiho! They

seem determined to make their money while the stream is at the flood, and to take advantage of our haste to get away; but they must receive their lesson. We make an offer of one thousand cash — which, as all the current cash is now about the thickness and breadth of an old sixpence, and go two thousand to the dollar — is half a dollar. They would not listen to the proposal, but jumped into their boat again, wonderfully irate at the small value we set on their labours.

We mounted, and made as though to ride towards a deep ford, where a number of people were toiling in the bubbling water, immersed to their shoulders, with their clothes in a bundle on their heads. The elder Charon gave in; he could not suffer such generous souls to plunge and battle in the seething river when he could ferry them across, sure of gaining the thousand cash. He loudly shouted to us to come, and that he would be content with our offer.

The cart was emptied of its load, which, with the saddles, was put in the bottom of the boat, and then sent some way down the stream to get a place where it could pass in safety — we crouching down in the leaky craft to ballast it, while the ponies were swam across by naked Chinamen, who seemed accustomed to the work — they showed such tact — though it could not be very remunerative to such a number of strong fellows.

There were many pedestrians sitting and standing on the grassy bank when we got out of the impromptu barge, nearly all of whom were in the thatch coats, and appeared as if they had already been some hours on the road. Their astonishment at our presence was fairly eclipsed by that of our boatman, who almost screamed for joy, when, being rather scarce of the base and bulky coin of the country, we gave him a new florin. Such a silvery gleam had, perhaps, never before gladdened those unnaturally exposed eyeballs of his — much less had ever been in his possession as lawful

property. He ran off from the crowd with it stuck out in his open palm to admire it alone, but the excited fellows followed like a lot of rats after a piece of cheese, and gathered round him as if he had obtained a gift of the *elixir vitæ*, in which they desired to participate.

It seemed too good to be real, however; and to the surprise and delight of a few seconds before, succeeded suspicions and doubts as to its quality. The man came up to us again, weighing the coin in his fingers and testing its genuineness as well as he could, looking very business-like and very serious during the scrutiny, and, pointing to the obverse, wished to know what the Queen's head signified. The reply that the likeness was that of the grand lady who ruled the great English nation, though it caused some wonder, and perhaps a grin or two from some rustic wretch whose ideas of the estimation in which the sex ought to be held were not of a very exalted or noble kind, did not content the shrewd countryman until he believed that the cross on the reverse was Her Majesty's mark; then did he fully understand the importance of the bargain he had made, and the lucky windfall he had obtained by a few minutes' work.

The ominous weather had by this time vanished; the hills came out with their keen upper ridges only marred by misty exhalations from below; and the July sun shone down hot and strong from a sky unruffled by the thinnest cloudlet, sending the water lying everywhere about us in steaming vapours over the ground, until we were well-nigh suffocated and parboiled, in the bright hot light, with the moisture and perspiration.

The only tracks we saw having any pretensions to a high road were at every few yards regular lakes and dams of reeking rain-water, from which no cart could come unscathed, and through which it would have been fatal to our prospects to have urged the mules. The sole alternative, therefore, was still to cling to the north-east horizon, while

we sought lanes and paths through the millet and maize sweeps. We were often baffled, but always came to some little village. Rather poor they were, perhaps, at times; but the people looked healthy and happy. Here we found some part of the drowned main road, which gave us a clue to our position. The labourers in the gardens, or in the rows of grain, did not bustle or stir themselves much about our presence among them; and the passengers on the move—whom we were often obliged to brush against, as they made way for us in the contracted passages, where there was no ditch or bank to protect the crops, and where everyone was solicitous to avoid damaging them—unscared, just favoured us with a sly squint, as they strove to soothe their far more alarmed steeds, should they happen to be mounted. After proceeding for a bit, and before the opportunity could be lost, they would give us a little more of their attention, and cogitate on the extraordinary sight of two strange men—the likes of whom, in such a novel garb, had never been seen there before—moving through the country as if they had been in it all their lives, and were familiar with every inch of its perplexing mazes.

