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Author: G. F. Davidson

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TRADE AND TRAVEL IN THE FAR EAST ***

TRADE AND TRAVEL

IN THE

FAR EAST;

OR

RECOLLECTIONS OF TWENTY-ONE YEARS

PASSED IN

JAVA, SINGAPORE, AUSTRALIA,
AND CHINA.

BY G. F. DAVIDSON.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

The following pages were written to beguile the tediousness of a long voyage from Hong Kong to England, during the spring and summer of 1844. When I state, that the whole was written with the paper on my knee, for want of a desk, amid continual interruptions from three young children lacking amusement during their long confinement on ship-board, and with a perpetual liability to be pitched to leeward, paper and all,—I shall have said enough to bespeak from every good-natured reader a candid allowance for whatever defects

may attach to the composition. It is necessary, however, that I should also premise, that the sketches are drawn entirely from memory, and that the incidents referred to in the earlier chapters, took place some twenty years ago. That my recollection may have proved treacherous on some minor points, is very possible; but, whatever may be the merits or demerits of the work in other respects, it contains, to the best of my knowledge and belief, nothing but truth in the strictest sense of that term; and, as embodying the result of my own personal observations in the countries visited, it may possess an interest on that account, not always attaching to volumes of higher pretensions. [ii]

My wanderings have been neither few nor short, and, perhaps, verify the old proverb, that a rolling stone gathers no moss. I have crossed the Ocean in forty different square-rigged vessels; have trod the plains of Hindostan, the wilds of Sumatra, and the mountains of Java; have strolled among the beautiful hills and dales of Singapore and Penang; have had many a gallop amid the forests and plains of Australia; have passed through the labyrinth of reefs forming Torres' Straits; and have visited the far-famed Celestial Empire. My first idea, in endeavouring to retrace my journeyings and adventures, was, that the personal narrative might serve to amuse a circle of private friends. But the notices relating to the openings for Trade in the Far East, and to the subject of Emigration, together with the free strictures upon the causes of the recent depression in our Australian colonies, will, I venture to hope, be not unacceptable to those who are interested in the extension of British commerce, and in the well-being of the rising communities which form an integral part of the mighty Empire now encircling the Globe.

Some parts of the work refer to coming events as probable, which have since become matters of fact; but I have not deemed it necessary to suppress or to alter what I had written. I am more especially happy to find that my suggestions respecting Borneo have, to some extent, been anticipated; and that the important discovery of its coal-mines has been taken advantage of by Her Majesty's Government in the very way pointed out in observations written at sea fifteen months ago. Since my arrival in England, I have learned also, that the feasibility of the navigation of Torres' Straits from west to east, has struck others more competent to form a correct judgment than myself. Captain T. Blackwood, commander of Her Majesty's ship, Fly, at present employed in surveying the coast of New Holland, the Straits, and parts adjacent, has expressed his determination, after refitting at Singapore, to endeavour to enter the Pacific Ocean, during the north-west monsoon, by sailing through Torres' Straits from the westward. I trust that this enterprising Officer will succeed in the attempt, and thereby put beyond question the practicability of the passage; which would not only shorten the distance between Australia and our Indian territories, but contribute, more than any thing else could do, to facilitate the transit of the Overland Mail to Sydney. The Australians, I find, are still sanguinely bent upon discovering an overland route from the present frontiers of the Colony to Port Essington; but, although I heartily wish them success, my opinion, as expressed in the subsequent pages, remains unaltered. [iii]

I observe, that the Singaporeans are already complaining of the decrease of the number of square-rigged vessels that have visited their port during the recent season, and of the falling-off of the Chinese-junk trade, which they correctly attribute to the opening of the trade with China; thereby verifying my predictions. I fear that they will have still greater cause for complaint before twelve months shall have rolled away. But the merchants of Singapore, it gives me pleasure to add, are taking advantage of the times, by entering upon the China trade, and seem determined not to suffer loss, if they can help it, by the effect of Sir Henry Pottinger's famous Treaty. This is as it should be. [iv]

With these few remarks on the motives which have induced me to write and give to the world the following sketches, I now commit them to their fate; trusting that they may serve to beguile an hour, to some of my numerous friends in the different parts of the world they refer to, and that, to the reader unacquainted with those countries, they may prove both useful and entertaining. Before taking leave of the reader, however, I must apologize for an unfortunate error my printer has fallen into, (at p. 3 [note](#)), in misprinting the name of Mr. Mercus, one of the best men that ever ruled a Colony, whether Dutch or English. This name has been converted into Minns; and the error was not detected, till the sheet had passed through the press.

As for the critics.—for any kind or friendly remarks they may make, I shall feel grateful; while any of a contrary nature will neither surprise nor displease me. [v]

HULL, *January 1846.*

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TRADE AND TRAVEL

IN THE FAR EAST.

CHAPTER I.

