Our small quarter in a miniature quadrangle of the place was not to be despised, for the woodwork was clean and new, the window was as wide as one side of the apartment, and the 'kang' on which it looked was covered with freshly woven reed matting. Besides, there was the seabreeze, healthful and strengthening, smelling strongly of iodine, salt, bromine, and those other chemical elements that impart such a bitter and brackish taste to the air which was rolling in delicious zephyrs about us, making amends for the bad water they gave us to drink.

A travelling breakfast, half-an-hour's winks, with no one to rouse us, and we were in the saddle again, greatly to the disappointment of the poor people, who had deserted their homes and occupations for a peep; and scarcely got the opportunity before we were out of their sight.

The barren land was got rid of; trees, and gardens, and houses lined the road; and for the first and only time, in the light soil of a field of maize, we saw the plough—that primitive wooden implement of Chinese husbandry, constructed by the traditional Shin-nong, the second Chinese emperor, some two and a half thousand years before the Christian era—and probably as simple and rude as he left it —with the beam and single handle or shaft, the wooden share, and the narrow, nearly horizontal light iron coulter, that performs the functions of a mould as well as making a scratchy furrow but a few inches deep. It was drawn by a man at the end of the beam, the ploughman putting his shoulder to the perpendicular bar placed for that purpose, besides guiding the direction of the machine. Surely this is the reverse of ploughing by steam,—the very earliest effort of the human mind to abridge Agrarian toil.

We were about seven or eight miles from the hills, which now began to circle round before us, as if making towards the coast instead of proceeding parallel to it. Shan-hai Kwan, the town or fort in or at the Great Wall, was only

six miles off, we were told, and yet we could distinguish nothing of the world-famed barrier whose wonders have been sounded for centuries in the West; though, full of expectancy and eagerness, our eyes were strained to the very utmost in scanning the mountain-tops and sides, each of us fully bent on obtaining the first view.

Not a peak, pinnacle, or point presented the slightest hopes of being capable of transformation, by the most ardent observer or searcher, into a tower; and not a rift, an exposed line of granite, or natural escarpment on their sides could honestly be pronounced a wall built by the hands of man. Were we mistaken? had we come the wrong way? or, did the structure exist at all here? I felt inclined to ask, as we were passing through a village, and just clearing a clump of trees that grew near the village sanctuary. Another look in front made me aware of a long steep ridge ascending from the plain to the higher acclivities, and, near its upper edge, what might have been a long twisted streak in the side of a sandstone hill, otherwise covered with dark vegetation. It looked tolerably like the stone fences one often sees on hill-tops and sides in the highlands of Scotland or England, for dividing lands or enclosing cattle or sheep. Could this be the object so anxiously looked forward to? We were dubious, in truth somewhat desponding. Suddenly, on the border of the ridge, in clear relief against the intensely blue sky, a little square tower started out from the dark-grey background of granite, as if it had been a sentry-box for some lonely watcher on the heights: then another shred of brown line crept up to meet it, and down to join the piece we had first seen, and this curved gently towards the lower earth, hiding itself at last behind the trees and houses that intervened.

There could be no hesitation now in consoling ourselves for the suspense we had endured. The old frontier of Serica had been gained, and its ancient line of demarcation and

defence — a mighty work of human industry — stood above us with its twenty centuries of byegone years lying apparently lightly upon it, as it mounted with unbroken and flexible outline the irregular ascent. It was impossible to resist the enthusiastic impulses that gathered thickly in my breast. To meet my old and genial friend, the sea, once more, and to make the acquaintanceship of one of the world's greatest and, perhaps, most distant wonders all in one day, was a compensation I could never have anticipated a week ago. M—— was not behind in submitting to the blissful agitation of mind inseparable from such an occasion:—

> 'Joy had the like conception in our eyes,
> And, at that instant, like a babe sprung up.'

Another large village was entered, with a very wide level road passing through; and the houses, good sized and of brick, were standing on banks on each side. The inmates, male and female, were sitting under the trees or at their doors smoking the afternoon calamut, which they hastily dropped to run to the nearest and most convenient spots where they might stare at us, calling loudly to those within to hurry out and look at the strange men. Of course, uncontrollable curiosity was the predominant characteristic of all their sayings and doings. Exclamations and low whisperings of astonishment were in every corner. All was wonderful about us; all was incomprehensible on which they rested their vision.

In common courtesy we were bound to indulge them, and were pleased to observe that the ladies stood the test of our approach with the greatest *nonchalance*, sometimes merging into good-natured nods and bland smiles from their not at all disagreeable little faces. Those who had been rather slow or late in coming out made the most marvellous attempts to overtake the party with their Pandean feet

O those village urchins! those breeched, tailed, and

jacketed sprouts of manhood, figments of humanity, molecules of mischief and uproarious riot, whose smallest ration of existence seemed tainted with the largest adulteration of jocular precocity and playful annoyance! They buzzed about us like hives of bees, tiring us out a thousand times more by their importunities, remarks, shouts, and bodily obstructions than all our other ordeals of travel. They were the first to notice and attack us, the nimblest to follow on our track, to outflank us, to form a howling vanguard as we entered a town, and a yelling rearguard when quitting it; and were in full force here. What aggravated the case, the old and adult population were certain to lend them their countenance and applause, when they made any laughable remarks.

We bore it all with the fortitude of martyrs, not quite oblivious to the fact that we were once young ourselves, and would have madly entered the ranks of any mob to hoot and cry, did two North American Indians chance to patrole the streets of our boyhood's city in their war paint; but we made a point of never encouraging them in their hobgoblinish freaks by speaking or sharing in their merriment. Nevertheless, the most austere individual must have shaken the reefs out of his sides with mirth, had he heard the ringing peals of derisive laughter that broke out from these small fry, re-echoed by the parents on the banks, when I removed my turban to dry the perspiration, that never ceased rolling down forehead and face. One of the ringleaders caught a sight of my short-cropped hair, and bawled out, in his most humorous vein—'Look! look, ha, ha! The funny stranger has got no tail, he has got no tail!' and he tumbled and jumped like a mad elf.

About a mile beyond this hornet's nest we met a fair damsel, astride upon a donkey, led by a youth about twelve years of age who might either be son or brother to the gentle creature. She was masked by the disgusting [illegible] that glares out everywhere on the faces of these women, though

their necks may have been innocent of water for months, and as filthy as a beggar's. There was a most imposing get-up of the hair, in another style to any we had seen; a round ball on the top, shoe-horn behind, and wings on each side, with long silver transverse skewers sticking out about a foot

A Lady on Donkey-back.

from her head, and terminated by a button of red silk, and one or two little pennons waving behind. Enclosed in the capacious blue silk pelisse, no more of her could be seen than the lower part of her pink trousers, and the stumpy embroidered shoes, scarcely touching the stirrups.

The path was not a wide one, so we had to draw near each other in order to pass; but she never gave any external token of alarm, and faced us with an unmoved countenance, which she maintained until we had passed, though her sloe-black eyes,—dull beads compared to those at Lanchow,—were skimming busily over us the whole time. A very exaggerated specimen of the masculine gender, who may have been

husband or cicisbeo to the smooth-featured equestrian, walked after her with a ponderous lance, and looked rather jealous when we turned round to see how this mixture of filth and finery appeared from behind.

The highway widened suddenly into a level plain covered with broken stones and pebbles to a very inconvenient degree, and with but few houses to mar the view for two or three miles. On this the public road from Peking through Yung-ping opened to our left, and to our front we beheld what seemed an immense battlemented wall stretching from that on the elevated ground far away towards the sea, with some four towers quite new, the middle as massive looking and standing nearly as high and grand as those of Peking. A little farther on, and we came to an inn on somewhat of a grand scale, into the courtyard of which our gyp led the way. The small rooms on two sides of the quadrangle were externally clean and tidy, and the open doors were furnished with cane screens, that gave one a promise of fresh air and a cool bedroom. The yard itself was not very sweet in its trodden and unswept surface, but the numberless wooden troughs that almost filled it showed that it had often many occupants.

The landlord came out and civilly saluted us, and Ma-foo had even gone so far as to engage a room for our reception, when we were told that the town at the Wall was still four miles a-head; and as we considered it expedient to spend as much of our limited time as could be spared nearer that structure, we could not stay here, so thanked the disappointed proprietor for his politeness. and left. Afterwards, we regretted that we had not remained.

Our approach to the square bastions indicated the town of Shan-hai-Kwan. On the new map of the north-east provinces of China this town is named Ning-hai, but here it was only known by this name. We were much retarded by loose stones, and sunset was drawing near; after which we knew

that all communication with the place would be suspended by the closing of the gates.

On an upland near the foot of the hills, in the enclosure of an earthen bank, was a vacant camp of about a mile in length, composed of huts in rows and blocks, not unlike those of Aldershot, but perhaps more comfortable, because built of stone and mud. The strange feature of this plain was its stillness. Scarcely a creature was to be seen stirring for miles around, and there was this large and important city close by, as hushed and lifeless without its gates as if the people had all been dead, or hunted away by some fearful plague. There was the wall of ages, too, looking as old-fashioned, dreary, and obsolete as if it was standing ruinous in the valley of Mesopotamia, sole witness of the old world that had passed from before it like a shadow. Confronted by this venerable edifice in such a lonesome situation, it was impossible not to feel a tumult of indescribable sensations crowding in one's mind as we slowly approached its antiquated precincts, and I made a profound salaam to a monument that had survived the troubles and turmoils of barbarism and primeval civilisation, the rattling storms and tempests, arctic and antarctic extremes of temperature, changes of dynasties, and the ever transforming and demolishing fingers of Time.

We encountered nothing, with the exception of a row of open-fronted houses like inns, and a temple in ruins that stood in the way, and was inhabited by a single priest, ragged and dirty as any mendicant, of whom we enquired the easiest road to the gate. About sunset we crossed a fordable stream, the Shih-hô, or Stony river, on whose banks lay some rotting flats, deprived of occupation by the shallowness and rocky nature of the noisy foaming torrent. We were then close to a newly-raised plaster-work intended for defence, and spreading out in a wide semicircle to the city wall. Creeping through the constricted wooden gateway, we were once more launched into the Augean streets of a foul suburb, through

which we waded and sprawled, until M., who was riding the freshest pony, apprehensive of the gates being closed, hurried on in front with Ma-foo as interpreter, leaving me to bring on the half-foundered cart as best I could, and run the gauntlet in slow time of hundreds of people, who assembled on every available dry spot (they were scarce), and on the roofs of the houses, to look at the far-travelled strangers.

We profited by the exertions of a waggish Chinaman in a broad-leaved straw hat, who bestrode a jackass that was endowed with the faculty of tossing its rider over its ears whenever it had a mind to get rid of him. This man, by his good humour, had so far ingratiated himself into our groom's favour as to elicit all the necessary information about us. We soon had an audience increasing in numbers like a pack of jackalls round a piece of carrion, as he went in front trumpeting out, in his sonorous voice, 'Ta ying-kwoh li,' 'the great English nation comes'—a most unpardonable, as it was a most arrant exaggeration, to which, however, his hearers did not subscribe any great degree of credit or even attention, so wrapt up were they in the contemplation of the solitary and dusty 'English nation,' carried on the back of a tired pony through their unmerciful streets.