But two or three old worthies in the course of the day were not so courageous, and showed the unmistakable impulses of childish timidity or fear; for, catching a glimpse of us in time for a retreat, they hastily dismounted from the animals they bestrode, and, with the alacrity of a startled fawn, darted in among the thick screening jungle of stalks, dragging their 'mounts' with them, and were not seen again, being probably too much overpowered by the distant glance to try a nearer one.

Travellers were pretty numerous in some places, where the independent and circuitous thready ways converged on the lowland, nearly all of whom were equestrians, who rode well-conditioned ponies, or sleek, tall mules; and not a man of them but looked well fed and well clothed. The latter was,

if not a picturesque, a certainly very decent outfit of spotless-white homespun cotton, with long, wide thigh gaiters of silk, faultlessly-bleached socks in the black or blue shoes; the wearers' sonsy faces tantalised, hid, and fanned by the flapping yard of brim that spread out from the flat-topped straw hat, so tightly bound to their round heads by the tape across, and the tape below the chin.

There was also a sprinkling of those who in every country must always 'pad the hoof'—the less comfortable members of the peasant class who move about in search of employment, trudge to other localities on friendly visits, or plod to towns in the vicinity for the few necessaries they require. Straggling wheel-barrow men, who throw themselves in before us, with the straw face-shade tied over the brow by the useful tail; plying their weight and strength to the utmost between the shafts of their carriage; but what they conveyed was too well wrapped up by covers to allow anyone to guess it correctly. They had an arduous job propelling such heavy loads on the thin wheel in such muddy ground, but they went at it with such determination and goodwill that they kept away fatigue and despondency.

The crops have not varied in kind along the whole of our track from Tien-tsin; there is just as much diligence and regard to be remarked in reference to the sedulous application of the hoe or the plough in turning up the soil about the roots of the plants, the manner in which these are sown, and the non-existence of a bare spot where a seed-topped stem can wave. Here and there in certain places, the ground was broken a little into narrow, but deep, gullies, from which the water could not be drained; and in these grew in abundance the 'Lien wha'—the much-prized and sanctified lotus or water-lily—the *faba Ægyptica*, or Pythagorean bean, the symbol of creative power and fertility, continually represented in the images and pictures of the Buddhistic

religion. As in Egypt it was the emblem of fecundity, or power of the world from water; and, as it was consecrated to Isis and Osiris, so is it in China to Fô. As it is not in flower so far north until the end of July or beginning of August, it was not in perfection when we saw it; but even then it looked graceful and pretty, with its closed pink or carnation-and-green calyx, growing like that of the tulip before it blooms, and rising up from amid the great concave round leaves, so green and glossy after the genial rain, as they swim on the clear pools.

It can scarcely surprise anyone, who looks at these beautiful herbaceous plants, growing as they now do, with their gorgeous double flowers only in the bud, that such a people as the Chinese, as well as other eastern nations among whom Buddhism prevails, should entertain a preference for this above all other flowering plants. They accept it as a type of the most mysterious operations in Nature, and have assigned to it a prominent place in the Eden promised by Fô — whose image they place on a dais of lotus flowers — that land of supreme happiness, where his votaries are taught that there is but one sex, and that the masculine. The women admitted will be desexualised, and the bodies of those who have obeyed the precepts of this false religion, 'reproduced from the lotus, are to be pure and fragrant — their countenances fair and well formed — their hearts full of wisdom and without vexation.' It is there also where they dress not, and yet are not cold; they dress, and yet are not made hot; they eat not, and yet are not hungry; they eat, and yet are not satiated. They are without pain, irritation, and sickness, and become not old. They behold the lotus flowers and trees of gems delightfully waving, like the motion of a vast sheet of embroidered silk. On looking upwards, they see the firmament full of the "To-lo" flowers, falling in beautiful confusion like rain. The felicity of that kingdom may justly be called superlative, and the age of its

inhabitants without measure. This is the place called the Paradise of the West.'