JAVA.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF BATAVIA—NARROW POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT—
DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD—ROADS AND POSTING SYSTEM
—STATE OF SOCIETY—CLIMATE AND SEASONS—TROPICAL FRUITS.

Early in the year 1823, I left England, quite a youngster, full of life and spirits, bound for that so-called grave of Europeans, Batavia. Of my passage out, I shall say nothing more, than that it lasted exactly five months, and was, in point of wind and weather, similar to nine-tenths of the voyages made to the same region.

Well do I remember the 5th of October 1823, the day on which I first set foot on the lovely and magnificent island of Java. How bright were then my prospects, surrounded as I was with a circle of anxious friends, who were not only able, but willing also, to lend me a helping hand, and who now, alas! are, to a man, gone from me and all to whom they were dear. I was then prepared—I might say determined—to be pleased with every thing and every body. At this distance of time, I can scarcely remember what struck me most forcibly on landing; but I have a vivid recollection of being perfectly delighted with the drive, in a light airy carriage drawn by two spirited little Java poneys, from the wharf to the house of the friend with whom I was to take up my abode. The pluck with which those two little animals rattled us along quite astonished me; and the novel appearance of every thing that met the eye, so bewildered and delighted me, that I scarcely knew how to think, speak, or act.

What a joyous place was Batavia in those days, with every body thriving, and the whole town alive and bustling with an active set of merchants from all parts of the world! The Dutch Government, at that time, pursued a more liberal system than they have of late adopted; and, instead of monopolizing the produce of the Island, sold it by public auction regularly every month. This plan naturally attracted purchasers from England, the Continent of Europe, and the United States of America, who brought with them good Spanish dollars to pay for what they purchased; so that silver money was as plentiful in Netherlands India, in those

[1]

[2]

days, as copper doits have since become. The enlightened individual who now governs Java^[1] and its dependencies, is, I have good reason to think, opposed to the monopolizing system pursued by his Government: his hands, however, are tied, and he can only remonstrate, while the merchants can but pray that his remonstrances may be duly weighed by his superiors. Java exports one million *peculs*^[2] of coffee per annum, one million *peculs* of rice, and one million *peculs* of sugar; besides vast quantities of tin, pepper, hides, indigo, &c. Were its trade thrown open to fair competition, as formerly, it is as certain that His Majesty the King of the Netherlands would be a gainer, as that his adopting the more liberal system would give satisfaction to every mercantile man connected in any way with his East-Indian possessions. The experience of the last three years ought to have taught His Majesty this lesson; and we may hope he will take warning from the miserable result of his private speculations during that period.

Batavia is not the unhealthy place it has been usually deemed. The city itself is certainly bad enough; but no European sleeps a single night in it out of a twelvemonth.

From four to five o'clock every evening, the road leading from the town to the suburbs is thronged with vehicles of all descriptions, conveying the merchants from their counting-houses to their country or suburban residences, where they remain till nine o'clock the next morning. These country residences are delightfully situated to the south of Batavia, properly so called, extending inland over many square miles of country. Every one of them has a garden (called here a compound) of considerable extent, well stocked with plants, shrubs, and trees, which serve to give them a lively and elegant appearance, and to keep them moderately cool in the hottest weather. Servants' wages being very low here, every European of any respectability is enabled to keep up a sufficient establishment, and to repair to his office in his carriage or hooded gig, in which he may defy the sun. Many of them, particularly Dutchmen, have an imprudent practice of driving in an open carriage, with an umbrella held over their heads by a native servant standing on the foot-board behind his master.

Having resided several years in the suburbs of Batavia, I have no hesitation in saying, that, with common prudence, eschewing *in toto* the vile habit of drinking gin and water whenever one feels thirsty, living generously but carefully, avoiding the sun's rays by always using a close or hooded carriage, and taking common precautions against wet feet and damp clothing, a man may live—and enjoy life, too—in Batavia, as long as he would in any other part of the world. Many people may think this a bold assertion; nevertheless, I make it without fear of contradiction from any one acquainted by experience with the country.

One great and invaluable advantage over all our Eastern Colonies, Batavia, in common with every part of Java, possesses, in the facilities that exist for travelling from one part of the Island to another. Throughout Java, there are excellent roads, and on every road a post establishment is kept up; so that the traveller has only to apply to the post-master of Batavia, pointing out the road he wishes to travel, and to pay his money according to the number of miles: he obtains, with a passport, an order for four horses all along his intended line of route, and may perform the journey at his leisure, the horses, coachmen, &c. being at his command night or day, till he accomplishes the distance agreed for. Thus, a party going overland from Batavia to Samarang, a distance of three hundred miles, may either perform the journey in three days, or extend it to three weeks, should they wish to look about them, and to halt a day or two at various places as they go along. In no part of British India is there any thing approaching to such admirable and cheap facilities for travelling. And what an inestimable blessing they are to the Batavian invalid, who can thus, in a few hours, be transported, with perfect ease and comfort, into the cool and delightful mountainous regions of Java, where he may choose his climate, by fixing himself at a height varying from one thousand to seven thousand feet above the level of the sea! Java, from east to west and from north to south, is a favourite region with me, and, I believe, with every Englishman who ever visited it. Gin and brandy have killed five-sixths of all the Europeans who have died in Batavia within the last twenty years; but with pleasure I can add, that this destructive habit has almost entirely disappeared: hence the diminished number of deaths, and the more robust and ruddy appearance of the European inhabitants. The surrounding country is both salubrious and beautiful, rising gradually as you proceed inland, till you reach Buytenzorg, forty miles S.S.E. of Batavia, where the Governor-General of Netherlands India generally resides, in a splendid palace, surrounded with extensive and magnificent gardens. The climate is cool and pleasant, more particularly in the mornings and evenings, and the ground is kept moist by daily showers; for it is a singular fact, that scarcely a day in the year passes without a shower in this beautiful neighbourhood.