The suburb was only about half a mile in width, yet, before I had got half way through it, the thoroughfare that looked so vacant and dull but a few minutes before, was a moving causeway of animation and tumult. Like an old Highland pibroch or gathering, the movement was at first slow and distinct. A family would start out from a door here, another would sally out from a door there; a little shop ejected both owner and customers; a store would send forth a swarm of coolies, proprietor, and proprietor's sons. The buzz and commotion gradually increased as the movement quickened—doors opened everywhere—lanes and passages vomited crowds of crushing individuals; old and young hurry on faster and faster; decrepit old men, with a degree

of agility which must be not only unusual but unnatural to their physical condition, take extraordinary flying leaps across the puddles that separate them from us; the young and middle-aged race through them as if mad, or like the swine of Gergesenes, possessed of evil spirits, who would eventually drown them in their own ditches.

Away they tear, their tails behind,

'Like streamers flying in the wind,'

unheeding alike the mud, the tumbles, jostles, and tramplings, but forcing, squeezing, crushing, and urging on their way in the most ridiculous and outrageous manner, as the sounds of the said pibroch when it has gained its most vivacious prestissimo of commingling notes. Scouts flew in advance, like bearers of the fiery cross, who roused the sober tenants to the utmost verge of wonderment and excitability by their inflaming tidings, and gave the crippled, the old and young, the maids and matrons, an opportunity of contributing to the press and clamour, and the pestilential youngsters full time to brace themselves for the row and riot. So much 'bobbery,' so much rushing to and fro, perfectly upset me in the speedily-darkening *mêlée*, in which I was struggling to shake myself free; and had not the city gate been reached, and had I not perceived M. standing there to guide me through, I almost think I should have missed the way.

Fortunately, he had arrived just as the massive leaves of the gate were being closed, and contrived to get them kept open for me; and with as many of the rout and rabble as could force their active bodies through, I passed into the town. 'Under such circumstances, to examine the quality or extent of the place might well be put at the head of a list of impossible things. Our determination to overleap the banks, walls, and seas of heads, and obtain as much information as could be gained in a four-miles-an-hour pace through deviously tracked streets, was completely baulked.

We could only notice that the western gate, by which we entered, was like all other gates of Chinese towns we have seen here, in being double—the one at an angle to the other. This was done, the Tien-tsin lower orders say, because, besides being more difficult for the assault of a temporal enemy, this disposition of the entrances affords a far more safe and certain protection from the wily and subtle efforts of the fire-devil to effect an ingress, as his course is so straight, or his body is so unwieldy, that the sudden bend frustrates his incendiary propensities towards the interior economy of walled cities, as witches were imagined to be unable to cross a running stream in the superstitious days of England and Scotland. Thus are the houses guaranteed against fire by an insurance, that, to say the least of it, costs little beyond the faith necessary to rely on its efficacy.

This being one of the chief entrances to the 'Hill Sea Barrier,' as the title of the town implies, as well as one of the principal points of exit towards Old China from Mantchuria, it is strong and well cared for, being in height and width little inferior to the gates of the Chinese capital, and having on its summit one of those enormous ark-like structures that gives them such a massive appearance, with tiers of closely-set embrasures blocked by shutters with painted gun muzzles looking out on the passengers below.

The outer gate faced to the east, and a wretchedly smashed-up stone pavement, apparently of granite slabs, filled up the short space that led from it to the inner or western one. The houses and shops were old-looking, and all single-storied, and, as they had begun to light up for the evening, the feeble opaqueish illumination rendered by stray lanterns of paper, horn, or oiled silk, only made their everlastingly dusky interiors the more sombre and forbidding, and lent a more unfavourable shade to what must be at best but a mediocre Chinese town. The streets were small deltas thrown up by Niles whose sources were not difficult to trace,

and which were continually overflowing their borders, and leaving deposits of organic and inorganic matter quite inconceivable, in a nasal sense, out of China. It required a good bridle hand, an active pair of heels, and some severe olfactory stifling, to wend a zigzag course that was at all bearable; though our ponies were either so tired or so attached to the grateful perfumes as to incur some punishment, rather than forsake these luxuriantly balmy pools of their native land.

As the distance from the gate lengthened, so the excitement strengthened: the place was in a *furore* of unalloyed curiosity, of such a fervent quality that it should not be mentioned in the same breath with any marks of that feeling we had ever before witnessed. It was curiosity untarnished and unblemished by the humblest speck of surface refinement or shams at concealment, that made the surprised citizens look really as they felt, and that drove them to little acts unbecoming such a sedate people.

We used to think that M'Crie's description of 'John Knox is come,' in his Life of that worthy, was the best picture of astonishment and doubt we had read anywhere; and we remembered Shakespeare's delineation of a people in the same state, when he makes one of his characters declare that—'There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture; they looked, as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed; a notable passion of wonder appeared in them; but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if the importance were joy or sorrow.'

But we could not have formed a proper estimate of what a regular panic of amazement and feverish inquisitiveness was, until now. Burgher and boy, maid and matron, were alike infected. Everything was neglected for the time being; the entire population seemed to have gathered about us, and knew not what to think or do, except rush about

and make a confused din. They bore no resemblance to a people gifted with the slightest modicum of what we gave them credit for in a moderate degree, common sense. They acted

> *'Like to a sort of steers,*
> 'Mongst whom some beast of strange and foreign guise
> Unawares has chanced, far straying from his peers:
> So did their ghastly gaze betray their hidden fears.'

By the time we had reached the centre of the city, where stood a brick tower out of repair, and with four low arches to the cardinal points of the compass, through which ran the four main streets, each of them more slovenly looking than the one we were in, the thoroughfare was crammed with the crowd, and we were bothered by conflicting reports from a hundred throats as to the whereabouts of the best, or even any, inn at which we might put up, and thus escape from the jangling concourse.

Ma foo had been sent to discover one down some unfathomable higgledypiggledy lane, and we, to save ourselves from instant 'squash,' had to keep moving on, until we nearly traversed the breadth of the city,—which might be a half or three-quarters of a mile,—and were near the wall on the opposite side from that we entered by, when some one in the crowd called out, 'There is the mandarin's inn.' Sure enough there was the gate of an inn, flanked by good-looking houses, being hurriedly closed on our approach, and barred within by somebody whose fears made him very clumsy at the job.

Our prospects of rest for the night were desperate—and desperate cases require desperate remedies. We thought wistfully of the comfortable quarters forsaken a few miles off, where we might then have been enjoying the very few comforts that go to make up the sum total of a Chinese inn. But no time was to be lost in vain regrets. It was dark, and the town gates before and behind were shut and bolted,

and nothing would cause them to be opened again before daybreak next morning. This was the only house of refuge for us, and it must be undauntedly tried.

M. rode up to the doors, which the trembling hands of the craven mortal behind had not yet fastened; and first knocking, then inserting the end of his riding-whip between their gaping edges, with a gentle push it opened, and we rode in amid the crush of people who thronged around us, and who were deaf to all entreaties or commands of ours to stay behind. Seeing the necessity of clearing them out again, and keeping them out, I rode up to a terror-stricken person who I thought was the brave Horatius, the keeper of the gate, and called to him to close it quickly and send away the crowd. He gave me one look—only one— of the intensest horror and dismay I ever saw depicted on the countenance of man, and fled as if pursued for his life, turning neither to the right nor left until he had reached the top of the courtyard, where he jumped at a bound a flight of four or five steps, and disappeared, like a harlequin, through the doorway of a little building. Thither we were bound to follow him, as the only means of settling the question as to whether accommodation was to be given us in this establishment or not, or where we were to go for the night.

Accordingly dismounting, and making strong demonstrations to the foremost of the multitude with whips and fists, we struggled into what did not give us the idea of being either inn, shop, office, or private dwelling-house, but a lively mixture or combination of all four. One room, partially lighted up by a large square glass lantern, profusely covered with painted flowers and birds that looked particularly unhealthy and hectic above the weak glow of the flickering tallow dips within, contained a counter on the right with a long form in front of it. Before us was another counter or table, behind which, in the farthest corner of the room, sat a dumpy,

excessively nervous-looking little man, with a very round face, a very globular head, and a very flat physiognomy, twirling his thumbs in a frenzy of agitation and dread, and wearing such a profoundly comical expression of seriousness about his puffy little eyes and superboiled dumpling countenance—he might have been sitting for a portrait of Mr. Pickwick in one of his dilemmas—that, if it had been to save the night's lodging, we could not forbear laughing heartily.

Above his head was the household tablet in the form of a small temple, with a glass front, in which dwelt the little idol—a model to the life of the distressed mortal below—before whom glimmered and smoked a few attenuated cinnamon-coloured incense-sticks. To the left was a small room, so well supplied with lamp and candles, that every nook and niche was seen to be covered and clothed and filled with all sorts and conditions of books and papers, which for length and size looked ominously like hotel-keepers' bills, with the leading characteristics of which we had already become sufficiently familiar.

In this place, guarded as it was from that we were in by a low half door, the majority of the dwellers had taken refuge —inhived themselves in the innermost crannies, and behind tables, stools, and chairs, hiding their heads as if from damage or sudden death. Such a set of fools the world never before produced.

We stood in the middle of the floor near to a large brass brazier, with a charcoal fire striving to burn itself out of our presence, below an assemblage of kettles, pots, and other tea-making apparatus, wondering how long this shock was to last, and unable to make any breach in the absurdity of the chicken-hearted bumpkins, who seemed not to hear a word addressed to them by us. Our minds were made up to stay until they either complied with our wishes, or made them-

selves complaisant enough to direct us elsewhere, so we quietly and coolly seated ourselves on the form until Ma-foo should return from his search.

Not many minutes elapsed before he did show himself, and apprised us that there was no other inn in the town (?), and he did not know what we were to do. He was told to enquire, once for all, if the people of this house would oblige us by letting us have a room and forage for our ponies on payment, and to inform them that we were travellers, and not wild beasts or savages at large. On hearing M. talk in this strain to their countrymen, the cravens picked up a few grains of courage, and risked themselves in an upright posture behind their respective bulwarks, though their fidgety movements betrayed the uneasiness they felt at heart when we looked at them.

Ma-foo advanced to my acquaintance, whose pigmy features had undergone a change from the workings of the diluted dregs of evanescent spirits he had managed to retain in their small abode, and enquired as he was bid. The little man, who, we surmised, was the landlord, screwed his lips into a purse mouth, elevated his scrubby eyebrows until they almost ran foul of the blue shaven crown, and bringing out his body—so nicely swaddled and swathed-up in the softest and whitest of cottons, and his answer at the same time, leant on the table with his plump childish paws to give dignity and force to his sentiments, which were compressed into a stern 'mae-yo,' and seemed resolved to adhere to his negative decision, so long as his adherents and supporters showed front, and no injury was done to his rotund carcase.

Our groom remonstrated and argued; little pig-tail was unmercifully obstinate, and growing quite imperious. Every word was echoed in the courtyard by the fagging mob, now so surcharged with presuming boldness and unbearable inquisitiveness, arising from the position assumed by their compatriot within, as to enter the house and gather round us

with the greatest audacity and brusqueness, until we were almost suffocated.

When M. requested them to leave, and not obstruct the entrance of the air we so much required, they began to laugh and giggle, and showed no disposition to move, except farther into the room. Their esteem or awe, it was plain, had vanished, and we were to be the subjects of their mirth and ridicule, unless these were to be restored to them again by the sole measure at our disposal. Respect us they must, and that attribute, in the words of Greville, 'is better procured by exacting than soliciting it.'

A charge is made among them with a riding-whip, and, without a blow being inflicted on their backs, they flee as would a crowd at a fair, did a lion or a tiger escape from its den and spring among the horrified spectators.

