says, you may gather that the Chinese have no schools for the teaching of veterinary science in any part of the Empire; though at Peking there is a Medical Hall, which, however, does not bear the character of being invested with any great degree of influence in disseminating or advancing the very

The Horse Doctor.

elementary, and often preposterously erroneous state of medical knowledge found among the quack and legitimate practitioners in Chinese towns. Indeed, when we visited the Hanlin Yuen or Imperial Academy at Peking—at which, we were informed, besides other sciences taught there, that

of medicine was inculcated — we found the building as ruinous and as lonely as the sheep-pens of a market are when unoccupied. So that, it would appear, the healing art exists and is taught only by the peripatetic quacksalvers.

In small towns and villages there are none of these; so when an animal is sick, or any epizootic makes its appearance, there is a consultation among the owner's friends or the sages of the place to devise the best means of cure; and when anything very serious occurs, entailing great loss of property, incense is burnt to exorcise the evil spirits or to appease the wrath of the angry god—for they seldom, if ever, think of conciliating the good-will of their idols until they find themselves in trouble.

Our veterinary friend has faith in the efficacy of horse-flesh in certain of the ills which prey on mankind, and besides is rather inclined to hippophagy when an accidental death gives him a good carcase. His ideas concerning the noble steed in life or in death are odd enough, and he would have no scruples in subscribing to such freaks of fancy as the following, which are written in a celebrated Chinese work, the *Pun Tsau* or 'Herbal,' published three or four centuries ago.

'The best kind of horse for medical purposes (says this standard authority) is the pure white. Those found in the south and east are small and weak. The age is known by the teeth. The eye reflects the full image of a man. If he eats rice his feet become heavy; if rats' dung, his belly will grow long; if his teeth be rubbed with dead silkworms or black plums he will not eat, nor will he feed if the skin of a rat or wolf be hung in his stable or manger. He should not be allowed to eat from a hog's trough lest he contract disease; and if a monkey be kept in the stable he will not fall sick. The flesh is a good article of food; that of a pure white stallion is the most esteemed and healthy.'

One author recommends eating almonds and taking a meal

of rush broth if the person feels uncomfortable after a meal of horse-flesh. 'It should be roasted and eaten with ginger and pork; and to eat the flesh of a black horse and not drink wine with it, will surely produce death. The fat of the crown of the horse is sweet, and good to make the hair grow and the face to shine.'

The milk, heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, placenta, teeth, bones, skin, mane, tail, brains, blood, perspiration, &c., are all lauded as remedies, or articles of diet in various diseases.

'When eating horse-flesh do not eat the liver, because of the absence of a gall-bladder in that organ, which renders it poisonous.' 'The heart of a white horse, or that of a cow, hog, or hen, when dried and rasped into spirit, and so taken, cures forgetfulness; if the patient hears one thing he knows ten.' 'Above the inside of the knees and below the hocks the horse has *yi-yan*, or "night-eyes" (the horny excrescences growing in these situations), which enable him to go in the dark and by night; these are useful in toothache.' 'If a man be restless or hysterical when he wishes to sleep, and it is requisite to put him to rest, let the ashes of a horse's skull be mingled with water and given him, and let him have another skull for a pillow, and it will cure him.'*

It was dusk when we entered one of the long suburban streets of Chung-hue-soh—a street with high embankments on each side, and with large business-like shops, built of brick, perched thereon.

Passing through the ruts and puddles, with lots of eager spectators on every hand, we reached the town walls, which were lofty and apparently in good repair; and, though the temptation was strong within us to explore the interior, as a gateway opened before us, yet bearing still in lively remembrance the infelicitous reception and unnecessary trouble we had been subjected to in our last halting-place for the night,

* Williams' *Middle Kingdom.*

we thought it most advisable to keep clear of the public functionaries for the future. We determined to take up our quarters in one of the outside inns, where we should stand a better chance of passing the dark hours unnoticed, and of departing on the morrow without a watch on our movements, like the one who had followed us nearly all day, and whom we had parted with just before nightfall, when he silently dropped behind, and was then hurrying back to Shan-hia Kwan to give an account of our doings to the fussy magistrates.

Chung-hue-soh gave every token of being the largest and busiest town on the way since we left Tien-tsin. The main thoroughfare running parallel with the wall was nothing but shops, and though they were all closed, or the doors but slightly ajar, revealing a very scantily-lighted range of interiors, yet the tenants were thickly grouped in front laughing, chatting, playing at some game, or making music of a mumpish hypochondriacal character to the strumming of the three-stringed banjo.

We had nearly a mile to walk before a house of entertainment was found, and it was none of the cleanest; for as soon as our evening meal was concluded, to the intense relief of the hundreds who had been bewildering their eyes at our unheard-of manners, M. felt the rooms so hot and dusty that he was fain to make himself a shake-down outside. I gave chase to sundry scorpions which were moved by curiosity and the odorous fumes of the food to leave their hiding-places and approach my kang. Then we went to sleep for the night, but not till after several failures, as some donkeys in the courtyard proved more than usually kind in the exercise of their vocal organs for our amusement, and more than once prompted us to speak of them harshly.

CHAPTER XXI.

SUNDAY MORNING — LONELY SCENERY — BEGGARS — RUINS OF NING YUEN CHOW — GRAIN WAGONS — MANTCHURIAN LI — STUPIDITY OF THE COUNTRY PEOPLE — SHIN SHAN — A PASTORAL PICTURE — CONVOY OF CATTLE — THE FLOCKS — PACK SADDLE TRANSPORT — THE APPROACH TO KIN CHOW — KIN CHOW — THE MARKET-PLACE — MEAT AND FRUIT — GOOD HUMOUR OF THE CHINESE.

THE morning of the 13th July was a Sunday morning, and was ushered in by as lovely a sunrise as could be desired in any part of the world. We were early afoot, and soon receiving the full benefit of a good start from our place of temporary sojourn, where we had slept well, despite the stenches and noise.

Our rides had been long and without intermission since we began the journey; our ponies looked none the worse, certainly, for their exertions, though each day had seen us eight and ten hours in the saddle; but we were apprehensive of overtaxing their strength and remarkable endurance, as well as fatiguing ourselves unnecessarily by these forced journeys of forty or forty-five miles a day. So prudence dictated—and perhaps the remaining sensations of our *divertissement* at the Great Wall recommended — a Sunday's rest, on which occasion we made up our minds to be satisfied with half a day's travelling, should suitable accommodation offer.

It took us a little time to get clear of the town, for its environs assumed comparatively large proportions, besides carrying a very creditable appearance of business, notwithstanding the early hour; and then we had to cross a fordable river, undisturbed by any kind of craft, but which might at other times greatly aid the commercial transactions of the

mercantile community of Chung-hue-soh. The road or track ran up from the hot and air-stagnated plain to the higher land edging the waters of the gulf, giving us in exchange for sandy roads and shingly streams, undulating stretches of green sward or rocky paths, over acclivities and down in easy curves, where, if the soil could not be forced to carry its allotment of grain, cattle and ponies grazed in small troops. From the most elevated knolls we occasionally caught a peep of the scalloped shore, and the unruffled sea looking smoky in the early morning haze.

But all was so unaccountably lonely, and so Sabbath-like on this morning and forenoon, that it would have needed more than an ordinary degree of self-persuasion to induce ourselves to believe that we were wandering among such a toiling, work-a-day people who have no holy day of rest, or that we were in the vicinity of busy towns and striving villages doomed to the unremitting din and motion of traffic and labour. In the universal hush of nature, when such a tranquil and glad quiet reigned over a fair expanse of diversified country, Sabbath thoughts certainly came thickly upon us, and as we leisurely moved along, with nothing but the sunlit scenery around to awaken reflection, the day of rest and Christian thankfulness conjured up home scenes, and we had almost looked to the little clumps of trees for a tapering spire, and strained our hearing to seize the faintest echo of the

> 'Village bells
> Falling at intervals upon the ear
> In cadence sweet!'

But no; the revered memory of such scenes and sounds had no realisation here, and it was somewhat sorrowful to think that

> 'The sound of the church-going bell,
> These valleys and rocks never heard;
> Never sigh'd at the toll of a knell,
> Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.'

After winding about a good deal, and meeting only one pedestrian, we descended again into the lower ground, where we passed a sort of Madge Wildfire—a raving dementit old body with uncrippled feet, in dirty rags, and with a garland of wild flowers stuck on her head, who laughed, sang, and cried, by turns, as she allowed us to ride by her unsolicited for charity. Farther on we came across many other beggars—old men and old women, blind or lame—the women with natural sized feet, kneeling by the roadside and supplicating alms as earnestly from us as if they had been quite familiar with the presence of foreigners for years; one old croon even going out of her way so far as to slang and curse us like an Irish hag, because we did not satisfy her demands.

At length we drew rein at the diminutive hamlet of Wang-hia-tyer, where there was an inn more inviting and secluded than any we had inspected in the nicely situated villages in the neighbourhood; and opposite which we saw a large harbour protected seaward by two islands, and though apparently very shoal on the land side, yet affording refuge and an anchorage to a number of junks brought up straggligly to their hawsers. On the thick felt mats spread over the 'kang' we spent the afternoon and the night, and, thoroughly rested, began our onward course early next day.

In Du Halde's 'China' the worthy father, Verbiest, in describing his travels in Mantchu Tartary, mentions the state of decay in which he found the places he saw there. 'All the cities and towns I saw in Liautoong,' he says, 'and which are pretty numerous, lie in ruins, everywhere appearing nothing but heaps of stones, bricks, and old rubbish. Some few houses have been lately built within the enclosures of these cities—some of earth, others of remains of the old buildings, but few of brick, most thatched, and in no order. There remains not the least mark of a multi-

tude of towns and villages that stood before the war (the period when the Mantchus succeeded to the imperial rule); for this petty Tartar king (Tientsung, the father of the first Mantchu emperor), who began these wars with very small forces, recruited them with the inhabitants of these places, which he afterwards destroyed to deprive his soldiers of the hopes of returning to their native country.'

That was two centuries ago, and shortly after Tienming —the first redoubtable chief of the Mantchus, who caused the last emperor of the Ming dynasty to feel his power and tremble at his revengeful manifestos—had by levies, conscriptions, imposts, and unbearable exactions, reduced the people of this province to a pitiable condition.

We could see nothing of these dilapidated tenements and cities then reduced to rubbish, until after passing the two villages of Twso-chang and To-tia-dsa, about five miles from the coast, where there was a large and lofty island bristling up near the shore, we came to Ning Yuen Chow, once a walled town of the second order, agreeably situated a short distance from a good level road, and among trees, but where at present everything was lonely and desolate, as we peeped within the gateway of the crumbling brick enclosure. Not a living thing stirred; the houses were roofless, and the walls of the greater number thrown down; while the central street up which we glanced was untrodden, and monopolised by weeds or green-scummed pools. The grey havoc of age, and apparent wanton destruction, seemed to point to this period of Chinese history, when quiet citizens were deprived of their homes and forced to bear arms under the impetuous Mantchus, and afforded us the only example or proof of the probability of such an occurrence as that mentioned by the worthy Jesuit.

The country did not improve on this day's ride, as the houses became less and less tasteful, and the people dirtier

and lazier-looking than those we had hitherto fraternised with.