Buytenzorg is a favourite resort of the merchants of Batavia, who take advantage of the facilities for travelling to visit it on the Saturday afternoon, remaining the whole of Sunday, and returning to town, and to the renewal of their labours, on the following morning. The scenery is magnificent; and the view (well known to every visiter) from the back verandah of the inn, is the finest that can be imagined. Standing on the steps of this verandah, you have, immediately under your foot, an extensive plain, thoroughly cultivated, sprinkled with villages, each village being surrounded with evergreen trees, and the whole almost encircled by a river. To the left of this valley rises an extensive and picturesque mountain, cultivated almost to the summit, and dotted here and there with villages and gentlemen's houses. Looking into the valley at early morn, you will see the lazy buffalo, driven by an equally indolent ploughman, dragging a Lilliputian plough through the slimy paddy-field; the lazy Javanese labourer going to his work in the field; the native women reaping, with the hand only, and stalk by stalk, the ripe paddy (rice) in one field, while those in the next are sowing the seed; the adjoining fields being covered with stubble, their crops having been reaped weeks before. Upon the declivity of the mountain is seen the stately coffee-tree, the plantations of which commence about 1300 feet above the level of the sea, and proceed up the hill till they reach the height of 4000 feet. Nothing can be more beautiful than a full-grown coffee-plantation: the deep green foliage, the splendid bright-red berry, and the delicious shade afforded by the trees, render those spots altogether fit for princes; and princely lives their owners lead. One is always sure of a hearty welcome from these gentlemen, who are ever glad to see a stranger. They give him the best horse in the stable to ride, the best room in the house to occupy, and express regret when his visit is drawing to a close. I speak from experience, having put the hospitality of several of them to the test.

During my first stay at Batavia, from 1823 to 1826, the celebrated Java war broke out, the so-called rebel army being headed by a native Chief of Djockdjocarta, named Diepo Nogoro. Shortly after the first outbreak, the then Governor-General, Baron Vander Capellen, called on all Europeans between the ages of sixteen and forty-five to serve in the *schuttery*, or militia. An infantry and a cavalry corps were formed, and I joined the latter, preferring a ride in the evening to a walk with a fourteen-pound musket over my shoulder. After a probation of pretty tight drilling, we became tolerable soldiers, on "nothing a day and finding ourselves," and had the good town of Batavia put under our charge, the regular troops being all sent away to the scene of

war. As I do not intend to return to the subject, I may as well mention here, that the war lasted five years, and that it would have lasted five years longer, had Diepo Nogoro not been taken prisoner—I fear by treachery. I saw him landed at Batavia, in 1829, from the steamer which had brought him from Samarang. The Governor's carriage and aides-de-camp were at the wharf to receive him. In that carriage he was driven to gaol, whence he was banished no one knows whither; and he has never since been heard of. Such is the usual fate of Dutch prisoners of state! Diepo Nogoro deserved a better fate. He was a gallant soldier, and fought bravely. Poor fellow! how his countenance fell—as well it might—when he saw where the carriage drew up! He stopped short on putting his foot on the pavement, evidently unwilling to enter the gloomy-looking pile; cast an eager glance around; and, seeing there was no chance of escape, walked in. Several gentlemen followed, before the authorities had the door closed, and saw the fallen chief, with his *two wives*, consigned to two miserable-looking rooms. Java has been quite tranquil ever since.