But this suspended all diplomatic correspondence between our zealous representative and the head of the house. Little man and nearly all the others look aghast and relapse into their abject terror again. One droll old fellow we had not noticed before, with an orbicular laughing face, a pair of keen glancing eyes, and a large balloon paunch, gets himself on the other side of the counter a good way off, and grins and chuckles the whole evening, as if he saw something very funny in our perplexing situation, or in the terror and drivelling of his co-mates.

In a few minutes our host stealthily beckons over, and is seen whispering to, a long, bow-legged Chinese, who is dressed in white with large dark brown thigh-reaching gaiters, and this party moves quietly towards the door, keeping the hot brazier between himself and our side of the room. At another signal a domestic comes out of his lurking-place and proceeds to give us tea from one of the kettles, for which we try to feel grateful, though we know it is given only to keep us in play until something turns up, as we would have baited and fed a wild beast until a servant had

time to bring us a gun for its destruction. The groom is sent off once more on a survey for a house of any sort that will admit us for a few hours.

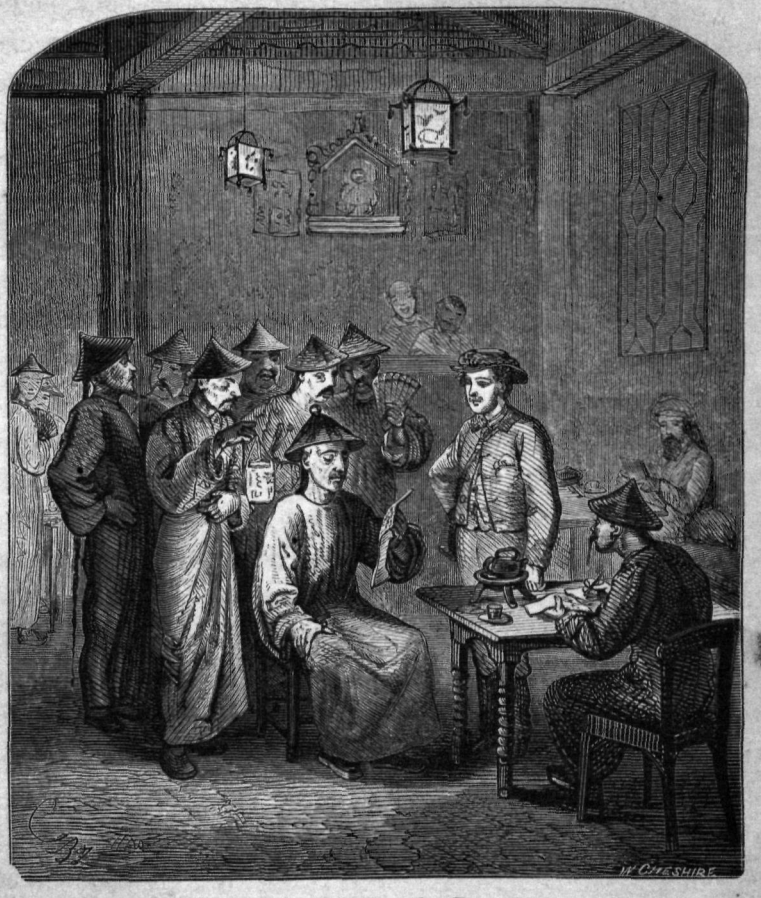
In the meantime a mandarin's clerk or lictor, a strong bouncing fellow with a good deal of false authority hanging stiffly about his thick neck and wide shoulders, comes in, and after a small confabulation with his unserene majesty, begins to reason with us, telling what we are sorry to believe to be a small narrative of fibs and crammers about the want of room, every place occupied, and the impossibility of giving us any assistance.

For the first time since leaving we must have recourse to our passports, and demand as a right that aid which they refused. The papers were produced, and evidently surprised the whole of the inmates, who thronged round to read them. The big man shakes his head, and the others retire unmoved. I wonder what they thought!

Ma-foo comes back again with the same old story and the same old repulsive expression about his features that they wore whenever he was unfortunate.

Almost at the same time a great bustle was heard outside: a lot of people rushed in, and as quickly rushed out. One of us got up and looked at them: there was a good deal of confusion and shouting and rumbling; all in the room, ourselves among the number, looked as if they expected something wonderful. At last, relief came — the mountain brought forth, not a mouse, but a mandarin — a tall, bony apparition of a man, in a long white robe, that lay on his beefless framework like a winding sheet, with deep-set eyes in a Dante-shaped head, and an aquiline nose, long, thin, and rather hooked, above a scanty moustache of about a dozen lengthy black hairs on each side that grew from the narrow upper lip of a large mouth. His face was so European, and so unlike the general run of Chinese faces, that, in the middle of the sensation created by his entrance, I

could scarcely take my eyes from it. He was also pale and thoughtful-looking, I imagined, as he walked in with an easy dignified air, carrying a fan, which the sultriness of the night caused him to use vigorously, in a long skeleton hand, the thumb of which was encircled by a wide heavy ring of greenish-white jade stone.



Inn at the Wall—the useless Passport.

This official was accompanied by a small army—a perfect *posse comitatus* of retainers and ragamuffins, bearing huge lanterns of oiled paper covered with mystic characters, and wearing conical straw hats to distinguish them from their scampish brethren outside. They also strode in with a

freedom and a mock military bearing, that would at other times have excited our risibility. But this was no moment to indulge in humour. All the Chinese in the establishment rise to their feet, look profound, and salute the great man by joined hands in front, which he returns, then gives us, *en passant*, several jerks of his almost fleshless head and neck, and with such violence that we fear the osseous structure will snap and tumble the skull at our feet. He at once enters into business with the little host, who is now himself again, and is very active in helping the big lean man to a cup of scalding tea; all the others join in the conversation unasked. The lictor has got rid of a good quantity of the pompous display he made before the arrival of his superior, and now speaks in a servile tone: several young dandies, evidently swells and men about town, come skipping in noiselessly in their white-soled shoes, with dazzling white socks forming a distinct stratum between the black uppers of the shoes and the bottoms of their blue or brown silk bandage-tied leggings, and white silken coats. Their queues are faultlessly plaited, and with the long embraided plaits of black silk cord that form a tassel at the end, are almost sweeping the ground. Everything about them bears the impress of dollishness and affectation as they swagger, strut, or skip up to where the mandarin sits, make a deep but somewhat offhand bow to that personage and to the elders of the party, and then, with a good amount of levity, betake themselves to the office, from whence they can drawl or lisp, if their dandyism carries them so far into civilisation, and have a satisfactory look at us; the jabbering members of the congregation outside, meanwhile, making tenfold more noise than they had yet done, and striving to press themselves through the heterogeneous body-guard of the 'Ta-yin.'

We had read in a translation of an old Chinese record an amusing account, which we then thought a burlesque or satire, of the first appearance in modern times of Europeans

in the 'Empire of the Centre,' in which it was stated that—

'During the reign of Ching-ti (1506), foreigners from the West, called Fa-lan-ki, or Franks, who said they had tribute, abruptly entered the Bogue,* and, by their tremendously loud guns, shook the place far and near. This was reported at Court, and an order returned to drive them away immediately, and stop the trade. At about this time also, the Hollanders, who in ancient times inhabited a wild territory, and had no intercourse with China, came to Macao in two or three large ships. Their clothes and their hair were red, their bodies tall; they had blue eyes deep sunk in their heads.. Their feet were one cubit and two-tenths long, and they frightened the people by their strange appearance.'

But that was a long time ago; and the Chinese, in every part of China, ought to have become tolerably familiar with the likenesses and characters of the various nations who had traded, and fought, and travelled among them since then.

Even of Lord Macartney's visit, the chronicler used mild language when he said that, 'in the fifty-eighth year of Kien-lung, the English, from the north west extremity of the world, and who from ancient times to the present had never reached the Middle Land, passed over an immense ocean, and came to the Court of the Universal Sovereign.'

Here we were within two hundred miles of that Court, and yet were looked upon with as much amazement, curiosity, and terror, as if we had been the primal Dutchmen or Franks who gave them such an outrageous opinion of Hesperians in general by their loud guns and *outré* figures. Our hair was neither red, nor our eyes blue; our noses might be a little longer than theirs, but were not so odd as the hawk-beak of that mandarin who sat discussing our fate with so much gravity. The garb we wore might be dusty and weather-

* The chief embouchure of the Canton river.

stained, but it was not a flaming red; and our boots, in which we did not stand very tall, though of a strange material, did not come quite up to the cubit and two-tenths in length of foot. So, what in the name of wonder did they behold in us to excite them so rabidly?

Even at Talien-whan bay, during the encampment of the army there, when we happened to ride a long way into the country, and through populous villages, we found the simple-minded rustics far more decorous in their behaviour towards us, and reasoning far more sensibly than these mad towns-people at our appearance among them. They said we were 'Yang-yin,' or Men of the Sea; that we lived always on those ships which they saw in the bay, leading in them a nomadising, seaweedy existence; and that when our legs were cramped by long confinement, we stopped at the nearest land, and lived in the white canvas houses until well again. With this, they seemed to rest content. Not so these Shan-hai-kwanites. Nothing would tranquillise them, and they made themselves very bothersome and nonsensical about us.

Negotiations were going on meanwhile; the matter had been formally explained to the magistrate by some of those about him; and Ma-foo was called up, and underwent a rather close examination, after arranging his tail down his back, and making a half-curtsey, half-bow to his worship.

The mandarin, having seen and scrutinised our passports with no evident satisfaction, endeavoured to elicit all sorts of information from our servant, merely for the sake, we thought, of asking questions and doing something—such as enquiring if there were any more Englishmen at Tien-tsin when we left? were we really going to Newchwang? what were we, and where did we come from? and so on.

This over, M. got into conversation with the functionary, and was particularly asked why he came such a long, weary distance overland to Newchwang, when he might so much more comfortably and readily have gone by sea: all the time

shirking the main point—the matter of lodgings—which was still as much in abeyance as on our arrival. M. mentioned this; but the man of probity, alas! commenced shuffling and prevaricating in a very undignified way. He was gently reminded that the passport contained a request that the civil and military authorities should give us protection and aid, in case of necessity; and that this was a case in which we required aid. He, however, continued to demur and hang fire, until the order given to us by Tsung, the Imperial Commissioner at Tien-tsin, happened to be pulled out of its bag. This was greedily laid hold of, and appeared to have far more effect than the harsh, stiff, unpalateable paper of the English passport; for no sooner had his quick eye ran over its contents than a change became visible. Our names were written down on a sheet of whitey-brown tissue paper, obsequiously brought in with the writing-slab and brush by the little landlord; this was put in the hands of an attendant, and the business of the Court was over—we were to be accommodated.

Things now wore quite another aspect, through the talismanic spell wrought by the potent fingers of Tsung. We were friends, and for the first time began to interchange civilities. M.'s silver snuff-box was unpocketed and handed round, much to the admiration of everybody within and without; the snuff was plastered in brown layers about nostrils and upper lips; and after having well scalded our tongues with boiling water, the Ta-Yin took his leave, with the same clash of chair-bearers and bustle of lantern-carriers with which he had made his advent in less auspicious moments, bestowing on us a majestic bow, and another twist of the mummified neck and skull before he departed, which formality we took care to return with as much grace as 'barbarians' could be supposed to possess.

Lanterns were procured by the domestics, and we were shown our apartments, which we soon perceived were not in the most favoured portions of the house, but at the bottom of

a back court-yard, crowded with mules, ponies, and donkeys. A little wall enclosed the dwarfish space in front of the outer door, leading to as filthy a kennel as we had been in since the night we left Tien-tsin. Musty, dusty, and foul, it had not been occupied for years. The walls were black and bare, and gave ample refuge and a permanent home to hundreds of gigantic spiders, whose extensive meshes did not suffice to thin the numbers of the thousands of flies who swarmed about our heads, buzzing and droning, delighted with the new arrivals.