But the Chinese, who seem ever striving to blend the beautiful or pretty with economy and utility, venerate the water-lily as much for the material service it renders them on earth in sustaining life, as for the part it plays in their popular creed; so that, while admiring it, dedicating its virtues to their highest spiritual creation, and lavishing florid encomiums on its beauty, they do not forget to cultivate it, and use it as an esteemed article of food. In the market-places of towns and villages in and about Tien-tsin, quantities of green capsules, shaped like the rose of a watering-can, or the head of a gun-rammer, are exposed for sale in August and September. This is the torus or ovary from the top of the stalk, containing the numerous seeds or nuts in cavities on its surface, which are said to be excellent when eaten raw, or after being boiled and preserved in syrup.

In March and April, and also in May, strange-looking rootstacks make their appearance on the stalls, of a white colour, and resembling somewhat three or four of those incomplete divisions of a large pork sausage, such as are sold in England. This is the root of the water-lily, and if one of the elongated tubercles be cut across, it will be found full of holes running lengthways like the strands of an electric cable. This is a most useful and healthy esculent, and is eaten in a variety of ways. Many of the country people prefer it raw, when it tastes not unlike a coarse chestnut or an uncooked potato; but it is best boiled, and furnishes a very nutritious meal, with the other trifling adjuncts of a humble dinner; tasting somewhat between a potato and a turnip, palatable enough for any hungry stranger. It is also salted, pickled in vinegar, and preserved in sugar; and where very plentiful, besides these methods, it is converted into flour, which, when mixed with a proportion

of sugar and baked into bread, the Chinese describe as first-rate.

These small ditches and pools of what would otherwise be lost ground, but which are so favourably situated for the growth of the nelembium, and also for a few yards here and there of the arrowwort (*Sagittæ folia*), the root of which is also eatable, but is not so pleasant as the other—would scarcely be worth noticing, did they not remind us that land above and land below water are alike seized upon and forced to yield their share of support to the people who so thickly crowd them. So skilfully and earnestly is a marsh or shallow fresh-water lake, which would be reckoned next to useless in other countries, hunted, fished, and gardened, that it would be difficult to pronounce with any degree of certainty which is most productive, or on which the inhabitants appeared to thrive best.

To the westward of Tien-tsin, and between that city, Peking, and Pauting-fu—the capital of the province—there is an extensive swampy marsh, in many places deep enough to be considered a lake, where a continual war is waged against the stubbornness and perversity of nature, and where what might fitly be called an irreclaimable morass is made not only habitable, but very pleasant, to multitudes of industrious people by the exercise of ingenuity and indomitable patience, such as would astonish the dwellers near the bogs of Ireland, the moors of Scotland, or the fens of England. Not only do the natives there supply the greater share of their own wants by their own handicraft and devices, but they can spare an abundance of their produce to towns in their vicinity; for they supply largely the markets with fish, vegetables, and wild fowl, in return for the commodities of the dry land.

To this great basin, which is only bounded by a high wide bank of earth that separates it from the Grand Canal and the low country to the south, and the higher land that rises

towards Peking and the mountains to the westward, I sailed in a river-boat from the Peiho in the month of March, with the intention of visiting the chief provincial city some eighty miles off, and though I found so many obstacles and difficulties as to be unable to reach that place in the limited time allowed, yet the strange and curious scenes, and the congenial pleasures of a sort of gondola life and similar novelties, gave me great satisfaction for five days, the remembrances of which one would be sorry to lose.

Passing up the 'Shang-see hô,' or upper western river—a small tributary of the Peiho—through a strip of country flat as Holland, and from which the river is banked in, a day's sail brought me to the region of wide waters, bulrush, and bindweed, where white sails were scudding on in every direction through myriads of occult clearings, like cotton sheets hung up to dry on a grassy plain. Here the silent highways were as clear as crystal, when compared with the Peiho's ochrey tint. So complicated did the various tracks appear, that in the middle of a beautiful sheet of translucent water, extending far beyond the horizon, there was a little house erected, with the names of the places to which they led, painted on its sides for the accommodation of day passengers, while those who sailed by night were guided by a beacon-light in a large paper lantern hoisted on a tall pole.