The society of Batavia, at the time I am referring to, was both choice and gay; and the influence of my good friends threw me at once into the midst of it. The Dutch and English inhabitants did not then (nor do they now) mix together so much as would, in my opinion, have been agreeable and mutually advantageous. A certain jealousy kept the two parties too much apart. Nevertheless, I have been present at many delightful parties in Dutch families, the pleasures of which were not a little heightened by the presence of some ten or a dozen charming Dutch girls. Charming and beautiful they certainly are while young; but, ere they reach thirty, a marvellous change comes over their appearance: the fair-haired, blue-eyed, laughing romp of eighteen has, in that short period of ten or twelve years, become transformed into a stout and rather elderly-looking matron, as unlike an English woman of the same age as one can well fancy. When I look back on those gay and pleasant parties, and think how few of the individuals who composed them are now alive, the reflection makes me sad. What a different class its English inhabitants of the present day are from those of 1823-1826! I may be prejudiced in favour of the former state of society; but, in giving the preference to it, I shall be borne out by any of the few survivors who knew Batavia at both periods. From 1823 to 1835, the Governor's parties were thronged with our countrymen and countrywomen. Let any one enter His Excellency's ball-room now-a-days, and he will not meet with more than one or two English of the old school, and not one of the new. The causes of this change are obvious: it arises from the different class of people that now come out from Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow, compared with the British merchant of former times, and from the total deficiency of the most common civility, on the part of our countrymen, towards the many highly respectable, agreeable, and intelligent Dutch families that form the society of the place. It is with pain I write this; but, as a citizen of the world, who has seen a good deal of life, in recording my sentiments on these matters, I cannot avoid telling the plain truth as it struck me from personal observation.

The vicinity of Batavia affords the most beautiful drives; and hundreds of vehicles, from the handsome carriage and four of the Member of Council to the humble buggy of the merchant's clerk, may be seen every evening, from five till half-past six, that being the coolest and best time for taking out-of-door exercise. The roads are excellent, lined on both sides with trees, which keep them shaded and cool nearly all day. The scene is altogether gay, and affords a gratifying indication of the wealth and importance of this fine colony. By seven o'clock, the drives are deserted; and, immediately afterwards, lights may be seen glittering in every dwelling in the neighbourhood, while, in every second or third house, the passer-by may observe parties of pleasure assembling for the evening. The Dutch have adopted the social plan of exchanging friendly visits in the evening, avoiding our more formal ones of the morning. At these chance evening parties (if I may so term them), the company are entertained with music and cards, and other diversions; and should the visiter be too old to join the young folks in their gayety, he will find one or two of his own standing snugly seated in the far corner of the verandah, where he is sure to be supplied with a good cigar and the very best wine. These groupes are perfect pictures of comfort and content. With all his good qualities, however, "John Dutchman" is jealous of "John Bull," and cannot help shewing it, particularly in commercial matters. How short-sighted his policy is, in this point of view, it would be no difficult task to prove.

The pleasantest months of the year, in Batavia, are, June, July, and August, when the sun is to the northward. I have frequently found a blanket necessary at this season: indeed, the nights, throughout Java, are generally sufficiently cool to allow the European to enjoy a refreshing sleep, after which he will find no difficulty in getting through a hot day. The public health is generally very good from May till September inclusive. In April and October, strangers, particularly the recently arrived European, are apt to suffer from colds and fever, caused, in a great measure, by the breaking-up of the monsoon, which takes place in those months. In November or December, the north-west monsoon brings on the rains, which certainly then come down in torrents, and render the city of Batavia a perfect charnel-house for those poor Natives and Chinese who are unfortunately compelled to remain in it. I have seen it entirely flooded with water, to the depth of four or five feet in some parts. The malaria occasioned by the deposit of slimy mud left all over the town by the water, on its retiring, causes sad havoc among the poorer Chinese and Malays, who reside in the lowest parts of the town, and inhabit wretched hovels. These floods seldom annoy the inhabitants of the suburbs; yet I well remember, in the season of 1828, a friend of mine lay down on a sofa and went to sleep, about eight o'clock in the evening; at three next morning, he awoke with the water just reaching his couch, much to his surprise and no small alarm, till, on becoming collected, he bethought him of the cause. The neighbouring river had risen, from mountain rains, whilst he was asleep, and had completely flooded his house, to the depth of eighteen inches, together with the garden and neighbourhood.

I know no market, east of the Cape of Good Hope, better supplied with fruit than that of Batavia. Among the choicest, I would name the mangistan, the durian, and the pumaloe or shaddock. The first is unknown beyond eight degrees from the Equator, and is, perhaps, the best fruit with which nature has blessed the tropical regions. It is about the size of an orange, its rind of a dark purple, and its pulp divided into parts like the contents of an orange, as white as driven snow. Its taste I cannot attempt to describe, knowing nothing to which I can compare it. The best quality of the mangistan is its perfect harmlessness. The patient suffering from fever, liver complaint, consumption, or any of the numerous ills that flesh is heir to, may, with perfect impunity, cool his parched tongue with a dozen of this delightful fruit; and no one who has not been laid on a sick bed within the tropics, can appreciate this blessing. The rind, when dried, and made into tea, is an excellent tonic, and is often successfully used in cases of dysentery, by Native as well as European practitioners. The durian is a favourite fruit with most people who can overcome its smell, which certainly is no very easy matter. Natives of all classes are passionately fond of this fruit, and almost subsist on it when in plenty. Strange to say, goats, sheep, poultry, and even the royal tiger, eagerly devour the durian, of which I confess myself, notwithstanding the aforesaid smell, an admirer, in common with many of my countrymen. Its size is that of a cocoa-nut, husk and all; its rind is very thick, of a pale green colour, and covered with strong sharp thorns; its interior is divided into compartments, each of which contains three or four seeds about the size of a pullet's egg; these seeds are covered, to the thickness of a quarter of an inch, with a pale yellow