We passed many wagons laden with agricultural produce, in the shape of bags of pulse or millet, some of them with as many as twelve mules or ponies dragging them along over the uneven ground, to the stimulating chirrup of a great sun-burnt wagoner in a straw hat and light garb, who, with legs extended, like another Colossus of Rhodes, from one shaft to the other, tugged his reins, or artistically cracked a long whip, with a report as loud as a pistol, to stir up the struggling team, always disposed in two lines of three, and one of two, in front of the strongest beast yoked in the shafts. Right well they responded to the incentive, and moved the stiff machine through the most disheartening of tracks with a willingness quite wonderful; their rude hames, and cane or hempen traces, passing through wide harness and shaft-rings to be attached to the axletree, standing the fierce tugs or steady strain remarkably well.

Otherwise, the way was silent and dreary, and the absence of lively passengers or crowded towns made the day's distance long and monotonous. The remains of the round towers we had noted as we left the Great Wall still accompanied us, as they showed their more or less shattered structures perched on plain or height; and between Sai-miau and Cow-chow—two little *bourgs* of an unpretending aspect, a fine bay, about five miles in width, swept round to within two miles of the road, the entrance to it being protected by a high island; while on the western side, the spur of a mountain running at an acute angle from the seemingly interminable chain, swept across our path, and stopping suddenly when it had gained the sea, formed a bold promontory on one corner of the little frith, and gave a stronger contrast to the softly-sloping shallow beach.

The dullness of the journey was much aggravated by the uncertainty of the number of *li* we had to travel before

coming to a suitable resting-place. Since leaving the Wall we had reason to believe that instead of three lí to a mile, as on the Chinese side, the inhabitants counted only two, and as this made a material difference where the road was parcelled out by us into so many stages each of 120 lí—three of these to a mile—enquiries were frequent when the long day's allotment seemed never likely to be overcome by any amount of trotting and urging onward.

To our query of how many lí it still was to such and such a place, which we had resolved to make our evening's halt, some dotard old villager would look at us bewildered, with eyes staring and mouth a-gape, and unable to utter a word. 'Shin Shan, toh-sha lí lu?' would be repeatedly dinned into his venerable ears, until one almost gave up the attempt to make him understand his own language, and inform us how many lí it was to Shin Shan; and when about to leave in despair and vexation at the stupidity of the amazed bumpkin, there was little consolation or benefit to be derived from his suddenly coming to himself, and bawling out in an off-hand way, as he wheeled on his heel, 'Shin Shan is twenty lí, *or more*.'

The six-and-a-half miles would be carefully computed by the time it would take us to traverse a rugged patch of country. Mayhap a dreamy sort of a little village would lead us to hope that our day's toil was over, and that the inn about which we had been told at our last night's quarters, was ensconced somewhere in the short, tree-shaded street before us. 'Shumah te fang?' one of us would call to a browned son of toil enviously reclining on a rest-inviting natural couch near his cottage door, pretty confident that we had at last attained Shin Shan, and that the inn was ready to receive us. In vain, however. The never-absent pipe was unremittingly puffed away at as he listlessly looked at us and tried to think, and the question would be repeated again and again, each time more distinctly, slowly, and

emphatically, and each time with a larger admixture of that piquant *grasseyement* and profound, guttural enunciation that I believed the perfection of the spoken mandarin tongue.

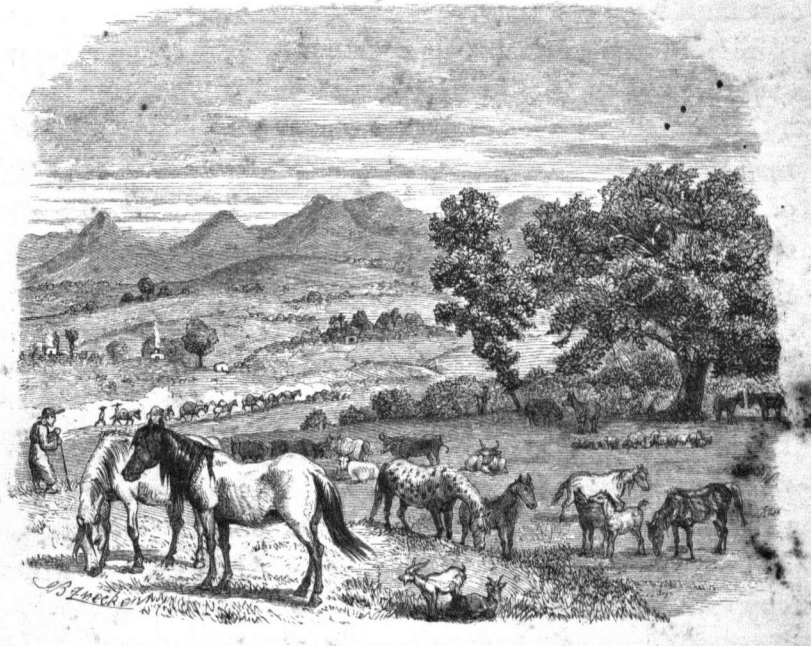
Banishing to unmentionable regions such a stupid race of people—for who so irritable and uncivil as a hungry and fatigued traveller—we would set ponies and cart in motion again, and when we had got almost beyond hail of our taciturn friend, would hear him halloo 'Shin Shan-*a*, it is *more* than twenty lí.'

'Kippletringan was distant at first a "*gey* bit," then the *gey* bit was "aiblins three miles;" then the three miles into "like a mile and a bittock," then into "four mile or thereawa." But it was a weary lang gate yet to Kippletringan, and unco heavy for foot passangers.' So we rehearsed, as we thought of Guy Mannering and his weary ride, when our distance seemed ever to be the twenty lí *and more*; and surely the vagueness of a dozen miles in Scotland or Ireland was never so tantalisingly manifested as in this day's ferreting out of Shin Shan beyond the Great Wall.

So it was long after dark, and some time had elapsed since we had seen the last ploughman in the fast vanishing twilight wending homeward with his plough, carried on a little wooden wheelless platform—dragged by his mixed string of animals, to preserve it from the wear of the road; before this distant 'fang' with its never-to-be-discovered house of entertainment was hailed, and our half-famished party joyfully put up in tolerable cleanliness and quiet.

Kinchow fu, the departmental town of one of the two divisions of the province of Shinking, and a town of the first order, was said to be only thirty lí, or about twelve miles distant from Shin Shan; though to the northward, and considerably off the direct course we had deemed it best to pursue. Still we had reasons strong enough to induce us to sacrifice half-a-day's time and labour to obtain some notion

of what is erroneously stated in a recent work on China to be the *port* of Moukden—the capital of Mantchuria—and, still greater mistake, only fifteen leagues from that city. Our carman heard the intimation with a frowning countenance and a very sluggish gait, and Ma-foo seemed more than usually put about; but there was no help for it on their side. Before the sun had time to show itself above the horizon, we were ascending the highland to the northward



Landscape in Mantchuria.

again, and climbing over rocky hills, and scampering over fields almost impassable by ruts and gaps, until at length we lighted upon what we were disposed to solace ourselves with as a real bit of Tartar scenery.

A fine piece of pasture land extends for somewhat about ten miles to the north and north-east, consisting of a long strip of level ground, with richly-green low sloping hills rising evenly to the foot of the lofty mountains about fifteen miles

off. It was speckled with large flocks and herds of cattle, ponies, sheep, goats, mules, donkeys, and pigs going to the hillsides and to the plain; producing a variety of sights and sounds quite pastoral and unique in this grain and vegetable growing land. When farm-houses with their low flat roofs almost screened by trees, and walls built of the stone cut from the neighbouring quarries, all but concealed by fences and stacks, peered out from some cheerful seclusion and sent their thin lines of blue smoke curling up into the cool morning sky, one could not help being reminded of the more fertile portions of the fells of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Yet there was the peculiarly wild and inimitable song of the solitary herdsman sounding strangely, but by no manner of means unpleasantly, in his retired post as he leant on his crutch-shaped stick; and the shrill squeak of a juvenile rustic who was lazily spreading himself out on the bare back of a shaggy pony which is attentively eyeing the movements of the erratic members of the herd, and the rider listlessly whiles away the early hours with this burlesque *concordia discors*. Healthy-looking but rather dirty men go skirling about as they with painful care gather up the much-prized fructifying element from behind the heels of the grazing quadrupeds, and deposit it in wicker baskets; the gowan and the buttercup spring up among the short herbage, and the smell of the meadow plants is extremely refreshing after a close night in a closer inn.

High up in the clouds, the lark circles and sings gushingly to the melancholy pe-weet of the startled lapwing, while the neighing of the ponies or the bleating of the sheep transports me once more to the island of the West. These ponies are larger than those I usually see, standing thirteen or fourteen hands high and well-proportioned; their colours are various, the lighter ones, especially white with bay, brown, or black spots, appear to be preferred. The cattle are not so

much amiss for a non-improving people, and are mostly of a light-red or bay colour, tolerable-sized but rather bony; they are not unlike the Irish breed of cattle, though finer skinned; and yet do not exhibit a tendency either to fatten, nor seem likely to prove good milk-givers, should their owners ever chance to test them in this quality, as they are generally flat-sided, light-bellied brutes, apparently bred only for purposes of draught. The sheep were the white-wooled, broad-tailed animals of the same stamp as those of the Cape of Good Hope and the Asiatic Steppes—excellent mutton, and as savoury as the tenderest rib of our own black-faced treasures. The goats differed in nothing from the shrivelled dwarfish toys we had met on our first day this side of the Wall; the pigs were as repulsively black and ugly as elsewhere; and the asses and mules in as good condition and well-cared-for trim as we found them everywhere.

We fell in with a long convoy going towards Shin Shan, composed of ponies, mules, and sturdy little donkeys, all carrying their loads on their backs, as the country was too heavy for wheeled vehicles; and no animals could get along better under the weight they carried than they did. The pack-saddles were worthy models for any director-general of army transport, and the packages were so carefully adjusted on each side of them that girths or surcingles were unnecessary. Some of the donkeys had as many as half-a-dozen half-empty bags of grain lying across their unprotected backs.

Turning to the eastward again—for we had been going almost due north—a fine prospect opened before us of a well-wooded plain stretching far away below, and in the middle, the notched walls of a city, and the prevalent well-defined wall-towers standing high above the trees. This was Kinchow—or as the natives pronounce it, Chin-chow, the second city in importance beyond the Wall. The view from the higher ground, just as the outline of the city is sighted, we thought

specially commendable, and would have been very guilty of an injustice to ourselves and to it, had we not drawn rein and indulged our vision for a few minutes.

Regaining the level, we soon found ourselves in the midst of cultivated fields in a forward state for an early harvest. Their banks — for here the fields were banked in from the road — were overspread with wild-flowers, among which we gladly single out the thistle, the wild-lavender, the sunflower, and the little blue forget-me-not sparkling here and there in the rank grass. The roadsides are thickly planted with old willows, laurels, and stray elms, and a large partially enclosed park of closely-set trees on our left was perhaps a promenade or pleasure resort for the townspeople, as we saw several well-dressed women stumping along with their arms in full swing to preserve their equilibrium, while they took their airing, and others were seated on low forms, having their forenoon's *on dit* or ramble into the murky precincts of the Hyrcynian wood. They were but slightly disturbed by our startling appearance so near them, for they scarcely yielded so much to fear or curiosity as to give our turbaned heads and black hairy faces more than a momentary squint before they resumed their tale.