For the whole distance I went—which was some forty or fifty miles—the shallower waters were mapped out by weirs —Elizabethan mazes made of reeds artfully disposed. The fish were not only prevented from wandering up or down the rivers and streams, but were let into the narrow crooked passages, that gradually contracted until there was not room for them to turn, and they were conducted then at last into a circular space, a *cul-de-sac* or regular trap, so arranged that egress was impossible. The open streams and the deeper bottoms gave lots of occupation to the throng of net skiffs,

and to the fishing cormorants. There were numerous boats with rows of these birds perched in sable majesty on a framework over the gunwales—like plumes on a hearse—looking as serious as if they were cognisant of the great responsibility of their functions, and the benefits they confer on their employers.

Presently I came to villages, numerous and well-built, as thickly peopled as those we were now passing, gathered on mounds in the middle of the lagoon, and shaded from the sun by great willow-trees that flourished in an appropriate soil, surrounded by stacks of reeds and bulrushes. A variety of the latter was very common—the *Scirpus tuberosus*—the root of which is the edible water-chestnut; from the stalks were made those great boat-loads of mats I had often passed, and which appear to be the staple manufacture of the district. The people eat the roots, weave the stems, and make tinder of the seeds.

Near, was an odd little town, as old-fashioned as any I ever beheld, built on an earthen foundation that had been dragged up from the muddy depths. The name, at this moment, I have forgotten, for it is a difficult task to remember such names, but it signified that its beauty exceeded its fragrance, which is a vast deal to say for a Chinese town.

Here I saw the first and only Albino I have met in the land, in a dense sloping wall of heads that lined the banks of the town stream to obliteration on each side of the boat. For here the crowd made a little stone bridge fairly totter again, as I was the first European to visit the unfragrant Venice.

Poor little fellow, his chalk-white skin and flaxen hair made him so conspicuous in the crush, that I looked and looked again, and yet could not understand what the phenomenon was, until the impetuous crowd near him, watching me every movement of eye or limb, discovered

that I regarded him as a curiosity, as they themselves appeared to do. Quickly they carried or pushed him down towards us, almost close to the water's edge, all the while joking and making fun of the little unfortunate, whose reddish or pink eyes, and golden eyelashes, could ill bear the sunshine, or even the daylight.

CHAPTER XVI.

BIRD SLAUGHTERING — WATER FOWL — MASKED BATTERIES — GATHERING THE *NELEMBIUM ROOT* — FISHING — ROADSIDE SANCTUARIES — THE SEA — SANDHILLS — MIDDAY INN — FIRST PEEP OF THE GREAT WALL — VILLAGE URCHINS — 'NO TAILS' — A FEMALE EQUESTRIAN — THE GATHERING AT SHAN-HAI KWAN — AN INHOSPITABLE HOSTELRY — THE VALUE OF OUR PASSPORTS — SORRY QUARTERS

NEAR this town we spent an entire day among the out-of-doors people, as it was better situated than other places we had sailed by, similarly located on muddy mounds. There were patches of wheat for home consumption; tolerably large rice fields, loved haunts of the snipe—made and in process of manufacture by scores of naked men who stole and scooped the slimy earth from below the water, and bound it with bundles of reeds, flags, or millet-stalk; there were good gardens admirably cultivated, and stocked with those vegetables and fruits that grow best in this almost tropical summer; and there were also good houses of brick, and fine healthy inmates to look at.

There was some sport going on—for away at least a mile or two the dull booming of heavy firearms was incessant, as if an active engagement was being fought; so to observe it better, if not to share in it, we had to hire a small shallop, poled by a rusty-moustached old man who knew the country well, like an old huntsman, and who could make his rounds to the easiest fences of reeds or rushes, and by a dexterous push and a jerk of the skiff, clear them cleverly. We were amazed.

Every foot of swamp was converted into something or another more mysterious, more fantastic, and more unmean-

ing, as we went on poling and paddling over all kinds of infernal machines and comical contrivances reared up from the water, lying in the water, or fixed in the weedy bottom. But the burning of gunpowder in the distance was too enticing and too indicative of potent amusement for us to linger long among these plots and puzzles, which we left for the afternoon's solution, to afford us more surprise and more food for curiosity and investigation after we had reached the shooting 'ground.'