pulp, which is the part eaten. The taste resembles, according to the description of those who like the fruit, that of a very rich custard, and, according to those who have never succeeded in overcoming their antipathy to the smell, that of a mixture of decayed eggs and garlic. This fruit cannot be eaten in large quantities with impunity by Europeans, being of a very heating nature. With me it never agreed; nor do I remember a single instance of its agreeing with my countrymen, when eaten freely. Half a one is as much as most people can manage at a time. The durian seeds, when roasted, make an excellent substitute for chestnuts.

The shaddock of Java is a magnificent fruit, and surpasses those of any other country with which I am acquainted. In addition to these three prime fruits of Java, I may mention the pine-apple, soursop, rambutan, rose-apple, guava, dookoo, and sixty different kinds of plantain and banana. These, and many others, thrive and abound on this favoured island. With poultry, butchers' meat, fish, and vegetables, Batavia and Java generally are abundantly supplied; while the residents on its mountains may enjoy strawberries and cream in perfection.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] 1845. His Excellency Mr. Minns, since dead.
- [2] A *pecul* is a Chinese weight used all over the Eastern Archipelago, and is equal to $133\frac{1}{3}$ lbs. avoirdupoise.

CHAPTER II.

[16]

JAVA.

SAMARANG—A TIGER FIGHT—JAVA PONEYS—EXCURSION TO SOLO—WILD SPORTS—
DJOCKDJOCARTA—REMAINS OF THE ANCIENT PALACE—IMPERIAL ELEPHANTS—
EXPERIMENT IN INDIGO-PLANTING—JAVANESE EXECUTION—A PET BOA—
ALLIGATORS—FOREST LABOUR—SLAVERY IN JAVA—OPIUM-SMOKING—TEA—THE
UPAS-TREE.

Between three and four hundred miles eastward of Batavia, on the north coast of Java, is the small, neat, old-fashioned town of Samarang, which, when I visited it in 1824, was the residence of several English merchants: now, there is only a single one remaining, so completely has monopoly destroyed mercantile enterprise! The harbour is a safe one in the south-east monsoon, but the reverse when the north-west winds prevail. It is, however, constantly visited by European shipping, which take cargoes of coffee, sugar, rice, &c. &c., to all parts of Europe, Australia, Singapore, and China.

The circumstance at this distance of time most clear and distinct in my memory, in connection with my first visit to Samarang, is a tiger-fight, which I will attempt to describe. The exhibition took place on an extensive plain near the town, just after daybreak. A square of men, armed with the native spear, was formed three deep, and one hundred yards across. Inside this square was placed a box resembling in shape a coffin, but much larger, containing a royal tiger fresh from his native forests, which had been brought to town the day previously for this express purpose. Imagine every thing ready, the square formed, the box in its centre, and a silent multitude looking on,—some perched on trees, some on the coach-boxes of the numerous carriages, others on horseback, and thousands on foot; whilst the native chief of the district, with his friends, and the European officials of the place, occupied a gay pavilion, placed in an advantageous situation for viewing the coming strife. A native Javan, in full dress, is now seen advancing into the square, followed by two coolies or porters, one carrying a bundle of straw, the other a lighted torch. The straw is thrown over the box, and the torch-bearer stands ready to set fire to it at the end where the tiger's head is, the box being too narrow to permit his turning round in it. The leading native then lifts a sliding door at the other extremity of the box, carefully covering the opening thus made with mats, to prevent the light from penetrating, and inducing his royal highness to back out too soon. This operation completed, the straw is set on fire. The native and his two coolies now retire slowly, keeping time to Javanese music as they make their way outside the square. By this time, the fire has got fair hold of the box, filling it with smoke, and the tiger begins his retreat, his berth becoming rather warm. Presently, his hind quarters appear issuing through the sliding doorway, its covering of mat readily yielding to the pressure: by degrees, his hind feet gain firm footing outside, and his whole body is soon displayed. On appearing, he seemed rather confused for a few seconds, and, laying himself quietly down, looked all round upon his foes, and gave a roar that made the welkin ring, and my young heart quake a little. He then rose, deliberately shook himself, turned towards the rising sun, set off first at a walk, then at a trot, which he gradually increased to a smart canter, till within a few yards of the points of the spears pointed at him; he then came to the charge, and made a spring that surprised me, and, I fancy, every one present. I am afraid to say how high he leaped, but he was on the *descent* before a single spear touched him. This leap was evidently made with the intention of getting clear over the heads of the men and their spears too; and he most certainly would have accomplished it, had he not leaped too soon, and fallen within the square, the height of the spring being quite sufficient for the purpose. As it was, when on the descent, the spears of the six men nearest him being pointed at his breast, one of them inflicted a frightful wound. On reaching the ground, the noble beast struggled hard for his liberty; but, finding his efforts of no avail, he ultimately started off at full gallop to the opposite side of the square, where he renewed his exertions, though with less vigour than that displayed on his first attempt, and with no better success. He then galloped twice round the square, just at the point of the spears. Not a man advanced to touch him, it being the rule, that the tiger must come within the range of the spears before they can be used. He was ultimately killed while making a third attempt to escape; and thus ended the sport. His first charge was very brilliant and exciting; his second much less so; his third and last was very feeble.