The room contained nothing but old lumber and rubbish, and the windows were falling to pieces; and altogether we were as heartily disgusted at our treatment by these officials and noddies of landlords as we could well be. Their object, we had too much reason to believe, was to humbug us in every possible way, and in this particular instance they were successful; for finding that they might not turn us out of the house with impunity, they gave us the most disgraceful pigstye in the place; aware that we had no alternative but to remain and do as best we might until the morning.

Though we exhibited no acerbity or bitterness at such conduct, but plainly and dispassionately told those who lighted us down how very unkind it was to treat tired strangers so badly, we felt angry at being so duped and tricked. While we were at dinner, and trying to compensate for the fatigues and fasts of a long day, and the vexations of a humbugging evening, under the *surveillance* of countless eyes glaring everywhere around us, a small military mandarin — in so far as wearing a low grade brass button made him small — for he was as tall as most men, as scraggy as any man could be, and had shocking bad teeth, entered the room without any ceremony, followed by all the tag-rag and bob-tail these petty officials collect round them, and these again backed by masses of people of nearly all ages.

He was a vulgar-looking man, and made a slight genu-

flexion as he sat down unbidden on the edge of the brick oven-bed on which we were to sleep. His business was quizzing, and as we paid him no very marked attention, but thought him rude and officious in disturbing us at that late hour, Ma-foo was again subjected to the tearing and rending operation. When this was effected he began on us. My companion, who, doubtless, thoroughly appreciates the Chinese character for what it is worth, and could see as far as many into the deceitful motives that too often govern their acts of intercourse with foreigners, treated him very coolly and indifferently as he deserved. He wished to see our passports, and when he had got them tried to copy out some of the Chinese words, but either from excitement or timidity he could not write, and a young scribe in his promiscuous suite stepped forward to the rescue and copied what he desired. He then asked to see Tsung's missive, but this was too much of a good thing to be allowed.

M. told him that the production of that private document was neither necessary nor justifiable so long as we possessed those ordained by the Treaty (a single copy of which we did not see in any town or village along the whole of our journey), and that they alone must suffice to carry us to our destination; at the same time—bringing out the manuscript in question—to show what value we placed upon it, we threatened to tear it up into fragments before his face, and ended by asking the astounded brass button if the authorised document was good or bad? if it was the former, why did they wish to see Tsung's? if the latter, we would return to Peking or Tien-tsin in the morning, and complain of the unfriendliness, stupidity, or perversity of the officials at the Great Wall.

The fellow felt he dared not ignore the printed form, and said it was good, but asked if we would oblige him with a look at the other, as he must see it before going away. Nothing but our tired condition, the tempestuous crowd surging outside, that excluded every breath of air from us, and the

sense of heart-sickness that arose from these annoyances, induced us to lend him the coveted paper, which, having perused, he returned. Some sherry was offered, but he would not touch it; and in return he presented his snuff bottle or bottles — two curious china affairs fastened back to back like the Siamese twins—but we also declined.

Thus ended the passport business for the night. We prepared to go to sleep, and the boorish mandarin took the hint; but before he went, M. enquired if we could ascend the hills in the morning. This we were anxious to do, because our route hitherto between this place and the Pehtang-hô had been somewhat enigmatical, because of some great inaccuracies in the most recent maps which we had provided ourselves with; and as the end of the Great Wall abutting on the Gulf had been properly fixed as to latitude and longitude in the surveys made by our navy, we had only to take the bearings of several important and conspicuous landmarks that we had passed and noted, with the wall, to enable us to form some idea of the progress we had made.

Perhaps there was also a latent desire to scramble to the tops of those great peaks over which the Titanic fence wandered, and to judge for ourselves whether the wonder on the heights was as wonderful as it appeared to be on the plain and the lower levels of the sloping hills. We longed once more, in fact, to bend a willing knee against the side of the steepest mountain we could find, and where so convenient? where could the exertion serve so many purposes as here? The modern Excelsiors had climbed the highest peaks all over the world almost, and why should these rugged and eld steeps, so long locked up in inaccessible restrictions, escape?

We thought there could not be the slightest shadow of an objection to such a proposal, but we were wrong, for to our astonishment the mandarin was as ready with a No, as if it

had been in his mouth when he was born. Why could we not go to the hills? Because there were no roads, and the hills were difficult of access, and many things might happen —and every obstacle will be thrown in your way, he might have said; but we wished to hear no more. So long as the difficulty rested with ourselves we were content to risk the absence of roads, and to rely on limbs that had been pliant enough over heather and steep rock not many years ago.

We were visited no more that night by officials or myrmidons of the local government to *risé* our passports, but we were pestered by relays of scouts from the crowd, who kept continually labouring to fill the room with their bodies and stench, notwithstanding they saw others expelled in a rather ignominious manner. The people behaved not violently, certainly, but like spoilt children. No matter whether we were eating, writing, or sleeping, enter they would, though they knew they were forbidden to do so, and then commence handling the various things that lay about the room or on the ricketty table with the prying rudeness of a lot of boobies. Others would come, pull their pipes out of the leather bags, fill them, and having ignited the tobacco at the candle, seat themselves down deliberately on our bed without seeking permission or consulting our tastes.

When we unfortunate travellers were not sharp in turning them out they would fill the apartment full of smoke, and puff it into our faces until the cloudy atmosphere is almost unfit for purposes of respiration. A lot more would draw near to look at us, and cough and spit as if they had swallowed a gross of fish bones, and one half of them had lodged about the ticklish nooks in their throats Presently we would be treated to an emission of all sorts of ventriloqual sounds, unpleasant to listen to, being intensely suggestive of bad manners and garlic; and they do all this with the most unblushing effrontery. Finally we drove them out and bolted the door.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SPY SYSTEM — THE POLICE — THE FRONTIER GUARD-ROOM — A POLITE OLD SOLDIER — FRENCH POLISH AT THE GREAT WALL — THE THUMB-MOMETER — OFFICIAL OBJECTIONS TO OUR ASCENDING THE MOUNTAINS — A CONFERENCE — WOO-SHI — A SULTRY MORNING — I ATTEMPT THE ASCENT ALONE — STAVELY PEAK — TAKING BEARINGS — THE END OF THE GREAT WALL — ITS PRESENT CONDITION AND WONDERFUL COURSE — ACCOUNTS OF TRAVELLERS — A VAST CONCEPTION AND A MONUMENT OF INDUSTRY.

WE got up about five o'clock next morning, and found to our annoyance and vexation that a system of espionage had been established on our special behoof; and that some spies, in the shape of great big Chinamen, cleanly dressed, with the semi-official conical hat and red silk crown fringe, were comfortably seated in the passage outside the door, where probably they had passed the night. As soon as one of them saw M., he came forward and demanded to be shown Tsung's passport again, saying that the others were of no value, and that we could not be permitted to go up the hills. He had been taught his lesson very well, but his peremptory audacity met with no response of any kind, as M. simply refused to have anything to do with him. We proceeded to dress, and get ready for our expedition as quickly as possible, in order to have it over, and depart from such a troublesome region about midday — firmly resolved never to have anything more to do with such officials, if we could help it. We were in such a hurry that we took but one cup of tea each, and a small biscuit, intending to breakfast when the work was done, which, we fancied, would not take more than three or four hours at the utmost. But in this we deceived ourselves.

We were determined to attempt the ascent of the nearest peak, to measure its height, and to get the bearings of the various places we were about to pass; and for these purposes we took with us a rather large Aneroid barometer, and a very clumsy iron thermometer—the only one we could procure at Tien-tsin—with a small pocket compass. Though so bent on this project, however, we were not the less ready to desist from this or any other transaction that might be wrong, be regarded as offensive to the authorities, or give rise to troublesome after-consequences. We moved with the spirit of the Treaty ever before us, and a desire to conciliate, rather than squabble with the people we met on the way; and if they gave us any sufficient reason why we should not do this or that, we would have gladly reconciled ourselves to their wishes. Such, I am sure, were the feelings that influenced my companion, as well as myself, that morning, and the line of conduct that was to guide us in our dealings with the equivocating mandarins.

One of the runners had watched our preparations, and though we were but a few minutes in putting on the lightest suit we possessed, and in drawing on the lightest pair of boots of our small assortment—never expecting that we should have a difficult task in climbing what did not appear to be very lofty mountains—the man had vanished before we left the room. The others preceded and followed us, as much to observe our movements as to keep off the people They were waiting in hundreds at that early hour outside the inn, and were with difficulty kept in check by these shouting Goliaths. The streets were wide and roomy for ordinary traffic; but like those of large European cities, Rome excepted, before the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, they were unpaved, and impassable in very many places from the lodgement of rain and surface water. The shops looked as if they drove some trade, and were numerous enough in proportion to the number of dwellings.

Near the inn was a government building, with glaringly painted gates, and two great guardian dog-monsters, covered with black and brown circular spots, defending the doorway. A few paces further on was another door, garnished in the same grotesque manner, which was supposed to belong to the Custom-house, as this town, we were told, levies a tax on the exports and imports that pass through to or from Mantchuria. Not far from this we came to an archway that had once been substantial and strong, but was now in a fissured and tottering condition, and supported below by a semicircular wooden structure, propped up by beams of timber. 'This was one of the venerable arches of the wall which bisected this, the eastern, side of the town in its course to the beach and the mountains.

On the other side we entered another portion of the town enclosed on the east side by its own wall, and containing a continuation of the chief thoroughfare, with many houses and shops; and, most important of all, on the left hand, as we passed along, there was the guard or garrison-room near the outer gate. At that hour we were surprised to find it clustered with soldiers—or rather unarmed attendants—clothed in long skirts of white, primrose-coloured, or blue, gauze and brocades, with a variety of coloured buttons on their hats, and apparently looking out for us rather anxiously. As we approached, they one and all made way for us, and pointed to the guard-room door. We could not at first comprehend their meaning, and thought for a moment that all our prospects of getting up to the hills were at an end; but on looking towards the few steps that raised the floor from the ground, we saw an old blue-button mandarin, surrounded by a small host of officers, waving his hand to us, and looking remarkably kind and civil.

This augured well for us; the old fellow's smile was like an oasis in the Sahara, after so much tantalising and thwarting; and as he beckoned us in, I thought of a traveller who

had not journeyed quite so far out of the way, and yet had cause to exclaim, 'Hail! ye small sweet courtesies of life, for smooth do ye make the road of it.'

We ascended the steps at once, and as our unknown friend was evidently above the rank of those we had been contending with, and saluted us most cordially with hands clasped before his breast, as did the others, we made the best attempt to reciprocate the welcome thus unexpectedly given to us; and were then conducted into the room—a very naked collection of boards and bricks, with a sort of raised couch or platform, on which the commandant of the garrison—for such he turned out to be—seated himself, after he had seen us seated by him on another couch. I wondered if the Chinese general who commanded the troops in this then important town, and who first called in the wild Tartars of Liau-toong to assist him—thus giving them an opportunity of usurping the government—had sat in that nicely cushioned seat when the fierce Mantchus were hovering without the wall, ready to pounce upon anything that would forward their schemes—rob, murder, assault, storm the bastions, or batter the trusty gates!