Flocks of bald cootes, dab-chicks, water hens, and other waders, swimmers, and divers innumerable, as if there had been an ordained muster of the families of the Orders Grallæ and Anseres; with — treasures to the eyes of the sportsman—scores of the mathematically flying birds winged rapidly over our heads in lines and angles; duck, teal, widgeon, and even geese hurried on or settled cunningly in places where they could not be disturbed without a timely alarm. Vainly we tried to outflank them, or creep along through the weeds — lying close down with only the boatman's arms exposed above the sides of the coracle: in vain we tried long shots, too long to be effective, for they whirred and flapped their wings away to some more secure retreat, leaving us to follow if we thought fit.

The only birds we could deceive and kill were the cootes and dab-chicks, and a few specimens of the grebe, one of which was very like, though about half the size of the tippet grebe, the gannet of Lincolnshire; and we ungallantly made war on them with excitement enough. Our competitors, the Chinese, who all this time have been blazing away for miles, and scarcely permitting the birds to rest for a minute anywhere, have not been so unsuccessful, but have beaten us into shame with their clumsy unsightly weapons, notwithstanding our quick loading and double barrels, at least two centuries ahead of the matchlock. So well had they studied the habits of the game, and so craftily had they masked

their presence and laid their plans, that they were circumvented and shot before they knew that murderous man was within a mile of them.

Let us skim over quietly to that intent fowler, who, with a frame like a Hercules, a skin naked as that of a scalded pig, and broiled black as that of a Hottentot from daily exposure to the heat, is squatted in his low light punt hastily loading for another addition to the pile of slaughtered birds heaped up in a corner. He does no more than give you a good-natured smile as he pours out the cakey powder from a leathern bottle-shaped flask, into a bamboo measure that serves also as a stopper to the precious receptacle, and then drops it into the muzzle of one of the two very large match-locks. It might be truly called a full charge. Then without minding your presence at all, he lifts a great handfull of cast-iron shot of as many sizes as the metal may have chosen to assume when dropped at random into cold water, and, ignorant of the benefit of a wadding, trickles them down the thick barrel where they lie heavily on the powder.

The same form is gone through with the other, and then they are firmly lashed fore and aft on the punt—one horizontal to send its contents over the surface of the water, and the other slightly elevated to sweep the air some feet higher. Pole round his vessel. The bows and a portion of the sides are so hidden by carelessly-tied bundles of reeds or straw, that at a few feet you would think it a little heap of dead vegetation, and rather tempting to the birds than otherwise: in fact it is a masked battery done to perfection, and exhibiting far more knowledge of bird nature, than did those who inserted painted gun muzzles in the wall towers of Peking, of western human nature.

A low loose screen of rushes stands in front, through which the ends of the barrels protrude, and an apparently accidental sort of a hole is made about the middle of it for the use of the sportsman, or rather tradesman, who is now all

ready for any large collection of birds; but it must be a large congregation, for it would not pay to spend so much shot over a few, and the Chinese are not capricious or fastidious in their tastes, and will eat a coote with, perhaps, as much gusto as they would a teal or a widgeon.

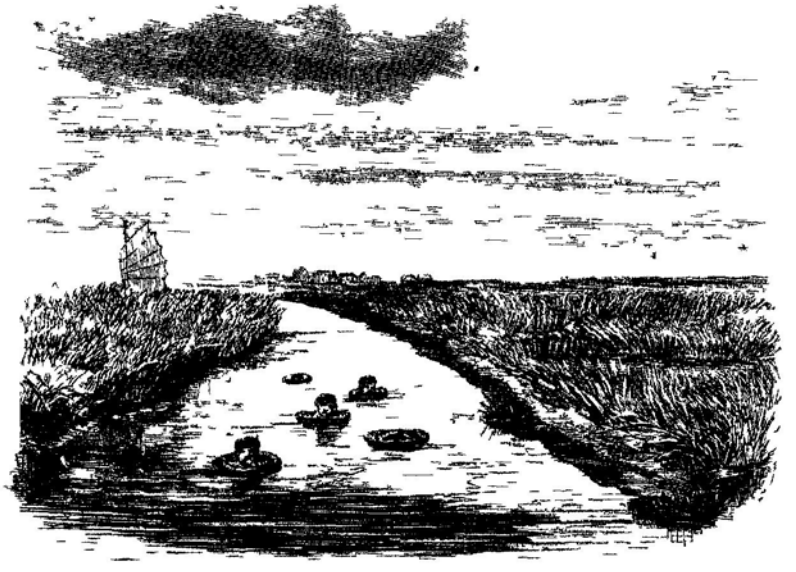
He has not long to wait where such swarms abound, for he sees in an open piece of water in the centre of sedges and young rushes, a group of natatorials darkening the surface and floating suspiciously about.