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Immediately after the tiger's death, the same ceremonies were gone through with a leopard, who took the spear-men rather by surprise, and, instead of trying to leap over their heads, darted in under their spears, got among their feet, and effected his retreat, to the no small consternation of the surrounding multitude, who soon scattered in all directions. He was, however, pursued by the men he had baffled, and was killed under a bridge in the immediate neighbourhood.

Tigers are frequently pitted by the native chiefs of Java against buffaloes, but I never was fortunate enough to witness one of those conflicts. The buffalo is generally the conqueror, and is sure to be so, if he succeeds in getting one fair butt at his adversary, whom he tosses in the air, and butts again on his fall. Occasionally, the tiger declines the combat altogether, when his tormentors rouse him by the application of lighted torches to the tenderest parts of his body: but even this extreme measure has been known to fail; in which case the terrified animal is withdrawn, and another is put forward in his place. These are cruel pastimes, though they may be thought not more so than dog-fighting and cock-fighting, which were formerly so much practised in Britain; and not so barbarous as a pugilistic combat between two hired brutes called prize-fighters. [20]

The society of Samarang is neither so extensive nor so attractive as that of Batavia: it is, however, a pleasant and healthy place, notwithstanding its proximity to an extensive swamp. Its safeguard against the malaria we might naturally look for in this situation, is the tide, which flows over the marsh twice a day, and keeps it sweet.

During the Java war, a small volunteer corps of cavalry was formed here, the members of which, in their zeal, offered their services to join a party who were proceeding to Damak, (a small village about forty miles off,) to put down a body of armed rebels. Poor fellows! they went out in high spirits, but trusted too much to their unbroken horses, which took fright, and threw them into inextricable confusion on hearing the first volley. The sad consequences of this rash though gallant day's work, were, the death of seven young English gentlemen, all highly respected, and sincerely regretted by their countrymen. They were all personal friends of my own. I well remember the gloom which the intelligence cast over the society at Batavia. [21]

In and about Samarang may be collected any number of the beautiful Java poneys, animals unsurpassed for symmetry in any part of the world.^[3] The work they perform is beyond belief. Ten miles an hour is the common rate of travelling post: four of them are generally used for this purpose, and the stages are from seven to nine miles, according to the nature of the country. When within half-a-mile of the first house where relays are kept, the native coachman cracks his long, unwieldy whip, which can be heard at a great distance. At this signal, the grooms harness the four poneys whose turn for work it is; and, by the time your carriage halts under the shed that crosses the road at every post-house, the fresh poneys are to be seen coming out of the stable, all ready for the next stage. Your attention is then attracted by a man with a stout bamboo, some eight feet long, in his hand, full of water, which he pours over the naves of the wheels, to cool them. By this time, the tired poneys are unhooked, the fresh ones put-to, and away rattles the carriage again with its delighted passengers. I know nothing more exciting and agreeable than a ramble amongst the mountains of this favoured isle, under the direction of the post establishment. [22]

From Samarang, early in 1824, I posted with a friend to Solo and Djockdjocarta, the ancient seats of the Emperors and Sultans of this part of Java. They are now shorn of their splendour; but they still possess novelty enough to attract a stranger. On our route, we visited some beautiful coffee-plantations, and passed through the pretty and romantic-looking village of Salatiga.^[4] We had a splendid view of the far-famed *Gunung Marapi*, or fire-mountain; and, on every side, we saw evidence of the thriving condition of this magnificent part of Java.

At Solo, I was so fortunate as to be present at the then Emperor's marriage; a scene which brought painfully to mind the fallen state of the chiefs of this neighbourhood, by its being superintended by the Dutch Resident at the Court. There were three days' feasting, royal salutes from the imperial guard, Javanese music, and dancing girls in great numbers; but I found the whole affair very fatiguing. Fallen as was the Emperor's state at that time, it subsequently became much more reduced, in consequence of his having been found guilty of being secretly concerned in the late war or rebellion. He has long since followed his friend and coadjutor, Diepo Nogoro. A tool of the Dutch Government now reigns in his stead, who cannot even leave his house for twenty-four hours without permission from the Resident at his Court. [23]

One day, I accompanied a party of friends to see the Emperor's tigers, a number of which animals he generally had ready for exhibitions similar to those already described. We found one very noble fellow confined in a house some fifteen feet square, formed of the trunks of cocoa-nut trees, placed about five inches apart. On looking through, we saw the tiger in the position usually chosen by a dog when he wants to warm his face at the fire. Hearing our approach, he stared us steadily in the face for about a minute, and then made a spring at us, so suddenly that he came with his whole force against the bars, before we had time to move a step. The shock shook the building, as well as our nerves, not a little, though we were of course scatheless.