The houses improved in exterior and size, the passengers along the side-paths became more numerous and better clad, kitchen gardens took the place of maize and millet, and everything foretold our approach to a large town. These were all in turn left behind; a wide waste of black quag-mirish ground lay between us and the south side of the city, with a rather broad, but now very shallow river—the Siau-ling-hô — running through it, but destitute of everything except some two light ferry boats in an ineffective state, and a long plank bridge laid on trestles spanning the sleepy waters for about 200 feet. This *hô* is easily forded, and in a few minutes, despite the awfully deep cesspools that forbade our advance, and nearly poisoned us when the wagon wheels

stirred them up, we were in the rancid tumbled-up suburb which we can unflinchingly pronounce to be, if possible, worse than any other suburb we have been inveigled into, for foul gases, fermenting filth, and muddy confusion.

Having got thus far, it became a serious question whether we could go on at all, as the ways were deadly sloughs more than axletree deep, and the news of our arrival having already been bruited abroad, the entire population seemed to have thought it their duty to leave everything to look and talk about us.

'What strange men!' 'what wonderful clothes!' 'what astonishing boots!' and 'what marvellous saddles and bridles!' were trifling exclamations compared to others ringing in our ears. There was no help for it but to send the cart on by an easier street to the opposite side of the town where we could meet it, and then make a hurried sally into the city.

The walls were in good repair, and offered nothing to our notice we had not already seen. The gates were wide and strong, but the great granite flags paving the way that led through them were sadly in need of repair or renewal. The city appeared to be nearly of a square form, and each side about half a mile in length. The guard-room was on our right immediately within the inner gate, and it exhibited a little more care and a better attempt at display than any other place of the kind we have yet seen in the land. It was raised three or four feet above the level of the street, and railed in front with gaudily painted spars and arm-racks, in which were a profusion of large bows and cases full of arrows, with swords and all varieties of ludicrously-shaped lances, bill-hooks, pole-axes, and pikes done up in brilliant colours. Within the little apartment some half dozen men, like field labourers or coolies, were so intent on gambling that they did or would not observe our entrance.

The street was moderately wide for a Chinese thoroughfare, and clean too; and the shops erected on each side of the

channeled way were many of them large and tidy. Those of most ample dimensions and business appearance were appropriated for the storing and sale of grain — the staple commodity; while the smaller tenements furnished the ordinary daily necessaries and luxuries consumed by the citizens. We penetrated as far as the centre of the town, where a lofty tower perforated by four gateways brought us to the junction of the four main streets, and to a point where as much of the place was visible as we cared about seeing. Close by was a main guard-room with a few unsoldier-like loons hanging about the door, and a snuffy-nosed petty officer anxiously awaiting our departure to mount a scraggy caparisoned galloway that snorted and plunged when we approached. This domestic warrior eyed us suspiciously, and rather ill-naturedly, I thought, but we were so busy in the crowd about us that we had no time to care much for his favour or displeasure.

There was a far greater attraction for us in an assemblage of stalls rigged up on the pavement under the archways. We made for them at once, as our ordinary every-day fare was becoming irksome, and the country inns afforded nothing beyond the detestable pig, garlic, and fowls in a state of marasmus, with eggs at times in the finishing stage of chemical metamorphosis. Gladdening to the eyes, and consoling to an often insulted stomach, was the sight of tastefully-arrayed quarters, legs, and loins of mutton suspended and laid out on the blue-cottoned butcher's temporary shop-front; and pregnant with savoury and nutritive reminiscences in the memory of a north-countryman was that display of neatly and well-singed sheeps' heads, ranked up on the narrow benches for the selection of customers. But most alluring of all were the baskets of peaches, nectarines, apples, and grapes displayed on every side on that hot forenoon.

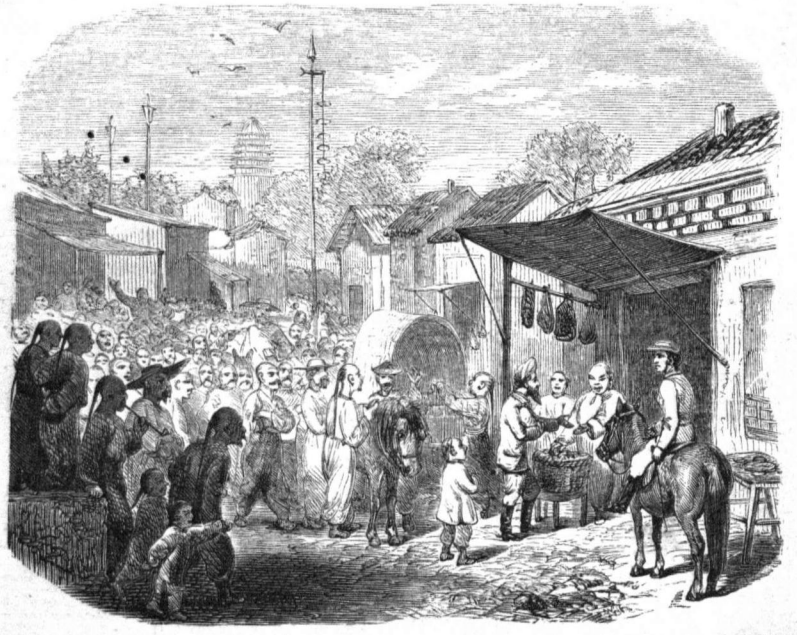
We had scarcely time to cast our eyes up each street,

and to note that the one to the east was crossed by lines from every shop, on which were fastened little triangular flags of various and bright colours, inscribed with the owners' names and occupations, giving the long vista quite a gala appearance. That to the west was inhabited by the poorer portion of the population, and contained what must have been at one time a splendid specimen of the North China pagoda, but which was now ruinous, having been stripped of the external covering of brickwork,—the internal foundation of earth and wooden transverse beams were alone remaining; while the street to the north was little better than a dirty lane through squalid cottages and smallware dealers' hovels.

We came to the conclusion that Kinchow was not the trading place we had been led to believe it was, but that it must rely for its business character on its port, which we inferred must be near the mouth of the river, some ten or twelve miles off. We gave, however, but little time for considering the subject, being rigorously intent on the purchase of fruit enough to fill every pocket and saddle-bag, and mutton-chops sufficient to give us a reparatory feast in the evening. The vendors of these goods were never, perhaps, more readily or liberally paid—though we could not complain of their charges, considering that mutton was sold to us for something less than a penny a pound, and fruit enough in quantity and quality to invalid half a regiment for about sixpence.

An immense concourse of people swarmed around us while we were initiating the butcher into the art of cutting mutton-chops, but they were remarkably civil, and said or did nothing that could give us the slightest offence. As they gathered in behind, they thrust those in front forward, and these resented the inconvenient pressure or crowding-in upon us, by setting up a counter squeeze, during which a

decently-clad young fellow was shoved over a bucket of water and got himself slightly saturated. Enraged at this, he vented his wrath on those immediately in his rear by scolding and dashing the water in handfulls over them, very much to the mirth and laughter of not only the bystanders but the sufferers themselves, who, instead of seeking reparation by a game of fisticuffs as an English rabble of the same



Victualling in Kinchow.

class would have done, seemed to enjoy the fun, and permitted us, the unwitting cause of the mishap, to depart in peace and plenty.

At some of the shop-doors, we saw what was, to us, a new variety of the lark species confined in cages, but as all were moulting, and the owners were removing them out of the way of the crowd, we had no chance of examining them. We could only discover that the people called this variety the

San-ma-chow, that the plumage on its back resembled very closely in markings that of the button quail, and that over each eye was an elliptical lemon-coloured line. Bird-collecting being then our favourite hobby, we were vexed that fortune had not favoured us here in obtaining a victim feathered sufficiently to warrant us in purchasing and preserving it for future comparison.

CHAPTER XXII.

RABID CURIOSITY — FILTHY HABITS OF THE PEOPLE — THEIR INDIFFERENCE TO THE PROPERTIES OF SOAP AND WATER — SHE-TSOU-TANG AT TIEN-TSIN — STEAMING CHINESE — COST OF VAPOUR BATH — PHYSICAL SUPERIORITY OF THE MEN OF NORTH CHINA — GOOD SERVICE — IGNORANCE OF THE GREAT ENGLISH NATION — CULTIVATION OF TOBACCO — WELLS OF TA-LING — MANTCHU HORSES — SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS.

EMERGING from the gate we had entered by, we passed eastward through another portion of the suburb, where we found the cart and our driver working up the minds of the groundlings to a pitch of rabid curiosity rather annoying than otherwise. But the *Yung-ro*—Sinensian for sheep's flesh—was safely deposited in the coolest and roomiest corner of the vehicle, the vegetables were hung from the frame of the cover, and guarding our treasures with an unusual degree of attention, we scrambled out of the uncomfortable locality, which possessed some large buildings we took, or mistook, for potteries.

All the womenkind were out to scrutinise us, and we had ample opportunity afforded to enable us to surmise that the morality of the place was not of the highest order, nor the feminine beauty or modesty other than of a very low type.

Meretricious looking Messalinas jeered and smiled wantonly towards us from beneath their indecorous masks of paint, as they uneasily tried to maintain themselves erect on their fashion-nipped feet, or leant against the walls or the shoulders of some debauched Lothario. It was, perhaps, as well that we did not understand much, if anything, of their

language. Everybody was piggishly dirty, and carried about an alluvial deposit of such a thickness, that one could scarcely forbear wondering they did not become fossilised within the muddy encasement daily and hourly accumulating about their persons.

The people of North China are certainly not addicted to tubbing, and of all of the Eastern races the Chinese in general are surely the most indifferent to personal cleanliness. At every step in one of their towns this is more and more apparent, and examine and enquire where and when you may, you can never discover at what time or where a Chinese performs his ablutions.

In the towns and villages I had passed through, especially in those situated on the banks of rivers, I looked in vain for wash-houses or yellow skins being scrubbed in the fresh flowing water; and since leaving the banks of the Peiho, had not been able to discover the faintest clue to lead me to suppose that they were at all cognisant of the properties of water and the virtues of soap.

Before my reaching so far northwards as Tien-tsin I undoubtedly thought so; and no account of bath-houses, having been given in any books on China that had then fallen into my hands, and Europeans long residents in the country, of whom I enquired, having expressed their ignorance of, or unbelief in, the existence of any such establishments, it was with some degree of pleasurable surprise that I became aware of their presence in that city, and in good numbers, too; for—and I confess it with all due sincerity and humility—I had given up our garlic-eating friends, unconditionally, to be an uncleanly race, not only from what I had been told and had read about them, but from what I had observed of their habits; and I was fully prepared to affirm that the assertion made by physiologists regarding the renewal of the body in general, and the skin in particular every seven years, did not apply to any

of the citizens of the Central Empire, who seemed to me to possess a most remarkable antipathy to the practical study of the lavatory process, in relation to its effects on the cuticle. In short I had viewed them, after a due amount of consideration, as a very large portion of the human family afflicted with a marked hereditary hydrophobic tendency. I could not avoid coinciding in the opinion expressed by the poet, when he says that—

> 'Even from the body's purity, the mind
> Receives a secret sympathetic aid.'