The national beverage was brought in by a waiter, and everyone was supplied with a quantum of the hot infusion, a stimulant to conversation, and a generator of kindly sympathies. M. did his utmost to get up and carry on a chat with the old soldier—and if I could dispose myself to be a judge on that occasion, I should say he was eminently successful, and acquitted himself in the enunciation of the appalling smashing up of sounds that follows a most active series of lingual and laryngeal gymnastics in a way that must have astonished himself. Ma-foo, our interpreter-in-chief, had been left at the inn to superintend the cooking of mutton-chops, sweet potatoes, and vegetables, *ad libitum*, for breakfast, therefore my companion was driven on his own

resources, which appeared, by the way, to become augmented and more useful every day.

While the gossip was going on, I had time enough to jot down our entertainer's likeness in my memory, and without staring at him too markedly, to observe that underneath the beautifully-wrought and bleached straw hat, surmounted by the deep blue glass ball, and thatched by a long layer of red floss silk, there was a perfect set of Mongolian features. His age might be about fifty-eight, though he looked older, and his brow and cheeks were a good deal wrinkled; but the agreeable face was sadly marred on a near scrutiny, by a shocking set of carious front teeth, which the thick averted lips, or the straggling hairs of the moustache, could not hide. This is a common enough defect among the lower orders in the north, who never clean their teeth from youth to old age; but in the upper classes, it looks much worse and creates unpleasant feelings.

There was a kingly dignity about him that was winning, and his address was free and easy while talking to men of another country for the first time. Unlike the others, he wore a long robe of light-blue figured silk, confined around the waist by a narrow plaited belt, with two buckles of cornelian in front, and a pair of enormous black satin boots, with canoe toes and ponderous soles—doubtless his best summer suit donned for our reception.

The complimentary questions were first exchanged. Ages were requested, in which he could not understand why one of us being the same age as the other should wear a longer beard, as it was the sign of a greater number of years.

What was our destination, and how did we propose to return, by sea or by land?

By sea.

At this he affected to be very sorry that he should not have the honour of inviting us to dine with him, and

mimicked weeping so very well, that we could not forbear being amused, and showing that we were so. As he went on, his gestures got stronger in their significance, and his pantomimic expressions more ludicrous; but if clever in this department, he was much more so in displaying every moment the most flattering daubs of French polish, and

A polite old Soldier

trying to excel in giving us a high opinion of ourselves by very windy words.

Everything was good that we had; even the passports—which he prayed might be shown him, in order that he might register our worshipful names—were acknowledged to be good; and all good things were indicated at once, as such, by his holding up a thumb with a very long nail and a very expensive jade ring on it. When he felt the leather of our boots, up went the thumb; when he fingered the cloth of our trousers up went the thumb; when told that we had travelled so many li for so many days, the thumb was

cocked very high; indeed the thumb-mometer seemed ever to be on the ascendant, until M. mentioned our going up the hill; then the little finger went up. It was bad.

Was there any particular objection, or any particular order prohibiting strangers from going up there?

No.

Then why could we not go up?

The thin horny-tipped little finger was elevated like a jack-in-the-box, while he told us that the sun was very hot, there were no roads, the hills were a long way off, and covered with stones, and the Chinese never went up there.

There were no other objections?

No.

Then we were inclined to attempt the ascent, as we did not much mind the sun, and stones and hills were familiar to us.

A little more talk, and M.'s snuff-box was honoured by an upright thumb, and the abstraction of a small shovelful of snuff. Then the little china bottles were drawn out from their recesses and passed to us. These toyish sneeshin-mulls had a neat little stopper of cork or wood, topped by jade or rose-quartz, in which was fastened a regular bone or ivory spoon, exactly like some we have seen in Scotland; but the Chinese did not carry their pungent dose to the nostrils by it, but only used it to transfer a little heap of the light brown over-dried nose provender to the back of their hand, and then from this to press it over the nasal extremity and lip, with a chance of a fraction of it penetrating to the excitory nerves only by the ordinary act of inspiration. I never yet saw a snuffer sneeze, though the social pinch is with them notorious; so that when my unaccustomed organ of smell rebelled at the unsavoury introduction, and repetitions of sneezing yells made the walls ring again, they all laughed, and the thumb-mometer again rose in praise.

But the morning was wearing on, and we had tarried

among them long enough, so we rose to take our leave, and the general, or whatever his rank might be, accompanied us to the door with great politeness.

The other officers about him were really fine men—tall, strong, and well-proportioned as the sons of Anak, with some very jovial cheerful faces among them. All had rigged themselves out in modest-coloured summer crape or muslin gowns, the low conical hat, and black satin boots, and with the dress bound easily round the middle, they looked comfortable and cool as they fanned themselves, and toyed with these feminine appendages, which they know so well how to use in sultry weather. Those who were mounted at times—the cavalry men—had the side slits in skirts very long, and tags and twisted buttons stitched on in various places, to tuck them up by when in the saddle. Not a single man was armed with anything beyond his fan, neither did we see a weapon about the room save two or three sabres: a rather singular circumstance, we thought, considering that this was a large town—in a comparative sense only, for few of the northern towns we have seen come at all near the populousness or size of what are called large towns in the South—and a very important pass, in a Chinese point of view.

When we left, three or four of these gentlemen escorted us, but at a very respectful distance, and without speaking, except to the crowd. Walking through the gateway, which was not bastioned in the ordinary manner—as the Great Wall, passing but a short distance within it, obviated the necessity for such a work—we are beyond the artificial boundaries, on the Mantchu side of the country, and turning suddenly northward, speed alongside the Great Wall, as near as the narrow footpath will permit.

We walked sharply and hurriedly — for it was past six o'clock — and our guard behind did the same, conversing in a gay undertone at first, but soon dropping this for a

detached remark at lengthening intervals, growing fainter and fainter, until they were puffing and struggling, and as uncomfortable as stranded whales, the ground between us increasing with every stride. They must have given in at about a mile, for when we had got about two miles up towards the foot of the range, and were still pursuing a narrow track through low crops of wheat, we heard some one shouting loudly after us that there was no road, and, looking back, discovered that the bulky men had been beaten off, and that there was a young understrapper with a brimmed-up hat, and lots of red cord dancing about its top, running after us as hard as he could. He was telling us a manifest story, and violating the integrity of his countrymen by a statement slightly incorrect in point of fact, as we at once proved to him by a reference to the road we were then on. He asked if we were determined to proceed, and was answered that we were; and, to convince him of this, we resumed our gentle promenade — at which token of our resolution he turned back.

There was no accounting for this species of want of candour on the part of the authorities, and we were a little puzzled in what light to view it, considering that they had already admitted the absence of orders or cogent reasons to intercept us, except in those little impediments which Nature offered, and which we were content to surmount, if practicable, at our own risk. Yet here was a squad of *gens d'armes* dodging and bawling about, and all but ordering us back, acting, without a doubt, under instructions from our courteous friend in the guard-house, whose motives for not telling us in plain language that we were about to do wrong, we could not even guess at for some time.

There is a sentence in the Chinese vocabulary — a sort of idiomatic expression, for which those who have read Mrs. Hamilton's homely Scotch tale of the 'Cottagers of Glenburnie,' would find an equivalent in Mrs. McClartey's

inevitable answer to every suggestion for the improvement of her slatternly household — 'I canna be fashed; it will be weel enough in time;' and the too familiar sentiment of to-day, 'I can't be bothered; do anything you like, if it doesn't trouble me,' would be found an approximation to it in sense as it would in deed.

This shibboleth of negligence and procrastination is 'Woo-shi;' and only to its employment by the military governor, when we asked for information and permission, and his deputing these small fry to act in accordance therewith, and to do as best they might without disturbing him, could we attribute the annoyance we encountered.

When within about a mile of the mountains, M. could go no farther with safety, for the morning had turned out so very unusually sultry and oppressive, and the heat so stifling and distressing, that he felt its effects far more than he had done since we left Tien-tsin; and, I must confess, I felt sick a little and rather fatigued. There is something particularly morbid and malevolent in the summer-morning's sun of North China, before it has reached very high in the heavens, and just when its beams are sweeping horizontally or obliquely about the neck and body; and at these times, when exposed, I have always experienced sensations of giddiness and sickly heaviness, unknown at other periods of the day; and I was not alone in this respect. To those who would sanction the imprudences of ordinary travellers, and encourage their erratic wanderings in this direction, we would parody Lord Chesterfield's advice about the evening dews, and say —

> 'The rays of the morning most carefully shun,
> They're the sickliest darts thrown out by the sun.'

I volunteered to go alone, though, had I been certain that remaining on the plain without venturing on the achievement of what we had promised or threatened, would be

construed to our disadvantage, I should not have done so. Taking the bulky instruments, which I was obliged to carry in my hands, and leaving M. in a shady clump of fir trees near some cottages, I started off. I had not gone many yards before two mandarins, mounted on ponies, came rattling up, and called out some indistinguishable jargon; but my companion justly divined their intentions, and bade me take no notice of them, while he kept them in play below.

Presently the base of the mountains was gained, but so precipitous and rugged were they in every aspect, that the difficulty was where to select a place from which to commence the ascent. The ravines between the advanced spurs were so narrow and steep, and so thickly strewn with rough masses of rock, that to walk through them to a more favourable side was impossible with the light boots I had on; and the sides of the heights before me were so savagely perpendicular to climb, even for a person with both hands at liberty, that I avow, though I had already done my share of craggy rocks and steep hills. I was now rather taken aback. I looked wistfully towards that moderately-sloping chine, some mile or so off, up which the wall rose from the plain to its loftiest elevation; but the ground between was so broken that a long time would have been consumed in getting to it, and then it was problematical enough if the pinnacles overhanging it would have been more easy of access.

Topped they must be, however, and that without delay, or the Philistines will be upon me, and deter me for an indefinite time. As the very conspicuous tower of the wall on the loftiest peak, over which that barrier wends, and which is almost the loftiest peak in the range from whence we are looking at it, is beetling immediately overhead, and was the one fixed upon for our observations, I at once face the difficulty by taking a zigzag course up the side of what I imagined to be the least formidable of the nearest mountains.

The massy angular *débris* of unknown centuries overcome, the clambering process commenced in earnest.

Searching around before rising, not a mark of a path to indicate the direction — not a sheep or a goat track even — is to be scanned; so I have to stretch out as best I may, fighting up against pieces of slope, carpeted with a thin, short grass, that to the soles of my boots feels like smooth ice, and is almost incapable of affording a foothold. After, perhaps, two or three hundred yards of this, bare vertical sheets of rock would suddenly meet me and bar further advancement that way, necessitating retrogression and fresh trials in different directions, until, after an hour and a half's as hard work as the best-trained mountaineer could encounter — over obstructions and wearying impediments, more harassing to the mind than those of the Aonian mount, and more leg-tiring than I found the more than 3,000 feet of stony ravine that conducted me to the top of the Table Mountain at Cape Town, on a South African midsummer's day — I won the coveted peak, and completed the ascension by toiling into the summit of the little ruined tower that had seemed so far above my strength from the plain below.