At Solo, I first tasted the Javanese "Findhorn haddock," which is, in fact, a trout caught in the beautiful Solo river. After being cleaned, it is wrapped up in a bundle of rice-straw, which is forthwith set on fire; and as soon as the straw is consumed, the fish is ready for eating, and really resembles in flavour its celebrated name-sake. [24]

In the neighbourhood of Solo, a bold sportsman may find game to his liking, and willing natives to guide him in his search after tigers, wild hogs, the huge boa, deer, snipe, and quail. In pursuit of the last, too many a fever is caught, through the imprudence of young men in staying out too late in the day, and in keeping on their wet and soiled clothes and shoes during their ride or drive home. A little attention to such apparent trifles would save many a valuable life. Deer and wild-hog are generally pursued and shot by a party armed with rifles, who post themselves along one side of a jungle, while a party of natives advance from the opposite, driving the game before them with long poles and shouting. Great care must be taken by the sportsman, on these occasions, not to fire too soon: if he fires into the jungle, he runs the risk of shooting one of the bush-beaters; if to the right or left, he may plant his bullet in the breast of one of his companions. He must reserve his fire till the game is fairly out of the bush, and in rear of the line of rifles, when he may turn round and deliver his charge. I recollect a fatal accident happening near Salatiga, through a gentleman's deviating from the strict rule, never to change your position when once placed by the leading sportsman. A party were out after hogs by moonlight, when one gentleman, thinking he heard a noise as of an approaching porker on his left, very imprudently got on his hands and knees to crawl round in the hope of getting the first shot. The sportsman stationed next to him got a glimpse of him on the path, and mistaking him in the uncertain light for a hog or other wild animal, fired his rifle without a moment's hesitation, and mortally [25]

wounded his unfortunate friend, who lived just long enough to acknowledge his error, and to beg that no blame might be attached to the individual who caused his death. Poor fellow! he paid dearly for his imprudence.

Solo is protected by a small fort, which is always garrisoned by European troops, the Government not choosing to trust native soldiers in that part of the country. For this, no one can blame the Dutch; for the chiefs require looking after, and are apt to give trouble. While the Island was held by the British Government, a mutiny broke out at Solo among the Bengal sepoy: on its suppression, it was found they had been tampered with by these chiefs, and that numbers had been gained over to their cause. [26]

Nothing can exceed the hospitality of the Dutch inhabitants of this part of Java: their houses are always open to the stranger, of whom they think too much cannot be made. The Resident's establishment is a splendid one, and to his liberality and hospitality I can testify from personal experience. Indeed, our countrymen, in many parts that I could name, might, with great advantage to themselves and to travellers in their districts, take lessons from their Dutch brethren in office.

From Solo, I went to Djockdjocarta, distant forty miles, in a gig. A kind friend having placed relays of horses on the road for me, I performed the journey with perfect ease, without the aid of a whip, in four hours. The poney I had the last stage, was the best little animal in harness I ever sat behind: he literally flew along the road. At one point, I came to a bridge, which, as I could see at some distance, had been broken, so as to render it impassable. While meditating how I was to get across the river, not knowing there was a ford in the neighbourhood, my poney, which had come the road in the morning to meet me, settled the question, by suddenly darting off, through a gap in the hedge at the road-side, down the river bank, at the top of his speed, and, before I could collect my scattered senses, was across the stream and up the opposite bank, to my no small surprise and pleasure. He was a noble little animal, of a mouse colour; and was originally purchased from a native dealer for twenty-eight guilders (about 2*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*). [27]

At Djockdjocarta are to be seen many ancient residences of the Javanese Chiefs; amongst others, the celebrated *Cratan* or palace, the taking of which, in 1812, cost General Gillespie a hard struggle. It is surrounded with a high wall, which encloses an area of exactly one square mile: outside the wall runs a deep, broad ditch. The place could offer but a feeble resistance against artillery, in which arm Gillespie was deficient when he attacked and took it. Another curious building is that in which the Sultans, in days of yore, used to keep their ladies: it is composed entirely of long narrow passages, with numerous small rooms on each side; each of which, in the days of their master's glory, was the residence, according to tradition, of a beautiful favourite. To prevent the escape of the ladies, or the intrusion of any gallants, the whole pile is surrounded with a canal, which used to be filled with alligators: the only entrance was by a subterranean passage beneath this canal, and which ran under it for its whole length. When I visited the place in 1824, the canal, passage, &c. were all in good order, though the latter was getting damp from neglect;—a proof that the masons and plasterers of Java, in old times, must have been very superior workmen. [28]

Djockdjocarta was the birth-place of Diepo Nogoro, and the scene of his earliest warlike movements against the Dutch. So unexpected and sudden was his first attack, that he caught the garrison napping, and had them within his grasp before they knew he was in the field.