So I determined to institute a full investigation into the matter without delay, and if I found that I had wronged the Chinese in this respect, and that the people who dwell 'outside' had done them no greater justice, to make all the amends in my power and give the results of my researches to the world. Yet I could not banish from my recollection the case of a certain domestic at Hong-Kong, whose facial pores during the summer weather appeared to be always undergoing the most active process of distillation, and whose lavations, so far as I could witness—and sometimes I could not avoid being spectator of them—were confined to the almost circular patch of senna-coloured cuticle that covers the queer assemblage of organs constituing a China boy's face. Unless, too, my eyes were deceived, this act was perpetrated in a well-known cooking utensil containing steaming hot, and probably greasy water, into which was dipped several times an article noted down in the maid-of-all-work's inventory as a dish-cloth, but which, in this instance, was made to serve as a swab. My note-book also mentions my having encountered, even in the streets of Peking, worthy dignitaries, wearers of high class buttons, who had, contrary to what is usually observed in those parts exposed and those hidden from the effects of sun and wind, a tolerably white face and an intolerably dirty neck.

It was not difficult to find many houses on the banks of the Peiho with flaunting advertisements in large black characters painted on the white-washed walls, extolling the clear and unpolluted quality of the water used within; though it was derived from a musty river, the common receptacle for every species of garbage. The first *She-tsou-tang* or 'Wash-body house' I sought to make the subject of enquiry, was standing in a busy alley above as nasty a *cloaca* as ever graced any part of the stream, and within the ordinary enclosing wall of brick. Entering by the narrow doorway from the street, I found myself in a little courtyard strewn about with tubs, and wood, millet-stalk fuel, and rubbish, and garnished with sundry sets of Chinese costume hung to dry or be aired on lines intersecting the limited space at various angles.

A small door, with a very small sign-board, between two others that flanked each end of a one-storied building, was pitched upon as the one to introduce myself by, and I pulled it rather suddenly open without any premonitory knock—for I fear such an obliging intimation was rare at Tien-tsin, when the men from beyond the seas wished to make an irruption into the abodes of the natives—to the no small surprise of the occupants, who jumped to their feet and stared. I was justly punished for my uncivil rashness by a simultaneous, and almost overwhelming attack on my visual and olfactory nerves—those salient and most vulnerable points so difficult to defend when assailed by Chinese smells and sights—as well as the sudden inhalation of a moist hot air, not at all agreeable to the lungs after leaving the cold dry atmosphere of a winter's day.

Yet I did not effect the hasty retreat that prudence and my outraged feelings dictated, but clung to my resolve with a desperation anything but worthy of the cause. After closing the door there, I was standing alone in a long narrow room—a companion who often assists in my explorations

having fairly ran away at the first sniff when the door was opened — that appeared to answer many purposes in this *maison de bains*, but principally those of a dressing and shaving-room. It was occupied at this time by about fifteen individuals, men and boys, nearly all of whom were in a state of *impuris naturalibus*, which condition they seemed to regard as quite a matter of course. Some were seated on narrow forms quietly looking about them, while their wet skins were being slowly and spontaneously dried by evaporation, for there seemed to be few if any towels in use, or even in the apartment. Others were having their setaceous scalps and tails operated upon by the household barbers, and one or two had surrendered themselves to the soporific influences of heat and exhaustion—influences more or less perceptibly at work on all of them.

On one side of the long building was a large piece of furniture with two rows of apertures, in which were placed the clothes of the customers, many of whom were earnestly intent in hunting for entomological specimens thereon. Two or three tables afforded accommodation for the perpetually at-work teapot, from which was poured into moderately-sized cups a small quantity of the grateful infusion, to be drank leisurely by the washed beings who smoked or reclined previous to going away, or to be gulped down by the reeking and panting men who issued from a room at the other end of the one I had entered in, and to which my attention was now directed.

I had not much time to remain in the establishment, however, for my heart was fast sinking within me; though I tried strongly to get over the repugnant sensations, and imagined I should become so soon accustomed to the malodorous interior as to stay in it long enough to see all. I was quickly undeceived; for when I made a dash for this chamber, and removing my fingers from the closed nostrils in order to drag open the door,—which was heavily weighted to

keep it shut, I found myself repulsed in the utmost trepidation by a cloud of steam of such an emetical flavour that all my firmness gave way. The door was banged to; and yet the heat, the steam, and the stench that had escaped in the brief lapse of time were of such a dreadfully penetrating and disagreeable character, that no amount of resolution could induce me to look within again.

I had, however, seen enough to enable me to make out a small room about twelve feet square, the floor of which was excavated and filled with very warm water to the height of the elbows of the crowd of men who, parboiled, gasping, and perspiring, were steeping themselves in the soupy ammoniacal fluid. It was a regular *Piscinum*, or plunge-bath full of vapour and fetid water, and strong-scented human bodies, raised to a temperature far above blood-heat, and which to me would have been quite insupportable.

Even the strong Chinese who had but just emerged from it were prostrated, and for some time they suffered a good deal from lassitude. Their faces were highly flushed, their hearts palpitated violently, and their pulse was nearly twice the natural number as they lay motionless in the *cooling* room. This plunge-bath was only for the poorer people, who could afford to pay no more than a few cash for their soaking and simmering; but at the opposite end was another little chamber, less obnoxious than the other, and paved with brick. This was maintained at a high temperature by flues underneath the floor, and these, with the steaming watery vapour, caused the perspiration to trickle down my face as I tried to watch the manipulations of a light-fingered chiropodist, who, with a mysterious collection of small tools, was doctoring the toes of a fat old tradesman in a gradual state of melting-down.

This was, without doubt, a better attempt at a bath-room, but still was very imperfect, and the whole thing was so utterly devoid of the luxuriousness and enjoyment that

must have attended the old Roman bath, or that follows the Turkish refreshening one gets in the bath-houses at Constantinople, that the wonder was why the place was patronised at all—the more especially as it possessed all the disadvantages of a bad vapour-bath in saturating the air with moisture, and giving rise to great derangement of the circulation and feverishness.

At the best, the bath in China is certainly not looked upon as a social or religious institution, as we see it among other nations of the East, and those who were now employing it perhaps did so more to pass away an idle hour, secured from the cold without, than from any motives of cleanliness.

Before decamping, which I was glad to do after about ten minutes martyrdom, the landlord politely offered me tea from the public teapot, and the sole use of the heated room I had last seen at any time I chose—both of which invitations I declined as mildly as my nauseated stomach would permit. But before hurrying out, I gleaned from him that there were no fewer than thirty-two such bath-houses at Tien-tsin; that they were tolerably well frequented; that the charge for the lower orders in the scalding-room at the upper end was three cash for bathing, and three for shaving the head and combing and plaiting the queue, or about one-third of a penny for each visitor.

He also showed me a man suffering from rheumatism who was being shampooed by a professor of that treatment; the latter played a most wonderful fantasia in good time, and with every modification of sound, by means of palms, knuckles, thumbs, and sides of the hands, on the poor wretch's naked back. Following me to the grateful atmosphere of the courtyard, the proprietor led me to an underground cellar, where two men fed the fires with fuel that blazed away immediately beneath the reeking caldron overhead. I did not again risk my health in such buildings; and yet, after the unscoured mob that at Kinchow surrounded us, and whose skins were

but too frequently covered with all sorts of loathsome diseases, one could not but in charity regret that the like was not to be observed in some part of their town.

Getting clear of the large suburb and its murderous roads, we got on one of the nicest highways we had yet traversed, with good villages at frequent intervals.

The farther we passed to the north-east, the more, I think, the character of the people—physically, and perhaps also mentally—changed for the better. The men became finer, more stalwart, and more manly looking than they of the south; and though like the 'Achaian chief, for bulk conspicuous,' they were lusty and inclined to be a little plethoric and flabby, they carried themselves well; and their tall upright figures (some of them could not measure less than six feet two or three inches) their properly formed and graceful limbs and wide flat backs bespoke hale constitutions, a good climate, and immunity from those hereditary and acquired diseases, the effects of which one notices so often in the districts of the south.

Besides the height and corresponding muscular growth, their features differed much from those of the people about Canton, along the coast, and even up to Shanghai. It is a mistake to suppose that the Chinese physiognomy bears the same invariable monotony of outline and expression everywhere, that there is no appreciable difference between one Chinaman's face and another, and that a Coolie from the banks of the Canton river, the Yang-tsze-kiang, or the Peiho must needs be identical in form and feature; ever the same plenilune face, the same inelegant arrest of nasal developement, the unvarying and characteristic width across the level-topped nose-bridge, and the willow-leaf slits, through which the sparkling jet-black eyes can be seen glistening and dancing.

This popular error is quite on a par with that of the Peking and Tien-tsin artists, who represented or caricatured

all Europeans as beings with vehemently florid complexions, hooked noses, sky-blue eyes, and hair—oh travestied transcription!—of the most atrocious brick-red colour imaginable; and owes much, doubtless, to the great sameness with which the nation is costumed, the perpetual and universal mode of wearing the hair parted behind, shaving the front of the head and the eyebrows, and depriving the face of all its capillary growth, as well as to their rigid adherence to all outward forms and fashions the traveller observes, no matter in what part of the long narrow fringe of the empire he may be wending his way.

In reality, the physiognomical characteristics are perhaps as diverse, and as strictly localised—I only speak from my limited experience, but somewhat attentive observation—as we find them in Britain. This may be attributable in a very great measure to the difference in the habits of the people, rendered necessary by the nature of the climate, and the soils of the country, as well as to the stationary and quiescent tastes of the sons of Han, who seldom travel, and as seldom marry beyond their own district, or town.

In a southern city no two faces can be met in the crowded streets exactly alike, but the multitudes who throng backwards and forwards, from day-dawn until sunset, present as wide a contrast in their individual visages as could be found in Fleet Street or Cheapside.

And so it is in the north; but the faces there are inclining to oval; the orbicular outline disappears as one goes towards colder latitudes; the features become more and more aquiline, the eye-fissures less oblique and narrow, the mouths are better formed, and the cheekbones, the maxillary bones, or the teeth do not project to such an unsightly degree; while their skins are fairer and more like those of Southern Europeans, and can often be perceived to have a faint tinge of rosiness mantling out about the cheeks.

Contrary to the generally received opinion, we have many times about Peking, and all along our route, seen men who

had not attended to the calls of the barber so regularly as is the fashion, endowed with the rudiments of more than averaged sized whiskers of a few days' growth, and have met with others who had not only rusty or reddish-tinted moustaches, but queues also of the same colour, as well as eyes very closely approaching to hazel; and these exceptional departures from the natural standard were not considered as at all wonderful or extraordinary by the possessors or their friends.

Small hands and feet are the attributes of the men of the north, as well as those of the south; but the former would obtain the first rank should there be any dispute about superiority in this respect; while the other external traits are so marked that the latest new arrival in the country could with ease single out a Canton or Shanghai man in a crowd of Pekingese. If their mental faculties are less acute, and they be not gifted with so large an amount of intrepidity, low cunning, or stirring business minds, they are undoubtedly blest with a greater simplicity of heart, honesty of purpose, and a kindly straightforwardness almost unknown beyond the Shantung promontory. Their stupidity—as we were pleased to term their bluntness—and ignorance of our habits and tastes could be tolerated or remedied by patience and a little trouble, but the wily deceit of the southern kept us ever on the watch.

The ignorance of the country people we were now among certainly overwhelmed us altogether, and might have led us to form a very low estimate of their acquirements, especially concerning the worlds beyond their own remote province, had we not been aware of the torpidity of the Chinese mind in acquiring knowledge about affairs in which they could not look for profit, and the slow way in which information was spread when it became essential for the government to keep its own secrets or conceal its misfortunes.