Unmingled pleasure, and I fear a large instalment of vanity, were uppermost in my breast as I stood on that pinnacled mountain-top where the foot of European had never before trodden, where the most adventurous of the dwellers beneath would never dream of coming, and where, perhaps, the presence of man had been unknown for long centuries. Hastily throwing open the lid of the barometer case, and planting it and the thermometer in the best nooks I could reach, I sat down among the bricks of the ruinous tower — much in need of a rest, and overpowered with thirst, for I had taken no flask, and not a drop of water was to be had on the way up — to take the bearings of the landmarks, which were just becoming visible in the steamy haze of the morning, and to leisurely survey the country around. As I shrink

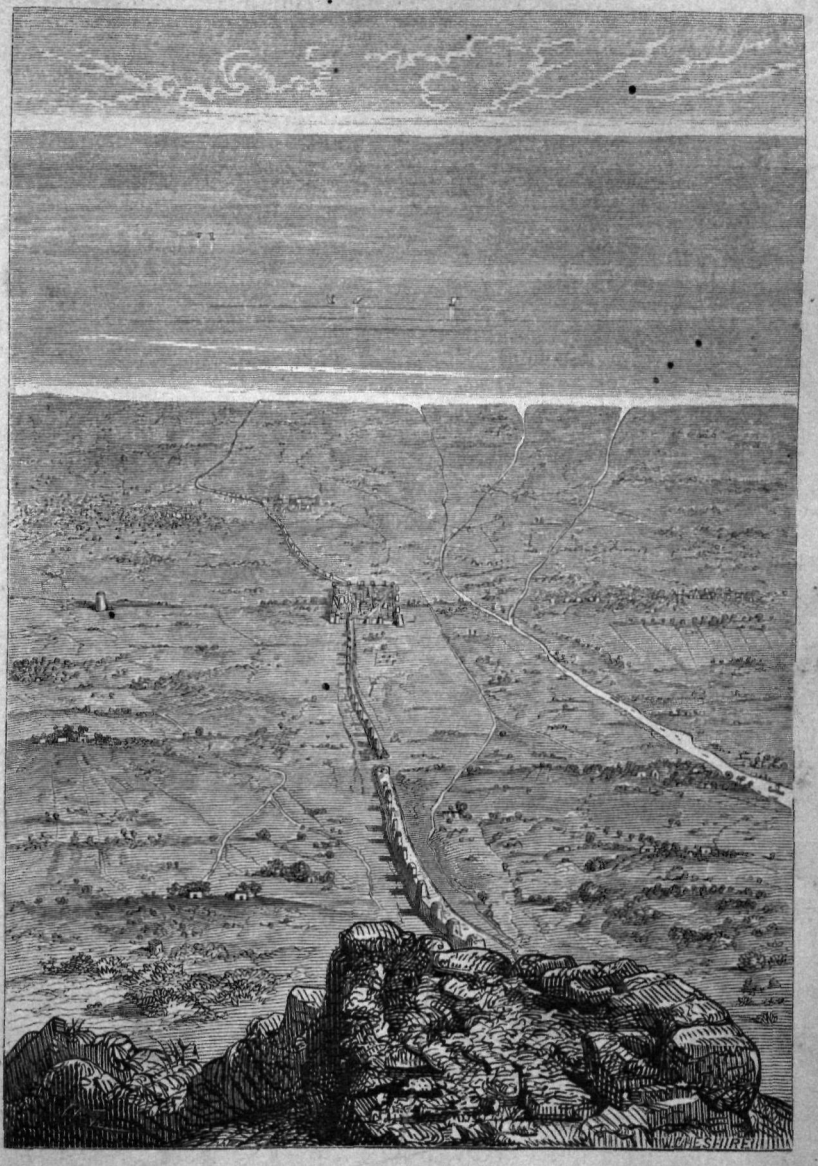
beneath a corner of the crumbling masonry that yet interposes between me and the scorching sun, let me try to describe, however confusedly and imperfectly, the novel panorama as it unrolls its wide scene before me; and dwell especially on what forms its strongest attraction, its most fascinating embellishment,—its world-renowned monument.

Away before me to the far south, unbounded by any visible land, without a dimple or a break to blemish its surface after the storm, and engirded on the edge nearest me by a crescentic border or socket of yellow glistering sand, lay the waters of the Gulf or Eastern Sea in a dazzling blaze of white light. It lies like a silver mirror in a partial frame of gold, with the faintly brown sails of three junks standing immoveable, as it were, on the distant expanse, like so many nocturnal moths surprised by the dawn of day and enchanted, with their wings folded back, by the magical reflection of the brilliant looking-glass. To the middle of the slightly convex edge of the golden crescent or frame, curiously and cunningly wrought and adorned by man's hand, and securely fastened to it by a massive clamp of dark stone, is wedded a fitting and proper handle to such a glorious natural mirror, the Wang-li Chang-ching, or wall of ten thousand lí.

From the sea to where I am ensconced, a distance of about eight or nine miles, and from that away among the hills, where I can only catch a glimpse of the interminable line of fortification here and there, I must have a range of prospect of about twenty miles or more.

Where it commences by a bold abutment through the sandy beach into the gulf there is a large black mass of building like a fortress, with a temple roof scarcely discernible amidst the pile; and continuing from this—wide, high, and solid, apparently with square towers, at first hard to be distinguished from the body of the work, but soon coming out in trenchant outline as they face the Mantchu country,—it creeps on, a bold fence across the level landscape, which is, at

this distance inland, and far east and west, variegated by all manner of lively colours, from the ochrey red of sand and



The Great Wall from Stavely Peak to the Gulf.

soil to the deep green of tiny plantation, and limited coppice, or millet and maize field, and interspersed with cottage and

hamlet; while running parallel with the wall on the China frontier, darts the limpid Shi-ho, like a streak of moving quicksilver, with an easy bend or swerve until it reaches the sands, when it throws out three fairy fingers to grasp the skirt of the sea.

At a little place burrowing among trees, which is perhaps Ning-hai, it makes an acute wheel inwards, until it touches the side of the group of buildings that dot the border of the town. Starting off again on its almost direct road, with the wide-based and battlemented towers courageously standing out at equal distances apart, that give it a very symmetrical and warlike front, it makes a dash through one side of the quadrangular wall of Shan-hai Kwan, about four or five miles from its starting-point, and separating a portion of the city, bursts out with larger looking towers and a broader parapet, steering its leviathan proportions in my direction with only one trifling deflection outwards. It bears no marks of decay from where I am tracing it, until it gets about a mile on this side of the town, when fissures and flaws blur its face at times here and there. At one place a portion of the parapet has given way, and left a ghastly void in the notched and crenelated ridge; at another, nearer still, a larger piece has tumbled down and exposed a deep gash in the parapet; there, the thickness of the building itself has suffered, and its width dwindles down considerably; here, a damaging breach gapes in its face, and the warrior bastions themselves are trembling in dilapidation and decay, and seem as if they were about to part from the great embankment that had supported them so long.

Presently, alas! the eye alights all at once on a deadly lane torn across its stately array to the very ground, and where an arch had once bridged some petty streamlet, long since dried up.

"The sweeping sword of Time
Has sung its death dirge."

And there lies a scattered heap of rubbish about an opening extensive enough to allow of a column of men marching through. This is a veritable break-down, and detracts very much from the expectations I had entertained of its entireness and durability. But the structure rallies quickly, and soon after raises itself on the low-angled spur that is covered with a dusky herbage, and with more or less of cracks, gaps, and chasms, it comes up with an easy grace to the middle of a bald declivity which it deftly tops and deposits a tower thereon, in good preservation, but a few hundred yards from my place of vantage. Having done this it suddenly changes its mind (for I feel as if looking at some vast monster since it began its heavenward rise), as if it saw me, and flies off at a tangent to the east—from the sea it has been progressing from south to north—down and up a flat-sided gulley to my peak, amalgamating itself with the partially demolished turret and disjointed brickwork that can but scrimply contain itself, the rocky space is so small and uneven. Then it sweeps away from me with a dive below the projecting crag where the eyes can but strain themselves after it, till the gorge of a black ravine has been met, when its height, which has been gradually decreasing since it began its vagaries, is somewhat increased, and lasts only so long as it has had time to traverse the bottom and begin another abrupt flexure. There it contracts its bulk as it scales impetuously one peak more cloud-rifting than the one I am in possession of, dotting little square towers closely together where the passes between the rough steep mountains might be accessible; which it no sooner accomplishes than it is flung wildly again down the concave spine of the slippery mountain, only to be thrust up an adjoining one.

And thus it continues to wander for miles and miles, retreating and advancing, bending up and doubling down, now lost altogether, now starting at once from the side of a cliff which it has wound itself round, in a manner almost

surpassing belief, planting tiny square towers closely together where the clefts and passes between the rough steep mountains indicate a possibility of their being practicable; and throwing out one, two, or even three additional barriers or ramifications to aid that in front across those constricted valleys where a few men might be able to scramble; posting odd turrets in the strangest places where the wall zigzags to and fro, and erecting castellated towers on the spiked points of the lordly mountains, like aerial donjon-keeps of the feudal ages. More wonderful and Cyclopean is it to behold, even from my eyrie in mid heaven, than the ancient castles of the Pelasgi could have been to the credulous Greeks.

As a general rule, however, it does not always mount the grandest peaks, but only here and there, for some eccentric and not very obvious reason of the architects; standing generally outside, and a few feet below, rather than above the very topmost pinnacles of the mountains it overruns. So much for the general outline and direction of the colossal monument, as I have anxiously sought to trace it from its origin away on the tempest-beaten shore up to my retreat; and from thence as it goes away bounding magnificently up hill and down dale, giving one the idea of an exciting steeple-chase, with tower after tower flying up into the unclouded [illegible]—like the body of a rider when his horse is clearing a [illegible]ssion of stiff fences on the opposite side of the field,—[illegible] it has vanished among the multitudinous grey mountain summits that recede into blue space.

Now for the scanty details that I contrived to put together on my way from the town.

At Shan-hai Kwan, I noticed that the arch passed under was propped up by a timber framework, and looked unsafe; and when I walked along through the fields adjoining the town —where the wall is exactly the same in construction, height, and width as that of the town itself, though very much older looking—I saw the marks of many recent repairs on

the outside, as if the maintainance of it in a respectable, if not a defensible, condition was believed to be still of some moment to the reputation and safety of the Custom-house city. In all respects, on the plain, it differs little, if anything, from the ordinary enclosing walls of Northern Chinese towns; and if anyone could imagine such a defence stretching out in an almost straight line for eight or nine miles, he would have some idea of the Great Wall on the lowland, as it yet frowns towards Mantchuria.

I have remarked that at little more than a mile or so on this side of the 'Kwan' it was ruinous in more places than one, and that there was no symptom of its having been otherwise than neglected in this part for many generations. Its occupation there was gone—the enemy it had awed and challenged without was now, for two hundred and eighteen years, within, and the only purpose it served was diverting the produce of the two countries through the gates of the Hill-sea barrier, where taxes might be levied, and goods and passengers scrutinised.

At the town, and until it nears the hills, its total height may range from thirty to forty feet, including five or six feet for a crenelated parapet on the eastern side; and the width of its rampart twenty or twenty-five feet at most; while the eye delighting towers are about ten feet higher than the parapet, are at the base thirty or forty feet square, gradually narrowing as they ascend, and are from one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards apart. They, with the walls, have been admirably built to withstand the devastations of ages of exposure in such a climate. The basement or foundation for the whole is widely and compactly formed for bearing the weight of such a load of matter, by imperishable granite blocks imposed on each other to an elevation of six or eight feet from the ground. On this the body of the building is reared, consisting of an internal bank of earth tightly rammed and packed, and encased in a

sloping brick shell of no great thickness, embedded very firmly in mortar of great apparent strength and hardness —consisting, so far as I can judge, of a large proportion of remarkably white lime, similar to the chunam of India, mixed with sand and pebbles in very small quantity. The courses of the brickwork were regular and well pointed, and in working up the wall the observer could scarcely fail to notice that it had only been laid in layers six or eight feet deep at a time; leading him to suppose that the builders had been fully alive to the necessity of allowing one part to settle down and solidify before building any higher, in order to prevent displacement and speedy demolition from premature shrinking.