'How'—good, he mutters, as he jumps out behind the punt, and sinks to his shoulders in the tepid liquid, standing in which he takes the flint, steel, and tinder from a small bag at hand in the boat, strikes a light, ignites the end of the coil of the twisted slow match that is fixed in the split of the springless hammer, and coiled round the short curved stock. Then with an anxious look at you, as much as to say, 'Please remain where you are, and let me follow my trade when I get an opportunity,' he walks or swims away, noiselessly and stealthily pushing on his gunboat, with his head scarcely above water, until he has got within twenty or twenty-five yards of the beguiled fowls, when a thumping bang scatters the shot among them like a hail shower, and sends about half a dozen flutterers struggling about, and nearly as many lying immovable on the smooth face of the pool.

Another bang in rapid succession to the first, and those who were flying away terrified are sadly pelted, some four of them descending lifeless to the spot they had just quitted. This is a wholesale butcher, but he sells cheaply the results of a day's work, and must do the best he can.

Where reeds are growing any height above the water, there is another kind of tradesman who pursues a mild business with as much skill as the other. Kneeling down in a small flat, with a light but very long gun, and peeping through a minute division in a screen of straw hung in front, this humble adventurer poles himself along after a crowd of

decoy ducks which he feeds from time to time. As soon as he hears the slightest sounds, or sees the wild fowl within range, he selects the best situation whence he can do the most damage; then he moves like a cat after a mouse, an inch at a time, and, lighting his match, fires his fusil from the hip, when a cloud of small iron pellets and baked millet-seed is hurled into the game. He seldom misses, though he does not take good aim, for he judges the distance so exactly that the bird or birds are in the centre of the discharge.



Gathering the Root of the Water-lily

But what strange animals are those struggling or manœuvring in such a remarkable way? the stranger is likely to ask, as dark-coloured bodies go bobbing up and down in the largest open space, looking like nothing you have seen on earth, sea, or lake, either of fish, flesh, or fowl. Your boatman propels you, according to instructions, right in among them, and you are astonished to find that they are

men, seemingly making awkward attempts at escape from some monster of the water, which has seized on their legs.

A glance at the floating tray of reeds at once relieves you: these nondescripts are gathering up the roots of the water-lily, and many of them have their trays nearly full of them. They are strangely dressed for their work, and have a very uncouth appearance, with nothing but their dark brown faces to be seen, and their heads wrapped up in a blue turban to prevent their brains being thoroughly baked by the March sun. Around each of their necks is a wide circular collar of the same shape, and about the same size, as the ordinary life-buoy, and almost as light. To this is attached a waterproof bag of sheepskins with the wool off, about one half as long again as their bodies, in which they live and move many hours every day, as dry as if they were on dry land. To this buoy, which keeps open the mouth of the sack, and admits the air around the body without allowing the water to enter, is fastened the raft on which the day's store is carried.

There go the amphibious labourers, jumping and sinking, moving to one side and then to another, sometimes disappearing altogether below the floating ring, which then looks like the entrance to a pit or well, as they scrape and rub off the mud by their toes, in the corners of the bag, from each segment of the root which runs along in the tenacious bottom; and then, having exhumed the hidden treasure, all but an obstinate bundle of fibres that grow at the end, and retain a firm hold of their native earth, the operation is soon finished. One of the hands holds, with the side of the bag between, a pole armed with a hook. This divides or tears away the fibrillæ; the precious esculent is liberated and quickly transferred to the depository, and another is attacked.