For example, when passing along this fine wide road, our

driver, who was becoming very indifferent to everything save cash and a comfortable quarter for the night, carelessly drove one of the wheels of the cart over a big stone, which resulted in the vehicle's being thrown over and our party brought to a standstill, they being unable to get it righted again. This was near a large village, where the wonderful sight of such astounding mortals, who seemed to have dropped from the clouds, brought out the inmates of the tidy houses to look and gape.

We were in a difficulty—the cart was on its side, the mules were entangled in the harness and long traces, and our carter was raving and dancing about in the most helpless manner; so the strongest and youngest of the spectators were requested to assist in getting the machine adjusted. At first they were too much bewildered, looking at us, to heed any request or supplication, but this over, when they satisfied themselves that we were really flesh and blood and mortals like themselves, they stepped forward and soon the mishap was converted into an interesting chat with the big powerful fellows who had seized mules and carriage and put them in the way of going on in a few seconds.

One old gentleman with a sadly diminished tail, and white flowing moustache and beard, and who was evidently *the* man of the village, took the liberty to enquire what manner of men we were and where we came from. As on other occasions, the answer was that we were 'Men of the Great English Nation.'

Imagine our littleness, the diminution our British heads suffered, when the crowd stretched out their necks and opened their mouths wide to hear the answer to the old fellow's stupefying interrogation. 'What is the great English nation? Where is it?'

Could anyone conceive the existence of such 'crass ignorance' in any part of a civilised country, where a sharp and short war had brought a moiety of this English nation to within three hundred miles of the hamlet we now were in,

and had laid their own nation helpless, and at its mercy! Not to know, or have felt in some way or other, or even have heard of the presence of that 'little body with the mighty heart;' that small but invincible polypus, whose vigorous *tentacles* grapple the nearest and most distant corners of the earth; not to have listened to a whisper regarding the merits or defects of that 'precious stone set in the silver sea' of the Far West, was ignorance, to us, indeed, and at that time particularly humiliating; and never before did we experience such a sensation.

If other proofs were needed, surely this was sufficient to convince us that we had at last got beyond the beaten track, the invincible reputation, and the universal homage that we flattered ourselves was the Briton's own right all over the globe. It would have been a loss of time to attempt the enlightenment of such *lost* creatures; so, I think, after telling them that England was a country lying in the great ocean far, far under the Western Heavens, where the sun was then fast sinking, we left them, shorn of a good part, we are free to confess, of our national vanity.

There was a great change in the demeanour and physical qualities of these people, and a very peculiarly marked difference in the language spoken by them, with regard to its harsh-sounding words and altered intonation—so closely indeed it resembled our own, that when two or three persons were talking in a loud voice a little way off one could scarcely dispel the thought that we were listening to some of our own countrymen, or were travelling in some of the more remote parts of Scotland where the guttural *cht*'s, *gh*'s, the tirling *r*'s, never heard in the south of China, and the rugged aspirates with which the consonants are wrapped up in the north country *patois* were still familiar to us.

All this, we thought, must prove that we had at last got amongst the Tartars, and that any little approximation they might bear to the polished individuals on the China side of

the Wall was owing to their intercourse with each other, and to the insidious power of Chinese commerce and Chinese industry. But no; everywhere we enquired the Mantchu-*rin**—the *r* substituted for the *y* in use on the west side of the 'Barrier'—was unknown; each villager seemed rather to think we were joking him, or trying to depreciate his social *status* when we blandly asked him if he was a Tartar, or if any Tartars dwelt in his village. He was a 'Chung-kwoh-rin'—a 'Middle Kingdom man'—and did not know anything about 'Mantchu-rins,' and shaking his head as if he were rather disgusted with our civil query, would resume his elaborate scrutiny of our persons.

We had not yet reached the conquerors of the Great Kingdom; we were still amongst the Chinese, who had absorbed all the wealth, all the influence, and all the country even, in the land of the conqueror. Surely in the capital of the Mantchu race we should find them dominant, and after all our labour and fatigue be able to satisfy ourselves that such a people really held sway in their own country! The Chinese could surely not be the same brisk business merchants, the same indefatigable toilers, the same controlling element everywhere, we were fondly hoping—for we were quite willing to exchange them for another race, and were ready for almost any extreme, so long as we could lead ourselves to believe that we had left China behind, and were in reality *beyond* the Great Wall.

What struck us everywhere was the large per centage of very old men lingering on the outskirts of their homes, and looking as if life had not yet become tiresome to them, nor its cares and toils an insupportable burden; their ages we did not seek to know, nor yet those of the many old women who tottered about the doorways, some of them very much disfigured by that unsightly enlargement of the thyroid gland of the neck, called *goitre*, which they took no pains to

* Mantchu-*man*.

conceal, and from which the male sex appeared to be exempt, for we remembered the rhyme—

> 'The age of man is threescore years and ten,
> But that of an old woman nobody knows when.'

And another thing that attracted our attention very much was the all-prevalent habit of tobacco smoking, indulged in by everybody, at all hours, and in all situations. From the child scarcely yet beyond the threshold of infancy to the young maid, the mother and the grandmother, in the feminine; and from the toddling boy of four or five years old to the great-grandfather verging on a century in the masculine gender, all use the tobacco-pipe constantly. Every garden has its allotted space for the growth of the plant, no duty is imposed on its consumption, and no preparation, save drying carefully, is needed to render it fit for smoking; and the population takes so early and so kindly to the influence of the gentle weed, that it looks rather fighting against inward belief to suppose that the custom was introduced from beyond China.

In truth, the people look as if they had been smoking since the far back times of the fabulous Fohi. If we are to credit some authors, the Chinese must have known tobacco long before it was first observed at St. Domingo in A.D. 1496, for the word *tobacco* is its ancient name used by them to express the idea of tobacco; and the Chinese characters signifying this article have been found in a book which has been in existence more than a thousand years. Even now in Mongolia there is no other name for the narcotic; so that when the blustering Spaniard was getting over his nausea, and beginning to relish the agreeable sensations of the *new* luxury at Yucatan in the commencement of the sixteenth century, and Hawkins, Raleigh, and Drake were introducing it to the notice of their countrymen, and throwing out wondrous clouds of smoke in a semi-torpid

state of novel enjoyment, our mild Chinaman, his wife, and the youngest of his progeny, were thoroughly seasoned to its use, had been so for generations past, and had smoked the finely powdered leaf in these dwarf-headed pipes which give but two or three whiffs before they require replenishing.

So fixed and constitutional has the habit become, that we should not wonder to hear that it would require many royal counterblasts from the ruler of the Empire, and volumes of servile satirical poems from pet poets of royalty, with the excommunications and persecutions of pope, peer, and autocrat, to prohibit a usage which appears to have become a necessary function of life with all classes of the people. The tinder, the flint, and the steel, with the pipe and tobacco-pouch, are an essential and never absent addition to every man's costume; and even the nobility, when they are carried out in their chairs, have these implements suspended near them. The first thing in the morning and the last act at night; the earliest manœuvre on entering a room, and the finishing one in quitting it, is to fill the everlasting calamut, and smoke it with as staid and contented an air as possible.

Truly it seems with them that—

> 'To rich or poor, in peace or strife,
> It smooths the rugged path of life.'

Did it not destroy their teeth, and by the prejudicial way in which they inhale the smoke and expel it through their nostrils, cause them to make such abominable noises at the back part of their throats, one could scarcely find fault with the practice, which appears moreover to be quite in keeping with the lymphatic temperament of the smoke-makers.

Nothing seemed so odd and yet so natural as to witness a whole household—men, women, and children—seated before their door, and looking quite sedate as they sent out the quickly succeeding jets of reek, without attempting to break

the dead silence that the social indulgence needed to produce its harmonising effect.

Towards evening we were passing over high ground again, and felt relieved when the excellent water drawn from the wells of Ta-ling—a very large village or small town situated in a most agreeable locality—had been swallowed by the half-gallon. Some of the inns were good, and looked inviting, but we had still some four or five miles of the day's forty-five to finish before we could rest ourselves. We, therefore, reluctantly left them behind. At the door of one of them stood three remarkably fine ponies—one, a chestnut, was particularly neat and active looking.

We descended to the plain once more, about a mile from the town, and came to the Ta-ling hô, a dull muddy river running through a marshy melancholy waste, where the scanty fields of grain on either side were highly banked up with earth to keep out the water during the flood seasons. There was nothing at all in the place to deserve attention; but in the palmy days of the Mantchus, some two centuries ago, in the neighbourhood of this river, and in that of the Liau hô, which we were approaching day by day, there were more than forty establishments or studs for breeding horses, then the greatest riches of the Tartars, and for which a Mantchu had more care than for himself.

In a somewhat rare and curious book* published in Paris, in 1770, containing an eulogistic poem on the capital city of Mantchuria and its neighbourhood, composed by the learned Emperor Kienloong, printed in sixty-four different forms of Chinese writing, and translated from the Mantchu language by the father Amiot, his Majesty says, 'the pleasant banks of the Ta-ling hô, and the great country that it waters, are the places most suitable for the location of studs. The mildness of the climate, added to the good qualities of the water,

* Eloge de la Ville de Moukden et de ses environs; Poeme composé par Kienlung. Traduit par Amiot. Paris, 1770.

renders the pasturage fattening and of a most agreeable quality. In the beginning of the spring, the underground sources of the river commence to rise and spread, and accelerating the growth of the grass, covering it always with a genial dew which keeps it tender. In the hottest time of summer, there reigns in this region a perpetual salutary freshness that banishes from it those annoying insects so common in the low and damp districts.

'It is here, in these delicious prairies, where can be multiplied to an infinite degree the superb races of the different kinds of sorrel-coloured steeds, the graceful light bays, the golden bays, and the deep brown shades, with the piebalds and other mixtures. Is it then a matter of surprise that we should have horses without number, of all kinds and of all qualities? If those which are for racing purposes have a swiftness without comparison; if those which are for parade have a step so majestic, an expression so noble and characteristic; if those which are destined to draw our chariots and to bear our burthens, or to perform our heaviest labours, are most vigorous and indefatigable? No; we are not telling an untruth when we aver that the Mantchu horses are, in every respect, the first and best horses in the universe. Assuredly the attention paid to preserve them from all deteriorating influences; the multiplied cares taken to procure for them at all seasons good pasturage; and the rest and the freedom we leave them to enjoy at certain times for the reparation of their strength, or to refresh them after their fatigues, ought to render them such.'

This rather highflown effusion was written in those days when the Mantchus were formidable; when entire villages were given up to the soldiers of Mantchuria, in which they exercised their military evolutions with perfect freedom, and always with the advantage of having good forage for their horses — for the Mantchu army was almost, if not entirely, composed of cavalry. Nowadays, however, the

face of the country must have become altered very much, and those agricultural, or rather pastoral, warriors have either died out, or betaken themselves to some other distant province, for we could never catch the slightest clue to any of them or their haunts.

It was necessary for us to look out for a ford, as the river and its banks looked suspiciously deep and soft; so we bent our way a little southward where a small house, like a ferry station, promised us something of the kind. The locality was very lonely and bleak, and though in other places, throughout the day's journey, the population appeared to be pretty well diffused, and somebody was always on the move, here all seemed deserted.

Looking back towards the village, we were rather surprised to find three horsemen coming rapidly behind us, mounted on the ponies we had so much admired at the inn door. When they saw that we had noticed them, one of the three wheeled suddenly round and galloped off in the opposite direction, leaving the two to overtake us, which they certainly were not long in doing. I, being the hindermost of our little train, came first in contact with them, and had but brief space allowed me to scrutinise their exteriors before a conversation was attempted by the one who was the best mounted, and on the good-looking chestnut too.