The bricks are of the usual large description employed in the city walls of this part of China, and are sharp and evenly moulded, measuring nine inches in length, four and a half in width, and two and a half in thickness—much less in size, certainly, than those of some of the smaller pyramids of Egypt—as in that of Howara, for instance, the bricks of which measure seventeen and a half inches long by eight and three-quarters in width, and five-and-a-half inches thick. They seem very hard and tough, and appear to be made of a light sandy clay, thoroughly well tempered, with a good number of quartz chips in their substance, but whether purposely or accidentally introduced it would be unsafe to say. From their colour and consistency, I am inclined to believe that they have been slowly burnt in kilns supplied with an insufficiency of air, by which the smouldering heat and smoke of the wood or straw used to bake them has imparted to the clay the characteristic bluish-grey or dark slate colour they now wear.

Did the traveller penetrate along its course no farther than from the sea to the town, he would be apt to conclude that the myriad lí wall was the same in size and preservation throughout its erratic incurvations, angles, and Pegasus-like

flight over the Chinese Grampians, and would begin to calculate and theorise accordingly. I should, I fear, have done so, its appearance from below is so deceptive, had I not climbed to the vertex of the stateliest peak on which there is a tower, and been made aware of the difference.

Whenever the wall begins to seek the mountains it becomes less in bulk and more decrepid. The height is reduced; the breadth of rampart melts away; the vigilant and stern towers sink into very mediocre stature, and their adamantine sides collapse into most modest proportions; so that the Great Wall on the dangerous plain is not the Great Wall on the impregnable heights. The tower on which I am seated, registering these notes, is a little less than six feet square, and occupies every available inch of the cliff's crown. What its altitude may have been I cannot be certain, for either from decay, lightning-stroke, or thunder-bolt, or the hurricanes of winter, destruction has swept it down to within eight feet of the base. It is, or has been, built of brick, but the rampart diverging from it, which is no more than eight feet in width, is of the unhewn loose stones lying in such abundance everywhere about, and bound together with the same hard cement as that used for the bricks. In many places among the hills this wall of stones is thrown down, or rased to the naked rock, and nothing denotes its existence or the line of its ambitious career, save little collections of rubble or a thin ridge of stones marking its basement breadth.

Nowhere here can I detect the slightest semblance of a parapet; indeed, from the appearance of the best preserved portions, there does not seem any likelihood of the barrier among the mountains ever having had such an addition, or ever being anything else but a strong stone wall, furnished only with turrets at unequal intervals for its defence. These turrets, from the manner and the excellent materials of which they are built, are nearly all in an admirable condition, and look as if they had not been many years from the hands of

the builder; but my pervading idea in surveying all the extensive work that now comes within my range of vision, is that of desolation and decay; the more salient and broad features of the fabric alone standing—as they will do for many, many centuries to come—to commemorate an era in Chinese history, and the Herculean efforts of a great nation in byegone ages to preserve itself from invasion and subjection.

Such is the Great Wall at, and near, the Eastern Sea. To the north and westward, however, it must have been constructed on a grander and more substantial scale, if the accounts of visitors in that direction are to be credited; and may have been kept in repair from time to time, when this portion of the unassailable mountain-line has been allowed to stand or fall as it might chance, without the needful intervention of those for whom it had been erected. Some of these accounts, notwithstanding, are doubtful enough, and, to say the least of them, rather overdrawn. For example the Jesuit Missionary, Kircher, says:—

'This work is so wondrous strong, that it is for the greatest part a source of admiration to this day; for, through the many vicissitudes of the empire, changes of dynasties, batteries and assaults, not only of the enemy, but of violent tempests, deluges of rain, shaking winds and wearing weather, yet it discovers no signs of demolishment, nor is it cracked or crazed with age, but appears almost as in its first strength, greatness, and beauty; and well it may be, for whose solidity whole mountains, by ripping up their rocky bowels for stones, were levelled, and vast deserts, buried with deep and swallowing sand, were swept clean to the firm ground.'

A statement that does not tally with what is to be found here. The more trustworthy Father Gerbillon had such exaggerations in his mind when he declares that 'it is, indeed, one of the most surprising and extraordinary works in the world; yet it cannot be denied that those travellers who have mentioned it have over-magnified it, imagining, no doubt,

that it was in its whole extent the same as they saw it in those parts nearest Peking, or at certain of the most important passes, where it is, indeed, very strong and well-built, as also very high and thick.'

Still, in spite of all these little inaccuracies, for the age in which it was designed and executed, it is beyond belief a great conception—an enterprise that makes one feel astonished by the immensity of its extent. Even to a Westerner, who has seen some of the triumphs of nineteenth century engineering, and undertakings such as the old world never dreamt of, it seems all but impossible that any people could set themselves down to the performance of so monstrous a difficulty. There is no great amount of skill; there is little, if anything, of ingenuity displayed in its erection, so far as I can see; but there is work—there is labour for giants—in the structure, and this character appears in every brick that goes to make up the solid outline of its towers. The latter are only within the scope of the most practised climber, and intrude themselves so menacingly into the upper world, that one almost expects to see them thronged by rebellious Titans aspiring to make war with Heaven.

In every stone of that rampart embankment that embraces with a petrous girdle the confines of far off Cathay, there is a tale of toil and fatigue such as, perhaps, the modern world never knew, silently told in the computed one thousand two hundred and fifty miles of the country, from east to west, over which it wanders.

Surely the king and the people who lived a little more than two thousand years ago: who have left their memories and their autographs written in such a bold hand over such a great tract of the world's uneven surface: and who have submitted to the scrutiny and criticism of innumerable generations such an astounding trophy of human industry and patience, were very different men to those of the present day, and had very much higher incentives to the achievement

of greatness and the maintenance of national independence, than the apathetic fratricides and blasphemous robbers of eighteen hundred and sixty-one! .

It is true that a diversity of opinions exists, both among Europeans and Chinese, as to the public and private character of the prince under whose auspices the Great Wall was built, and the motives that swayed him in this, as in other acts; and there is much difficulty in acquiring any reliable information that might lead us to look with favourable eyes on the career of such a despotic Eastern potentate. He appears to have had—like other monarchs who might be selected from the annals of the world—a mixture of good and bad qualities; but, for a Chinese emperor, the good probably more than compensated for the bad.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HISTORY OF THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA — ITS CHARACTER AS A WORTHY NATIONAL TROPHY COMPARED WITH SOME OTHER WORKS OF ANTIQUITY —A HOT DESCENT AND A LOST OUTLET — FLARFUL MIDDAY HEAT — IMPENDING SUNSTROKE AND ITS SENSATIONS — A HARD DAY'S STRUGGLE — MERCIFUL FOUNTAINS — A HAPPY RESURRECTION AND FRIENDLY PEASANTRY.

NOW that I have got thus far into the bowels of the Celestial land, and have carefully observed its greatest marvel, let me brush away the cobwebs and dust that shroud its paternity, and glean all the information respecting it, here accessible; for I am bound to acknowledge that I can hardly agree with those who assert that the erection of such a safeguard, by a peaceable and rather timid people, was the whim of a tyrant, and the gravest act of despotism, as well as of folly, that an autocrat could be guilty of.

Chinese history is abstruse and oftentimes perplexing, but I will consult only the best authorities.

It is known that, for many centuries before the Christian era, China was divided into a number of feudal states, in something the same way that Europe was twelve or thirteen hundred years ago, and that the same amount of turbulence and disputation was prevalent among the chiefs or princes that we find recorded in Western history. The number and power of these states was in proportion to the physical strength and political influence, or the weakness and temerity of the reigning monarch, who might sometimes be able to reduce them to complete subordination, and at other times rule only by their sufferance.

Under the Chow dynasty, which terminated in B.C. 249,

having lasted for 873 years,—the longest period of any reign mentioned in history,—the feudal house or state of Tsin, in the North-west, had long been the most formidable from the bold and arrogant character of its princes, its extent of territory, and the number of retainers it could send into the field.

One of these leaders, Chau-Siang Wang, carried his encroachments into the acknowledged imperial possessions, and compelled the sovereign, Tungchau Kiun, the last of the line, to humble himself at his feet, and surrender his crown; then content with what he had effected, he deputed his son to finish the work and reap the reward. As brave and politic, or as cunning as his parent, the son was not long in reducing the six states, which then formed the bulk of the empire, and in bending them to his sway; and the better to prevent their ever becoming again a source of trouble or uneasiness, he divided them into thirty-six provinces, principalities or 'keun,' which he placed in the hands of responsible governors. He at the same time sought to establish his authority, and reconcile his subjects to their change of rulers, by reforming abuses that had existed in the late government, and by remedying as far as he could the injurious effects of the feudal usages. He made progresses and inspections in great state throughout his dominions, to ascertain that his orders were obeyed, and that no injustice was done to the people. Moreover, he furthered their interests and welfare by opening canals and public roads to promote intercourse and trade over the country, by superintending and aiding the building of public edifices and other works, and by enlarging and improving the cities and towns, until he had consolidated the empire into one great nation. He took the title of Tche-hwangti, or first emperor of the Ta Tsin, or Great Tsin dynasty—from which name the people of the West are supposed to have derived the term China, and not from the mongrel *Chin-Chin*, the semi-

Anglicised welcome, or 'how d'ye do,' that amateur philologists — fresh arrivals in the land — are ready to declare is the origin of the popular appellation.

So successful and rapid was the advancement of the empire, and such lustre did the rule of this emperor bring upon it, that he has been styled the Napoleon of China. One European historian, Klaproth, has conferred on him high praise as a man of wisdom and resolution; but the native annalists, for some reasons, abhor his name and his reign. Perhaps one of these reasons arose from his having built an immense palace, or collection of palaces, adjoining each other, at the new capital he had founded, in imitation of those of the princes whom he had overcome; and to the apartments of this residence he commanded that all the valuable fittings and furniture belonging to the originals, with all the people who inhabited them, should be brought, and that everything should be arranged as it had been in the different dwellings.

This was certainly a very mild act of tyranny, after what the historical student has been told about some of the despots of other nations; but his next recorded deed of shame, if true (for some believe it to be a fable to serve the ends of certain Chinese historians), was undoubtedly a very heinous and barbarous one; for, through insatiable vanity in desiring to be considered by succeeding generations the first emperor of the Chinese race — or, as others say, at the instigation of a worthless minister — he ordered the destruction of all the histories and classics extant, not even sparing the labours of the idolised Confucius and Mencius, only exempting for some strange reason the books on law and physic. To be certain that no copy should be reproduced, nor any account of his rash action transmitted to posterity, he caused all the scholars and learned men, to the number of four hundred and sixty, to be thrown into pits or buried alive. But as a set-off against these registered cruelties and despotic whims,

he valiantly encountered the Tartars, who were then the terror of the Chinese, as they were subsequently that of the civilised nations of the West, and drove them out of the country beyond the frontiers, into the steppes and wilds of Mongolia.

These Mongol Tartars, northern erratic tribes, wandering nations, 'Huen-hoo' or clamorous slaves, or 'Hoo-yin,' for by all these names they have been called at various times —were as intractable, as wild, and as great scourges to the Chinese of these and later days, as were the Caledonii and Mætæ to the Romans, or the Picts, Scots, and Attacotti to the Britons; figuring, as they do, in almost every page of Chinese history, because of the excesses they committed, and keeping the harmless inhabitants of the border provinces harassed and poor; while the unsettled population on the skirts of the frontier, driven from their homes, and plundered by these pastoral warriors, were obliged from necessity, or perhaps choice, to perpetrate all sorts of depredations to ward off starvation: for we all know that—

> 'Near a border frontier in the time of war,
> There 's ne'er a man but he 's a freebooter.'