This is, we were told, the great nelembium-growing country; and, to judge by the number of men burrowing

and floundering, and the quantity of these roots they can scrape up in a few hours, the acres of flowers cultivated must be very large. In no place where they grow did the depth exceed six feet. When covered with full flowers, the Chinese described the appearance of this wide lagoon as something magnificent — like a great carpet of red, white, and yellow or pink gems, that diffused a delicious fragrance for miles around. One of these Tritons gave us a freshly excavated tubercle, and nothing but tea could have been more refreshing in the prevailing heat and steam.

We remained a considerable time watching them, and then betook ourselves to the fishermen, where we were amused for as long a period in looking at their efforts to secure the carp and eels that breed and thrive in the marsh, and for whose capture every possible device is had recourse to. Small hillocks and long banks of straw are thrown up all over the country. In these the fish take refuge, and about them boatmen hover, spearing, netting, and trapping the finny fugitives they have just started out with long sticks. Nets are contrived in all sorts of shapes to drop down on the confused fish. Conical baskets, open at both ends, are expertly launched over them, and the captives are taken out alive with the net or the hand by the top, and put in a tub of water for the Tien-tsin epicures. Reed baskets, about two and a half feet long, in form like an hour-glass, and open at both ends by the reeds being bent inwards, leaving only a small tapering aperture for the fish to enter by, something like a wire mouse-trap, are strewn everywhere over the bottom, waiting for the entrance of some old carp who soon will discover that getting out is a much more difficult matter.

Old men continually thrust hand nets into the mud; baskets of all shapes and sizes are planted wherever a fish may venture; weirs, the jagged tops of which can be seen, like white spikes, pierce the water far and near. These plans, such as only Chinamen could suggest and act on for

the preservation of their species, filled us with a high sense of Chinese thrift and ingenuity.

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Towards midday we got up high on the hill-sides again, where the soil began to get light and scanty; and masses of granite, with thick veins of quartz, and jags of blue limestone, impeded our progress a good deal. The country around us was not very attractive, and looked as bare and sterile as some of the mining or pottery districts of Staffordshire.

The hamlets assumed the dimensions of little towns; the roads became wider and more traffic-worn; the roadside inns, though very rough and untidy, had more of a business air about them, and occurred at every half a mile or so, with their signs of hoops and scoops dangling on the opposite side of the way; but the usual temples, built on the choicest spots and of the best materials, were not now to be seen.

Either the people were too poor to maintain the trains of idle priests who loiter about these comfortable institutions, or are too wise to tolerate them; and instead thereof, in the outskirts of every little town or village, we saw diminutive toys set up, something in the temple style, in the most sequestered nooks, and under the oldest and widest spreading willows, with the tiny censer standing in the dwarfish doorway—which is placarded on both sides with inscriptions; and the great old bell, roughened by devices and figures, suspended from the limb of a tree to call Joss's attention to the stereotyped prayers, prostrations, and reiterations, as well as incense burnings, of the rustic devotees.

Some of these altars displayed a good deal of taste and care, and, besides being situated in the best places, where the villagers went to smoke and rest in the hot afternoons, were neatly decorated and painted. Two we observed with the ends made of sandstone slabs, marked by black wavy lines, like a water ripple—probably brought from near some coal

bed — traces of this mineral being apparent in the beds of the streams running from the hills, of the blocks of which the foundations of the houses are built, and in the half-burnt stones lying near the doors.

Here and there we pick up pieces of iron clay-slate on the path, and sometimes pass between banks, red as blood

The Roadside Sanctuary

almost, from ferruginous impregnation. The crops are weak and thin, and more space appears to be given up to pasturage than millet growing. One advantage of sowing light-stemmed cereals between alternate ridges of the strong-stalked millet, is witnessed in the undamaged condition of

the former, notwithstanding the beating-down showers and heavy gusts of yesterday, owing, no doubt, to the support and protection they received from the lofty tough screens on each side.

As we descended again from the heights, we discerned the rusty outlines of a series of sandhills, which we knew must be near the sea; and about an hour afterwards we heard its sullen roar thundering over the sandy beach, as if it bid us once more welcome after our long absence.