He was well—even stylishly—dressed in a long robe of light-blue figured silk, spotlessly-white socks and faultlessly-shaped shoes. This man had a peculiarly southern look about him, quite uncommon on the eastern side of the Wall. His head was carefully shaved, and his tail hung down between the shoulders in a long glossy plait, much too fine for such a rude district; while his features were thoroughly those of Canton, and covered by a thin translucent skin of a yellow beeswaxy tinge, quite foreign to the North. There was a very peculiar glance of cunning and deceit in the ever-moving black eyes, as they darted over me and my

horse, and settled at last on the saddle and saddle-bags; but his voice puzzled me altogether as he came close up and brusquely addressed some question — it was so thin and shrill, and so very distinct in its every tone, and yet so very strange sounding that I could not comprehend a word of the tongue or dialect in which he spoke.

His companion was a jolly-looking fellow with lots of dash about him, though he was rather stout, and kept aloof from us. He was not so well dressed as our *quasi* friend, and wore a blue turban twisted round the upper part of his great swarthy bullet head, after the fashion of the Fuhkienese —who to this day hide their badge of submission to the Mantchu rule by concealing their shorn scalps and crinal appendages with a covering of this description. He tried to look indifferent to us, and yet I caught him several times scanning minutely ourselves and cart. He of the gay coat put a question to me which I could not make out—for the accent was altogether mystifying, and the sounds nasal and unpleasant in my ears.

I told him I did not understand his speech, though I partly guessed he wished to know where we came from. Still he repeated the question several times with a forwardness and pertinacity I did not like. At last he left me, and passing the cart—into which he very impudently peered—he rode up to M., who was leisurely riding on before, and began the same obtrusive enquiry. M. understood him a little, though his confidence in the man was far from being great. Abruptly he asked 'Where did we come from, and where were we going to? What had we in the cart, and how many dollars did we carry?'

Unconsciously I caught my hand unbuckling the retaining strap of the right-hand saddle-bag, in which the dispeller of six nestled securely, and already grasped the comfortable butt of the weapon—'and what might I have in the bag he saw me opening?' M. was very cool and civil, and tried to

answer him as well as he could, though cautiously and slowly, as if he had a difficulty in comprehending his meaning—which, perhaps, he had.

'Had we any more men, and how many?' he finally queried, as he looked away up the road seemingly expecting some more of us to make their appearance. Now the similarity in sound between the words *yin*, man, and *tien*, days, perplexed M., who luckily thought it was days he meant, and answered twelve—as that was the time we had been on the road. The stranger's face betrayed instant disappointment, and he addressed Ma-foo — the groom — in a diminished air of haughtiness, though yet in a somewhat rude manner. Seeing he could elicit no satisfactory information from him—for the crafty little man was evidently strongly suspicious of the character and occupation of his interrogator, and parried his questions very adroitly—he started off with his silent friend towards the ferry-house near which we now were, shouting out that the river was too deep and dangerous to ford, and that there were no boats.

Curiously enough, about a dozen scampish-looking rascals appeared all at once around the doorway. The inquisitive gentlemen halted and dismounted among them, and began a lively discussion concerning something of importance, which evidently did not please them. There was no ferry-boat, and nothing was left to us but either to stand the chances of an encounter with this gang, or swamp, swim, or ford the river as well as we could.

It did not require a second's consideration to choose the latter, and in a very few minutes we had plunged through the deepest part, and were gaining shallow ground on the opposite side.

The boldness of our resolve quite astonished the ragamuffins we had left behind, for they stood looking after us a long time, until the tall millet of the tilled ground hid us from their gaze. Still we looked wistfully up and down

every narrow lane, and behind the houses and fences of the villages we came to, ready for any sudden emergency—for the place was so suitable for an attack, and the whole business wore such a dubious character, that we were constrained to be on our guard, and to exhibit as much discretion and self-command as possible.

The darkness that set in soon after did not reassure us, and we toiled on across another small stream, and through a murky chaos of broken ground and fields that set our means of keeping on the path almost at defiance, momentarily expecting some alarm, when, heartily tired, we found a large inn under the lee of a long ridge of sandhills; and making sure that it contained no vestige of our enterprising friends, or anything on which we could ground a doubt, we sought its shelter for the night. The courtyard was a very large place, surrounded on three sides by the ordinary small single-storied rooms appropriated by numerous travellers, with very showy fronts, and dusty interiors strongly impregnated with the villanous smell of the native spirit, samshu.

The yard was filled with some score teams of pack-mules and ponies, feeding out of huge stone troughs, and dozens of dusty men smoking or eating their evening meal, seated on the ground out of doors; as well as with heavy and light carts strewn and blocked up in every corner.

We, of course, tried to get the best unoccupied rooms in the establishment, but officials and travelling merchants had arrived before us, and our choice was limited to three vile places into which fresh air had not been admitted for years. Fixing on one of them, the walls of which showed tasteful designs in China ink by some amateur, and verses of poetry illustrating the beauties of little cottages built in rice swamps under the leaves of willows and surrounded by bamboos, we thrust open the windows, much to the dismay of the attendants, who must have thought we were mad, and began slaying all the lively spiders and scorpions found out of their

dens in the ledges and crevices. We soon had dinner, and then, preparing for any unwelcome visit from without during the night, laid ourselves out to sleep.

The thunder and lightning during many hours was quite appalling, and kept us awake for a long time, but sleep came at last. The weariness induced by our long seats in the saddle sent us into a blissful oblivion, undisturbed by any thieves or cut-throats who might have made the village of To-lo-po-tenza their lurking-place.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EARLY HOURS — GRANITE HOUSES — CARRIERS' CARTS — FEAR OF HIGHWAYMEN — MARSHY COUNTRY — SALT MANUFACTORIES AT TEN-SHA-HOR — A FUNERAL PARTY — NORTH CHINA SONG-BIRDS — THEIR CAPTURE, TREATMENT, AND QUALITIES — TRAINED FALCONS FOR BIRD-CATCHING — THE PE-LING — THE WHA-MÍ — A FIXTURE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

NO matter however early in the morning we contrived to get up, our fellow-travellers were sure to be away on their journey long before us, and with so little sound of preparation as scarcely to disturb our repose. This morning the yard was quite untenanted when four o'clock found us getting ready to depart, and rather ashamed at being the last to leave, we were more so when six o'clock saw us only moving through the gateway: this was partly owing to the sulkiness of the carman, who was in a shocking bad temper because he had prematurely insisted upon, but did not obtain, the second half of the contract-hire agreed to be paid to him on reaching our journey's end, and partly to the rebellious dispositions of the two mules, who behaved themselves so badly when being harnessed and put in the traces, that the cross-grained driver was nearly worried out of his senses.

Not many miles after leaving this village with the unpronounceably long name, we came to another one, that had been erected with taste and a view to durability, as well as with a strong leaning to the curious and fanciful — for every house and garden wall was strongly built of cream-coloured granite, in which the feldspar was nearly, if not altogether absent, and the larger pieces of which, disposed to face the outer courses, were covered with beautifully distinct arborescent markings

of black oxide of manganese delineated exactly like a fossil plant.

I had the good fortune to pick up two or three specimens lying in the road, and of course a rush of surprised villagers was made towards me, as I dismounted to pack them in my saddle-bags, to see whatever I was going to do with the useless pieces of stone. Their observations to each other were possibly laughable enough, and perhaps the conversion of the petrous materials into medicine was not at all beyond their imaginings.

A few miles farther on, we had some intricate piloting to steer safely through the long single street of another village —Shin-shan Shan—where a crowd of carriers' carts laden with large bales of goods, which one of the drivers told us was *yang pu*, or 'foreign cloth,' were halted to refresh the already tired horses on their way towards the Great Wall.

At this place, where the long range of mountains (our constant and yet ever-varying companions since leaving Tien-tsin) terminates by a very lofty needle-like scar of greyish-blue rock, standing a little apart from the main chain, the road divides into two branches. One circling away to the northwards was the highway to the capital city of Mantchuria; the other, bending a little to the south-east, led to Newchwang, the new treaty port of the distant north, as we believed and relied on as the place where we were again to see Europeans, and rest ourselves before going farther on. As luck would have it, our blundering carter selected the wrong road of the two, and took us along that to Moukden half a dozen miles before we thought of enquiring; and then to gain a shorter way back to the proper track we floundered about for nearly two hours among the fields and mazy little lanes.

Since our adventure with the two mysterious strangers at the Ta-ling hô the previous evening, Ma-foo had been rather fussy and odd in his speech and behaviour, and when we

were riding at a quickened pace on a very lonesome part of the way indeed, he, half in dread, whispered to us to get our arms ready quickly, as the country thereabouts was infested by wicked robbers, who were mounted on the tallest and fleetest horses, and were very bold. There was little getting ready needed, as our revolvers were always at hand. My companion released the very reliable cut-and-thrust Japanese short sword from the rug it was wrapped in all day, and disposed it in a most convenient fashion in front of the cart.

The country was becoming so bare and miserable, and so barren in interest, that a romantic tussle with a manageable number of Chinese Turpins would have been rather a *desideratum* than otherwise, and we almost began to long for a sight of such formidable marauders; but our taste for excitement was, fortunately, perhaps, not indulged by any such meetings, and we had to move along drearily through a long low marsh, as level as a bowling-green, with slimy pools of brackish water tenanted by curlews and gulls, the spotted red-shank, the night-heron, the bar-tailed godwit, the water rail, and the funny little green dwarf bittern (*Botaurus minutus*), and on seemingly endless acres of blackish bog — quaggy and treacherous, often, for our ponies and the cart — covered with heath, over which isolated droves of ponies wandered, and the plover sent out its melancholy wail.

The hamlets were few and far between, and boasted of nothing but mud walls and misery. Sometimes we were enlivened by a few yards' ride after a small hare, or took a revolver *pot*-shot at odd collections of wild geese or ducks, but without inflicting any serious bodily harm on them. The few people we saw were very poor and awfully dirty, yet the females clung to the extremity of fashion and limped about on the small feet as if they were determined to brave even poverty to maintain their deformed notion.

Since leaving the hills we found the humblest houses built of mud, mixed with chopped straw to hold it together; and

others, a degree better, were rigged up with the unbaked, or rather sun-dried bricks one saw so frequently laid out where they had been manufactured—just as the houses of Mesopotamia are at the present day, and as they were in ancient Babylonia. Occasionally we see a muddy being tempering the clay and mixing it with chopped millet-straw—quite after the manner of the aboriginal Syrian—before he moulded it into the large flat bricks so easily built and cemented together.

The ground at last even began to lose its covering of heath, wide stretches of land lay before us quite impracticable for man and beast; and bottomless quagmires, into which we might at any moment have been plunged and lost, were on either hand—so that we had long détours to make, and great semicircles to describe, in following the right direction.

The vegetation disappeared altogether, and the brown earth became encrusted with a thick efflorescence of salt. Here the preparation of this useful condiment began, and near the villages immense rectangular stacks, about twelve or eighteen feet high, were reared in lines, consisting of a thick covering of smoothly-plastered mud enclosing the much-prized article of commerce. This might be, we calculated, about thirty miles from the waters of the gulf.