The estimation in which the Mongols were held by the Chinese may be gleaned from the fact, that a general, who is immortalised for having invented hair-pencils, was despatched with 300,000 troops to reduce the Huen-hoo, and to expel them from the country; after which Hwangti caused all the large towns to be enclosed within walls, and, to keep the invaders for ever beyond the boundary, and stop their disastrous incursions, he conceived the idea of extending and uniting the walls which the princes of the northern states *had before built to protect their kingdoms*, into one grand wall stretching around the land from the sea to the desert. The great barrier was began and successfully completed in ten years; during which time, however,

Tche-hwangti had died; and his son, unable to repress the machinations of the feudal chiefs, who had again acquired strength, was deposed and supplanted by a soldier of fortune, who began the celebrated Hàn dynasty.

One account states that the realisation of the magnificent conception of Hwangti was accomplished in five years, by many millions of labourers, and that three men out of every ten were impressed for the task; others say that it cost 200,000 lives from exhaustion and fatigue. But the ten years is more probably nearer the truth, and the fact of its being continued and finished after the death of the originator, and the extinction of his family, goes far to prove 'that this mode of protecting the empire from the fierce savages commended itself to the nation at large, which joined heartily in it, and that this stupendous work was not forced out of the labour of unwilling subjects.'*

The fact of its being thrown over a vast natural barrier, by which an enormous amount of toil was required beyond that necessary had it been built on the plain, furnishes additional proof of the almost supernatural dread which influenced the builders, and the daring attributes with which they invested the predatory nomads. The latter would have laughed at a wall on the low country, when defended by unwarlike Chinese. Indeed, it is related that the Mantchus once entered China by the mountains on the east, 'having amused the numerous garrisons of the forts (on the Wall), by which alone the Chinese thought it possible to pass; then the Tartars left their tents and baggage over against the intrenchments (at the forts) as though they intended to force a passage through; but they secretly marched in the night over the hills, and surprised a city at the foot of them called Chang-ping chew.'†

Taking history, and the appearance of the strong line

* Williams' *Middle Kingdom.* † Father Gerbillon.

of circumvallation together, one is prompted to believe that the Great Wall of China is far more likely to have been the cherished desire of the people, than the odd fancy of a cruel king—a noble effort towards self-preservation rather than a monstrous freak of tyranny. Though it was impotent against such intrepid barbarians—the object being frustrated by craft on their part, and faction quarrels on that of the Chinese—the intention remains, and its realisation is unquestionably one of the wonders of the world.

We must not forget that the military Romans did not disdain the services to be derived from stone walls when fighting with savages, or striving to keep them within bounds. Agricola, about two hundred years after the Chinese had completed their huge rampart, threw up a chain of forts between the estuaries of the Forth and the Clyde, to check the indomitable Caledonians; which forts were afterwards renewed and connected with each other by a great bank of earth, under the superintendence of Lollius Urbicus. Also, the Emperor Hadrian found it incumbent on him to erect a monstrous fortification of towers and stone wall of seventy miles in length, between the Solway and the Tyne, as well as others on the threatened frontiers of Germany.

The Chinese wall was probably about as useful to the frightened Chinese as was the Roman wall to the helpless Britons; for when the eagles of the disciplined Roman legions had disappeared in haste to meet barbarian hordes at home, the perpetual surge that had been incessantly beating at its base, and sometimes, even with the hardy trained bands on the top, breaking over it, the torrent of Picts and Scots burst beyond it into the guarded territory.

'Throwing up hooks, they pulled the Britons down from the top of their wall, and slew them, and then passing the wall, they destroyed the cities and murdered the inhabitants.'

Nothing but the firmness and military prowess of the Romans could guard the southern division of Britain from the fiery invaders who rushed from their unconquered wilds; and this discipline and firmness the sons of Han did not seem to possess.

From the ninth year of the dynasty succeeding the Great Tsin, the Tartars again began to disturb the country, and to appease them—as the Roman governor of Britain, Virius Lupus, was obliged to buy over the turbulent tribes with gold—the daughters of the emperor were given in marriage to the Tartar kings. 'From this day,' writes the native recorder, 'China lost her honour and respectability, and the disgrace brought upon her was never greater.' The chief minister of state, through whose fears and wishes this detested measure was brought about, excused himself by saying that the Tartars were such barbarians it was impossible to reason with them; moreover, as they had no permanent habitations, it was extremely difficult to carry on war with them. They were here to-day, and a month hence hundreds of miles distant.*

And well the men of the middle kingdom might dread the almost invincible savages—who afterwards, as Mongols and Mantchus, ruled portions, and then the whole of the empire, and finding stone walls along an immense frontier inadequate for their protection, began trying these political blandishments. The invaders would have infused a good deal of awe into any nation had they murdered its king, and then made a drinking cup of his head, as it is written they served a Chinese monarch who had fallen into their hands.

I have experienced very different sensations of wonder and admiration, when endeavouring thus to follow out the aim and construction of the Ta-Tsin Wall, than would have been produced had I stood before those melancholy

* Morrison's *Chronology.*

evidences of despotism that yet stand exultingly over the ruins of Memphis—the unmeaning, I had almost said unsightly, Pyramids of Jizeh. Of the largest, Diodorus says, that the unremitting labour of 366,000 men was required for twenty years, before its apex was reared above the sandy plain; and Pliny stigmatises the whole as an idle and foolish ostentation of royal wealth. Chance, the latter historian adds, has most justly obliterated the remembrance of their various founders.

Even had I now before me that unmatchable ruin of antique regality and grandeur, the magnificent amphitheatre of Rome's best days—the Coliseum of Vespasian, I could not help reflecting that its magnificence and grandeur was wrung, in one year, out of the compulsory toil of 12,000 Jews and Christians; that its eighty stately arcades were designed to contain 100,000 spectators assembled to witness and gloat over cruelty in its most depraved and repulsive form; to see captives, slaves, and malefactors fighting and slaying each other in cold blood, for life or liberty, and for the gratification of the civilised Romans; men worried and torn by wild beasts, and the beasts hacked and mangled by the men: that its columned walls had echoed and re-echoed the applauding shouts, the 'Habets' of the excited and heartless audience, when prisoner after prisoner, criminal after criminal, or slave after slave, as might be—to whom, if not killed outright—life was yet dear, had fallen, covered with blood and wounds, before his victorious opponent, and his valueless panting body lay waiting for the finishing thrust or slash, while his fast glazing eyes wandered desperately through the haze of exhaustion towards the blood-thirsty people for the death-warrant or reprieve—the *pollicem premere*, or the *pollicem vertere*—the clenched hands and upright thumbs of mercy, or the fatal thumbs bent back in disapproval.

I might prefer this as a national and a more creditable

work, because built with nobler intentions, and devoted to a more patriotic purpose. The mighty maze of stone that constitutes the old barricade of China, though it does not boast of a trace of beauty—save that which accidentally belongs to its austerely uniform towers and parapet, and the wild sublimity of its situation—is doubtless preferable to the vast details and architectural magnificence that glorified the Roman shambles for two and a half centuries later date.

But I have lingered too long in my refuge among the wreck of bricks, bare slabs of rock, and ledges of crumbling rampart. The sun is getting higher and higher, and hurling down with momentarily increasing rage the intensest shower of burning rays I have yet been exposed to; and an urgent feeling of thirst has been rapidly gaining on the pleasurable and reflective senses since the heat became so great.

The scenery around has altered a good deal, too. The sea that had shone like a shield of polished steel or silver but a short while ago, now seems a dense sheet of talc, from which the junks have been swept: the golden sand is a ruddy blaze of flickering fire, almost too powerful for the shaded eyes. Every tint has changed; everything wears an altered appearance; and the far-off objects that I could clearly discern when I sat down barely an hour ago, are now leaping and quivering in a hazy tremor of scorching light.

Though late in the morning, there is not a single being of any description stirring in the plain below me. The silence and deathly stillness everywhere is quite mystifying when one thinks of the mobs of howling and worrying people that beset us last night.

Surely they cannot live eternally within those walls, and haunt for ever those regular rows of houses I can just see the roofs of in long lines intersecting each other, without coming out into the plain on either side. Shan-hai Kwan is there, like a desolate ghost-ridden house that has been to let for years, and which no creature will venture near. The

high road to, and the high road from it, stretch east and west for miles, and yet they are vacant by all save the beating rays. Never in daylight was such a large piece of cultivated country, with populous villages and a closely-packed town, occupied by an industrious lot of inhabitants, so wanting in life.

Up among the clouds to the north-west, north, and north-east, soar the tops of the granite hills in the quickening glare, treeless and verdureless—thick as pins stuck in a pin-cushion by a careless hand—and with all the multiform outlines of mountains composed of this igneous extrusion rising so majestically that they look as if they were curious stalactites hung or growing from the vault of heaven. It is only among them that one can discover

> 'The negligence of nature, wide and wild,
> Where undisguised by mimic art she spreads
> Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.'

I am on the most advanced of these monarchs of the world's agony. They extend from far beyond Peking, margining, as it were, what is called the Great Plain of China, with tall sierras of fine-grained, hard, and beautiful grey granite, with low knolls of compact semi-crystalline limestone, of a brownish-grey colour, exhibiting thin veins of quartz in its fracture, flanking these, with a deep cave in one or two places; and are chiefly remarkable for the great uniformity they have presented along the whole track, in running towards the road from the long range in spurs inclining from north-east to south-west. This may be said to be the narrowest portion of the rich alluvial plain which spreads out from this wall to the junction of the river Kan with the Yangtsz 'Kiang in Kiangsi, in latitude 30° north;* for the mountains separating China from Mongolia and Mantchuria here take a bend round to the eastward, and terminate in the peak on which this

* Williams' *Middle Kingdom*.

tower is situated, about eight miles from the little headland that carries the Great Wall into the gulf.

In the most recent maps their height, at this part, is given as four or five thousand feet, but this is probably over-estimated, as my observations now only place the tower at 1,556 feet above the level of the town, and that cannot be more than 200 feet above the level of the sea. Immediately behind this, belonging, in fact, to the same mountain, is another peak about twenty feet higher than the tower, which looks almost as lofty as any of the others; so that at the very utmost none of the mountains in my vicinity can, I think, exceed 3,000 feet. To the eastward they seem to dwindle down in a very gradual manner, until lost in the fervent glitter; but to the north they spread away in limitless profusion, and over them bounds the ten thousand li defence, with towers and brown stone wall, like a long narrow skiff with square sails rising and falling on the waves of a heavy sea.

Holding on by a thin ledge of rock, I can look below and mark the two ponies of our mandarin friends, no larger than two white dots, standing at the edge of the fir clump, which looks scarcely bigger than a gorse bush. M. and the prying officials are under its shelter, but I wave a handkerchief, nevertheless, to let them know that I have gained the summit; and then finish the bearings, and the measurement indicated by the instruments.

It is insufferably hot, and a mouthful of water would be worth any price. Looking about, I find a wet streak, scarcely more than damp, on the face of a piece of rock; this I carefully soak up for a few minutes with the end of my turban, and then keep the moist cloth in my lips to allay the horrid craving; but it tastes very bitter—for the stone was covered with a thin mossy coat—and does nothing to palliate the drought. My handkerchief is wrapped around my head as an extra protection, and the ends are allowed to