I know not whether the pleasing sensations I then experienced quite equalled those felt as we drew near the mountains the second day after our departure from Tien-tsin, for they were of such a joyful nature on both occasions that I am not certain which gladdened me most — the hoary hills in the distance — so very like the Grampians — or the surging waters of the Gulf of Liatung, still lashing and writhing about after the storm in a grand fury, and madly hurling tons of sand per minute up on the shingly shore. M—— declares that he was certain he heard the low murmur of the waves between the awfully loud peals of thunder during the night in that curious inn; but such a declaration does not lessen our admiration now. We dismounted to let our angular-sided quadrupeds, on whose backs we had hitherto stuck as tenaciously as did the Old Man of the Mountain to Sinbad's, share in our joy, while we stood exultingly

> 'Watching the waves with all their white crests dancing,
> Come, like thick-plum'd squadrons to the shore
> Gallantly bounding;'

faintly trying to realise the raptures of any one individual in the van of Xenophon's Ten Thousand Greeks, on that day when the summit of the Sacred Mountain was attained; when the enemy's country had been traversed, and the Persians — with the redoubtable Tissaphernes at their head —out-marched; when the piercing winds and deep snows of

Armenia were left behind, with the barbarians who harassed them by night and by day; and the deep-blue waters of the Euxine lay slumbering beneath, and Greek towns, with open doors, were ready to receive them, after toiling over many hopeless parasangs and overcoming innumerable difficulties.

We did not shout, but never felt so much inclined to do so. The memorable cry of 'the sea! the sea!' seemed to ring in clear peals over the shore as we listened to the stern breakers crashing inland.

We mounted again after the first burst of welcome had been got over, and rode down towards the sandhills or dunes, through fine yellow sand, with, at intervals, a point of hard rock throwing itself in the way. Nearly everything was sand and shingle. Few trees grew within two miles of volcano-shaped, ever-changing, grit hills, and vegetation dared not linger where it would be buried many feet from the air and light, when the next storm that blew up the gulf carried tons and tons of seawater and dusty sand far over it. The highest of these dunes, standing about a mile from the sea, did not rise more than forty or fifty feet above the level of the beach; and while those in front, facing the gulf, were more generally detached from each other, those on the land side were in almost continuous ridges, running nearly north-east of the coast line. Though the northernly gales of winter may —nay must—add to the height and volume of these shifting barriers, and carry the materials of which they are composed far inland, yet as they don't seem to encroach further on the shore, and we could see no traces of scareed to bind the particles into a firm mass, we presumed that the fierce winds of summer sweeping down from the mountains threw the sea's discharged burden back again to the waters. and with it a vast quantity of sand from the plain.

A little shieling of millet-stalks stood far out, almost among the heavy rollers, and we could notice a few men, fishermen,

probably, doing something to their boats, which may have been damaged in the foul weather of last night and yesterday. Three or four miles farther on, we passed within two miles of a high point jutting out into the gulf, on which stood a temple and a few houses, looking very forlorn, though the sun gleamed brightly on them.

We were informed, on good authority, that in the old Chinese maps this little peninsula is marked as an island, and that the land has been gaining gradually on the sea all along the coast, a fact of which we had abundant proof before our journey was concluded.

Proceeding onward we cross one or two trifling streams, and thread through a boggy swamp, until we halt to breakfast at a large inn flanking an ancient village. It was a new erection, on a, to us, new principle, profusely done up in paint, and with many fringed triangular flags hung on the roof, in token, I suppose, of the happy termination of the builder's contract. A long building of the unchangeable blue brick, the plaster lines of which, between each layer, were agreeably whitened, while along the entire front a series of wide open windows, to be closed when needed by black shutters, made the place appear cool and airy beyond any houses we had seen before. The interior had the whole of one side snugly fitted up into neat little rooms, the small doors of which opened into the public hall. We supposed the other side to be arranged in the same manner from the number of tables and stools ranged along the earthen floor. The place looked secluded and cosy.

There was a little, quite a little, fuss when we entered, and the inmates scarcely knew what to do for a few minutes —whether to run for it by the back-door, or to yield to their fate. They soon recovered from their bewilderment, and did their best to satisfy our hunger, by boiling and steaming whatever could be found in the caldrons and stewpans that stood in the brick furnaces in the middle of the long room.