We were much annoyed at having made so little progress before the midday breakfast-hour, and yet we had much to be thankful for, as had the weather broken, and a heavy shower of rain come down, we should have been worse off. Never was a poorer collection of inns or houses anywhere, for they could scarcely afford accommodation to the veriest beggar. Often and over again we went out of our way to reach a village where we might halt for two hours, but each time without a chance of getting a house fit to put a donkey in.

One place larger than the rest—Ten-sha-hor—with acres of salt stacks ranged out like burial-mounds, gave us the only opportunity, though a pitiable one. But there was a

funeral going on, and howls and lamentations, outrageous and derisive enough for an Irish wake, bellowed out from a house opposite the dirty hostel. Numbers of women and children in white, with white bands round their heads and artificial white flowers fastened on them, thronged outside the door of the house of mourning, and shrill music not at all unlike that from the Irish bagpipe, with the doleful half-dozen notes of the flute and tomming of the little drums, sounded strangely so near the dead. The procession issued from the house of mourning, and the poor lame women limping painfully over the uneven ground proceeded to a little altar in which a boy, smiling and playful, was lighting some incense sticks to propitiate Foh. All the way they sobbed and howled in the greatest tribulation, until reaching the steps of the small edifice, they knelt down and knocked heads several times against the bricks, then got up and began to laugh and titter as if nothing had been the matter.

At first we felt inclined to respect their grief and sympathise with their bereavement, but seeing that it was but the semblance of sincerity and a mere fashion, we thought no more about them. We might have remembered reading in their records of how in the time of the Luh Chaou (A.D. 552), there were persons to assist to weep at funerals; but finally the bereaved came to the disgraceful practice of hiring certain people to weep for them. Something of the sort was evidently going on here.

We breakfasted in a back kitchen foul and filthy, and with an atmosphere made so heavy by the pungent sickly smell of the native spirit, samshu, as to be barely respirable. The wretched landlord was a dealer in all kinds of stomach-ruining goods, and greatest of all in the fiery alcohol, that he kept in vats carefully fastened against the wall, and surrounded with the small pewter measures in which he served it. We did not stay long here, but just sufficient time to enable Ma-foo, the good Catholic, to imbibe—along with the driver

—enough of the brain-bewildering stuff to set them both maudlin and forgetful of everything save more liquor.

In the afternoon the roads became dreadful, and the whole country low and wet. Where they were all but impassable, some attempts were made to drain off a portion of the water into wide ditches, which were bridged over by felled trees, and paved by bundles of the all-subservient millet-stalk. We crossed several small streams, and a pretty considerable river, almost as wide as the Peiho, and apparently subjected to the influence of the tides. There were no boats on it, however, though the high wide-spanning wooden bridge, constructed of strong beams of timber, along which we passed, would have allowed moderately-tall junk-masts to go underneath.

It was in vain that we tried to get the designations of these *hô*'s; for the natives were so dull and stupid as not to be able to tell us what names they bore, or even those of the half-immerged villages, where poverty and neglect were only too conspicuous.

Yet in these hovels the great fancy of the Northern Chinese for song-birds prevailed; and in the most degraded den of mud, plastered up like a martin's nest, where the occupants, one would be inclined to say, could not find accommodation or food enough for themselves to keep nature together, the cage and the warbler would almost as certainly be met with as the inevitable destitution and dirt. No other people could be fonder of, more attentive to, or understand better the habits and the treatment necessary for the preservation in health of cage-birds, as well as the way to domesticate them, so as to make them retain their un-saddened song when caught wild. This is a pleasant trait to observe, and the more so as kindness is the prevailing ingredient in the work; and the little favourites always look as happy and gay in their bondage as if they never had known liberty. There is such a great variety of birds whose song is

fine and varied, that the Chinese have an abundance to choose from, and always select what we should consider the best.

Canaries are unknown, and many of our birds are not to be found, but there is a remarkable mixture of Himalayan, tropical, and Japanese specimens which arrive when the cold winter has passed away. These remain for a brief space, until the heat of the plain becomes too intense for them, and then they wing their flight towards the mountains and the more temperate provinces, returning in the autumn, when the fierce summer has passed, and before the very cold weather sets in. These are the busy times for the bird-dealers; and the markets are literally crowded with the baskets and cages full of the captured victims, as well as with dozens of choice specimens carried about for sale on perches.

Boys and men go off to the woods to pursue their brief vocation, armed with long bamboo rods, fitting into each other, and the ends smeared over with a kind of gum, more tenacious than bird-lime. Taking post alongside the trunk of a tree under the wide branches, they wait until they see an unwary warbler perch itself fearlessly on a twig. No sooner has it done so than it receives a gentle tap on the shoulder, and, ere a minute has elapsed, it is transferred to a wide basket covered with cotton stuff.

But the most expert and artful bird-catchers are they who employ the yellow-footed or peregrine falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), and the hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)—which was formerly used to hunt small birds in our own country. These hawks are hooded, and their wings are confined by the brail until the very moment they are wanted. On the left wrist of the hunter is strapped a neat reel filled with fine but strong twine, one end of which is tied to one of the falcon's legs. Whenever the quick eye of the dealer sees a bird on the ground the brail is removed, the hood slipped off, and the bird's head being turned in the direction of the prey, a jerk of the arm sends him off, the reel spins round, and before the

incautious feeder has time to move a wing it is prostrate, and the hawk standing proudly above, holding it down to the ground with the extended claws of one foot, while the skillful man runs towards the spot, reminding the victor by a gentle tug of the string, as he approaches, that in his victory he is to be merciful to the vanquished. Not so much as a feather is damaged by these well-trained birds; indeed, the most perfect ornithological specimens to be procured in the markets are those caught by falcons.

It is astonishing the number of birds a boy with one hawk will capture in a day. He has a lot of little bags, with a square bit of wood in the bottom, into which he thrusts the seizures as soon as he has made them; and at the end of his day's labour you may see him coming into the town surrounded by these receptacles slung to his waistband.

When brought to the market, if to be kept or sold on a perch, and made pets of, the terrified unfortunates are seized in the gentle grasp of their owner, and plunged into a bucket of cold water once or twice. This *Rareyfying* is successful; the bird, instead of being frightened to death by such an apparently cruel ordeal, calms down rapidly, looks stupid for a little bit, and then settles on a perch without any signs of alarm or timidity. In a day or two it will recognise the call of its favourite master; will have permission to fly away for a short distance, and then return to the wrist or the spar on being called, and do other little feats rather surprising for the short time it has been in training.

All the cage-birds are, I think, caught in the fields and woods by glue and hawk, for I never could discover if the Chinese practised, or were acquainted with, the breeding and rearing small birds in confinement.

Foremost of all the captive minstrels, for the loudness and surprising melody pealed forth from its little throat, in resounding,—almost uproarious, bursts of glee, is the North China lark—the *Pe-ling*—the 'hundred-spirited bird' (*Mela-*

nocorypha Mongolica), undoubtedly the most industrious vocalist, as it is the cheeriest of all Chinese birds. On it is lavished the greatest amount of admiration and tender care; and the poorest householder thinks himself well provided when he can sit and listen to the inspiriting chaunt of his own *Pe-ling*.

Right well and gratefully it repays the esteem manifested towards it, and the watchful solicitude with which its wants are all anticipated by its enraptured guardians; for surely never did feathered minnesinger, pent within a tiny circular apartment with a low roof, and surrounded by closely-set bars of bamboo laths, warble such a pleasant ditty or carol such ravishing concord. To see the little creature in a perpetual state of motion, circling round, now on one side,—with his yellowish-white breast barred by a black collar fully exposed to view; then on the other—showing his rusty-coloured back; upon the miniature circular platform raised for it in the middle of the floor, or springing up with joy against the tassels of red silk, charitably suspended from the roof of the cage to warn the heedless musician of danger in his impassioned gestures and dulcet flights, and then going down again, and round and round; one can but say that the 'hundred-spirited' bird is worthy of the title, for its legs and wings appear never to be tired; and to hear its everlasting lay launched out in every street with undiminished vigour and harmony, from sunrise until after sunset, in that limited space, the inclination is strong to believe that the happy creature is still singing over its nest in the fields, and has never been subjected to the spirit-breaking sadness of such an unnatural round-house.

It is difficult to purchase a good Mongolian lark in any of the towns—their proprietors sometimes refusing altogether to sell their pets—and when it is a good imitator, and can be bought, it will bring a large price. The market value of a lark that will imitate the mewing of a cat nine times—and the imitation is often so complete as to defy the criticism

of the most sensitive ear, is thirty dollars—over six pounds. And there is, next in value, the brownish-yellow Crying Thrush, with the white eyebrow,—the *Wha-mí*, or 'pictured eyebrow' (*Garrulax Sinensis*), one of the state prisoners to be found at nearly every door, and a bird of some price when in good voice. This thrush the Chinese are very fond of, and its mellifluous notes, so full and free, like those of our own song thrush, trilled *con amore* after the heat of the hot summer day has passed, when it seems to exult in the diminished temperature, possesses something like enchantment for our celestial friends.

It is richest in sweet melody in the gloaming, its few notes ringing out with startling beauty at that time, and its society is then most courted. An aged Chinese friend of mine, who had kept a *wha-mí* in perfect song for some years, used to be visited towards sunset by a tottering old man, who carried his pet thrush in its cage for a distance of some two miles, catching for it grasshoppers and insects by the way, merely for the sake of hearing its voice in competition with that of the other bird.

No sooner were the two brought near each other in the open air, than the first note from either of them excited the most active musical tussle, which would continue for half an hour or more in the centre of a crowd of admiring Chinese, who would never be tired listening to their vocal exertions. Other members of the thrush family are domesticated, such as the Blue Rock Thrush (*Petrocincla cyanus*), the Pallid Thrush (*Turdus pallidus*), and the Siberian Thrush (*Turdus Sibericus*), all of which are numerous around Tien-tsin and Peking;* but they all yield in estimation to the Crying Thrush.

* I must not forget to include another beautiful Thrush—the first perfect specimen brought to England being found by me near Tien-tsin, which has been described as a new variety by Mr. Swinhoe in the Ibis, and named by him *Orcetes gularis*.

The gaudy Golden Oriole (*Oriolus Sinensis*), with its brilliant orange or primrose-coloured body, fantastically barred in various ways with streaks of the deepest black, is also a candidate for favour; but it does not succeed to any great extent; for it is only when at large, in the coolest time of the day, and in the thickest woods, that its fine flutina-like *aria* seizes on the willing ear in pleasant snatches, now and again; differing but little from that of its European congener, which the Italian agriculturist fancies to be the bearer of the pleasing intelligence that the figs are ripe, by its chaunting something resembling the words — 'Contandino è maturo lo fico.'

It is indeed delightful to hear this bird's song when the eye is at the same time charmed by those exquisite and singular little denizens of the trees, the Paradise Fly-catchers (*Muscipeta Paradisi*)—delicate and lovely enough, assuredly, for that supernal region, as they twirl and flutter about on the branches, or dart off gaily in pursuit of insects. So handsome is the little steel-blue head, adorned with an ever-rising and falling crest, the grass-green mouth, the eyelids and bill tinted like the bloom on the grape, the snow-white body and surprisingly long tail, with each milky feather trimmed by such a delicate border of black, that my eyes were almost dazzled when I first saw these sylvan beauties fluttering about, interspersed at odd times with the chocolate-coloured variety (*Muscipeta Incei*).

Other favourites are numerous; but of these the Gorget Warbler, or *Hoong-bwa*, Red-throat (*Calliope Lathamii*), and the Blue-throated Warbler (*Phœnicura Suecica*), are the tamest, though their note is low and plaintive, like that of the Robin Redbreast. They stand any amount of handling, for I have seen their attendants wash them in weak tea, when their plumage was soiled or the birds were sickly, and wrap them up in a comfortable bandage without injury; but I always liked the little green *Pye-yur* —

'White Eye'—(*Zosterops japonica*), with its pearly spectacles and humble twitter. So do the Chinese; for it is such an affectionate and sociable little fairy, that in pairs it will live a long time quite happily, but alone it soon pines and dies.

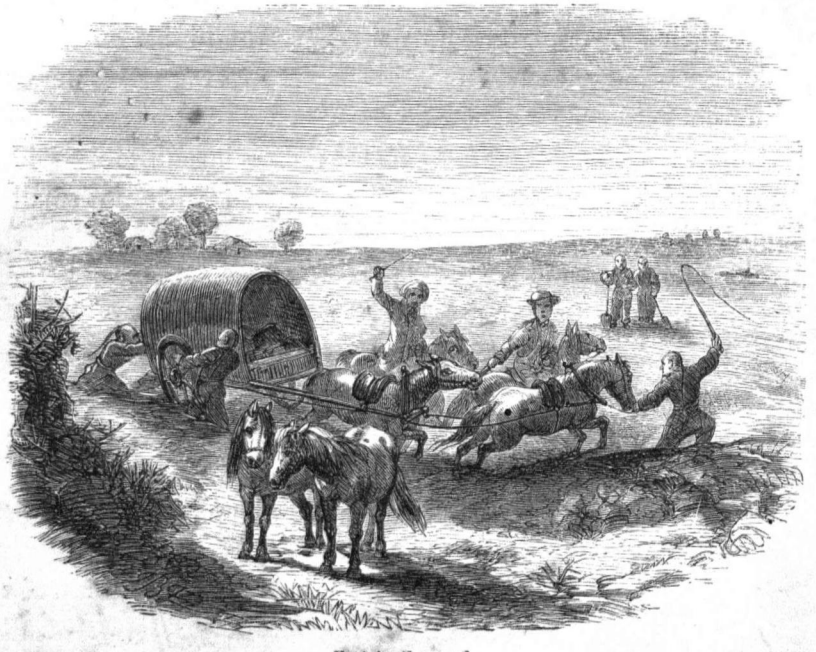
At the end of one of our dullest day's marches through a most desponding region, seven-eighths of which must have been mud and morass, we were not very exacting in our selection of a quarter for the night, and fixed on the roadside caravansary of Tu-kia-tai. The host and his numerous servants did all in their power to make us snug for the night. A herd of donkeys in a shed not far from our room seemed to be of a different mind, for during the long hours of darkness they kept up a truly heartrending concert of braying quite beyond the powers of human endurance. It was with no small delight that, about three o'clock, we hailed the earliest streaks of dawn, and began to pack up once more, little refreshed by the five or six hours' rest. We were desirous of reaching Newchwang by the evening, as we were only about fifty miles from it.

As usual in all such cases, the cart was not movable until nearly six. The carter muddles about as if he had not slept for a fortnight, and Ma-foo is horribly redolent of decayed samshu, while his brain must be quite addled by the large doses he has swallowed before going to sleep, as he always did, in his clothes—for he was barely conscious of what he was about when he poured some scalding tea into the carter's shoe, and sent him limping and howling into a corner, where he all but took leave of his senses.

No sooner had we emerged from the gate of the inn, and got on the pathway, than the stupid fellow, who would do nothing but sit on the shaft when the roads were bad, to save his nearly worn-out shoes, allowed the mules to take the muddiest part of the road. Before we could call or stop them, the cart was buried over the axletree in the most

adhesive compound imaginable, and the mules standing up to the necks and hocks, unable to stir. All the *tah*, *tahs*, and *chur*, *churs*, of the agitated Jehu were unavailing, except when the shaft beast, at the first sound of his voice, made a bound, sunk on its knees, and would have been suffocated had I not rushed to the rescue, at the imminent risk of losing my riding-boots — the only pair I had — and got its head raised above the mess.

The weather promised well, and the sun had not yet



Fast in the mud.

become too warm for us; but here were all our hopes of a good morning's work shattered by the blundering and inattention of this Chinese booby. We might as well have tried to carry one of our ponies on our backs as to have moved that cart an inch out of the slough; so, after making ourselves as disgustingly dirty as the brats who burrow for coin in the Thames filth, we despatched Ma-foo back to the village to obtain the assistance of the labourers, who were assembled

in groups around the farm-houses, not yet having begun their work in the fields.

Two or three came rather reluctantly, and were slow in aiding us. Shovels were had recourse to to clear a way for the long-projecting end of the axletree, and to make a somewhat firm track to more favourable ground. But this was no trifling matter; and the Chinese were loath to enter the mud after they had seen our driver make a spring towards the middle of it and sink to the thighs, where, with a most determined struggle, he had enough to do to release himself, with the loss of his blue soft-soled shoes, left at the bottom.

After a long struggle, in which we had all to put our hands and shoulders to work, we were just on the point of making a determined effort for the emancipation of the vehicle, when the leading mule, which had remained attached by its traces to the axletree, and was standing to one side, suddenly bolted across to the other, and before anyone had time to guard against the catastrophe, the unfortunate driver, who had been tugging and grappling at the shafts, was lying deeply in the mud with one of them on his stomach, and looking as helpless and terrified as if in the agonies of death. This accident, occasioned as it was by his own mule tripping up his heels by the traces, caused a most painful fit of laughter impossible for some minutes to repress, which drove the object of it, when at last he was dragged up, into a flaring rage, and to the utterance of all kinds of strange expressions.

After an hour's very hard work we got the cart removed out of present difficulties, and on to a sound scrap of ground. We offered our valuable assistants some money for the good service they had done us, and as a recompense for the soiling their clothes had undergone, but strange enough they would take no reward from us except thanks. When they were told that we were far-travelled strangers, and found us ready to laugh and joke with them, they seemed to change their

manner altogether, and from a cold unwillingness to come near us at first, they were ready to do any service we might have desired.

It was of no use pressing them to accept of the trifle—take it they would not, though silver must have been rather a rarity among them. So after warmly thanking them we got on the move again, through awful sloughs and deep ruts, apparently specially selected by the begrimed conductor in the perversity of his disposition, or from an irremediable stupidity natural to him, but characteristic of his countrymen in general, in preferring the sloughs and ruts of antiquity, whether leading to interminable disaster or irremovable obstacles. If only two roads presented themselves before him, either from blunted sagacity or a stupid tenacity of purpose, he was sure to take the wrong one. On he proceeded, sitting on the front part of the wagon, eternally chucking to his team, and wagging his thin legs, which are but scantily encased in dirty blue-cotton bags that serve the purpose of, but can never be designated as trousers; or drumming his thigh continually with the only hand left at liberty, he jogged along as he best could, leaving a good deal to the instinctive faculties of the quadrupeds in advance, who, long trained to pursue the beaten path, maintained the most rigid adherence to it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PASTORAL COUNTRY — 'KOONG-SHI' — FARM-HOUSES — PROFITABLE EMPLOYMENT OF SEWAGE — IGNORANCE OF DAIRY PRODUCE — HUMBLE DORMITORY — A YOUNG MANDARIN — BANKS OF THE LIAU-HÔ — BOAT VOYAGE — ARRIVAL AT NEWCHWANG — AN UNFRIENDLY RECEPTION — INHOSPITABLE LANDLORD.

BENDING a little northwards, the country commenced raising itself from the marsh and mud, and the salt efflorescence on the sun-baked crust of earth began to be succeeded by grass as the road became firmer and our progress accelerated; while the light-green foliage of the graceful willow interposed itself between us and the sun at short intervals, and here and there formed diminutive avenues of shade, as refreshing to the sight as they were grateful to the feelings.

Farm-houses, from being isolated and scarce, began to congregate in gradually increasing numbers on the most favoured situations, and to exchange the millet-stalk and poverty-stricken earthen structures for those of brick and wood; and the fields put forth their improving aspects in the same manner, showing how eagerly the inhabitants seized on the slightest approach of amendment in the soil to bring it under the sway of cultivation. The ditches were cut with more skill; attempts had been made to raise the general level, and where this had not succeeded, the land was banked round with wide ridges to keep out the water; —in short, the desolate country was being rapidly redeemed by the efforts of scrupulous industry.

The gardens displayed a little more vitality, and some of them a fair amount of taste in the matter of flowers and

vegetable beds, and every one had its two or three vines neatly trellised over the little square bower that served for their support, as well as a cool shady recess for the inmates of the houses.

It was necessary to pass through several villages. The accustomed amount of reckless curiosity was duly excited by an individual who, discarding all self-gratification, seemed determined that every human being within the reach of his limbs or voice should participate in the unwonted sight, as he gave warning of our approach. Their greeting and civility was of the passive kind,—limited to absurd remarks on our costumes, beards, eyes, and saddlery, and the absence of *tails* on us; and with vacant stares that plainly told how little their minds were really engaged in trying to understand anything about us: they looked, as they thronged together, like so many young children, whose eyes and mouths mechanically follow whatever is presented to them for the first time, but whose intellects are not yet able to appreciate the nature or functions of these objects.

The only active demonstration of welcome that we received was bestowed on us by a somewhat intelligent-looking old man, who stood before his little gate with pipe and tobacco-pouch in hand, and the end of his fan peeping over the right shoulder. As soon as we came near, this venerable gentleman brought his closed hands in contact before him, and made a profound vertical sweep of the air with them; following the salute with a kindly '*Koong-shi! Koong-shi!*' —Hail, hail! To which we replied by saying, '*Ne how, ne how-a*'—equivalent to hoping he was well.

After many devious turns and wanderings over unknown and almost trackless ground, and crossing another river apparently of a good depth, and subject to the rise and fall of the tide, we emerged for awhile from the grain-bearing country. We now found ourselves traversing the richest

meadow-land we, in the gladness of our hearts, thought could possibly exist anywhere. It was quite different from any other portion of the country we had travelled through. Large tracts of land were enclosed, divided, and subdivided by high earthen banks, on which were planted young willow trees; and a deep ditch on each side of these drained off the superfluous moisture. A second crop of fine grass was in process of being mown, and the strong perfume of the sweet-scented vernal grass mixed with it, and the wild lavender, sometimes gave these rich meadows quite an English atmosphere. The farm-houses bore a great resemblance, in many respects, to those of middle and third-class agriculturists in Britain. Dispensing with the intricacies and mysterious disposition of passages and apartments found towards Tien-tsin, they consisted only of a quadrangular courtyard. On the upper side was the dwelling-house, with large open windows on each side of the doorway, through which we could see the female portion of the family at work, spinning cotton or renovating the household apparel.

Mules and ponies were busy in the courtyard threshing the wheat grown on fields separated from the grass land. This was a very simple operation, and consisted merely in dragging a heavy stone roller over the heads—for the stalks had all been cut off to within a few inches of the heads—or treading out the grain by the feet of oxen and mules on a prepared space of ground, where lime appeared to be combined with the earth or clay to form a compact level surface. This method appeared as wasteful and slow as it was primitive; and the winnowing was little better, for the short stems of the straw having been removed, the wheat was gathered on to another plastered space, and men were busy with shovels throwing it up against the feeble wind that moved across the country at that hot time.

Little groups, presided over by a mother or grandmother, attended to the grinding of the millet or wheat for the