In the *Cratan*, the Sultan had, in 1824, three noble elephants, each kept under a separate shed. I went, with three other visitors, to see those animals; and we passed sometime amusing ourselves by giving them fruit and other dainties. We did not remark, however, that one of our friends had been for sometime teasing one of them, by offering him a plantain, and constantly withdrawing it just as the poor animal was laying hold of it with his trunk. We had not gone twenty yards from the spot, when the elephant's keeper approached, and gave him a couple of cocoa-nuts, (minus the husk, but with the shells,)—part of his daily food, I presume. The elephant took one of these, and, with a wicked look at the gentleman who had been teasing him, threw the nut at him with great force. Fortunately he missed his aim. The nut struck a post within six inches of the teaser's head, and was literally smashed: had it struck where doubtless it was meant to do, it would certainly have proved as fatal as an eighteen-pound shot. So much for teasing elephants. We beat a speedy retreat, not choosing to risk a second shot. [29]

Djockdjocarta can hardly be called a town; yet it is more than a village. The houses of the European inhabitants are much scattered, and many of them occupy very pretty situations. The climate is delicious; and exercise on horseback may be taken with impunity from six to nine A. M., and from three to seven P. M. It is not uncommon to see Europeans riding about during the intervening hours; but this is generally avoided by old residents.

A successful attempt was made here, by a countryman of mine, in 1823, to grow indigo. The quantity produced was limited, but the quality was excellent; and, but for some vexatious regulations of the Government regarding the residence of foreigners in this part of Java, which drove the spirited individual alluded to from the neighbourhood, I have no doubt he would speedily have realized a handsome fortune. Since that period, indigo-planting has been carried on in various parts of Java to a large extent. The quantity produced annually is now about one million and a half of pounds; and the quality is such as to command the first prices in the continental markets. Indeed, the Bengal planters are becoming quite jealous of those of Java.

Shortly before my arrival at Djockdjocarta, a daring house-robbery, by a band of Javanese, took place in the neighbourhood. Six of the robbers were afterwards caught, tried, convicted, condemned, and executed *à la Javan* on the scene of their crime: they were tied hands and feet to separate stakes, and *krissed* by a native executioner, who performed his dreadful office so scientifically that his victims died without a groan. The cool indifference with which five of the unfortunates witnessed the execution of the first sufferer, and successively received the *kriss* in their own bosoms, was quite surprising, and shewed with what stoical composure the Mohammedan fatalist can meet a violent death. [30]

The forests of Java are inhabited by the rhinoceros, tiger, black tiger, leopard, tiger-cat, boa-constrictor, and a variety of animals of milder natures. The elephant is not found in its wild state in these woods, though numerous in those of the neighbouring island. I am not aware of any other animal that may be called dangerous to man in these unrivalled forests; nor is there much to be apprehended from occasionally coming in contact with either of those above-named, though accidents happen now and then. I have known a carriage and four attacked on the main road between Batavia and Samarang, by a tiger, and one of the poneys killed by the fierce onset. This, however, is a rare occurrence, and can happen only when the tiger is hard pressed for food; which is seldom the case in the woods of Java, overrun as they are with deer, wild-hog, [31]

and other royal game. The boa is harmless to man, unless his path is crossed, when a speedy retreat is advisable. A friend of mine in Samarang once kept one of these monsters as a pet, and used to let him crawl all over the garden: it measured exactly nineteen feet. It was regularly fed twice a month, viz. on the 1st and the 15th. On the first day of the month, a moderate-sized goat was put into his house. The poor animal would scream, and exhibit every symptom of extreme terror, but was not kept long in suspense; for the snake, after eyeing his victim keenly, would spring on it with the rapidity of thought, coil three turns round the body, and in an instant every bone in the goat's skin was broken. The next process was, to stretch the carcass to as great a length as he could before uncoiling himself; then to lick it all over; and he commenced his feast by succeeding, after some severe exertion, in getting the goat's head within his mouth. In the course of twenty minutes, the whole animal was swallowed: the snake would then lie down, and remain perfectly dormant for three or four days. His lunch (as I may call it) on the fifteenth of the month, used to consist of a duck. This snake was given, in 1815, to Lord Amherst, on his return from China, and reached the Cape in safety: there it was over-fed to gratify the curious visitors, and died in consequence before the ship reached St. Helena.

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While on the subject of wild animals, I may mention a leopard that was kept by an English officer in Samarang, during our occupation of the Dutch colonies. This animal had its liberty, and used to run all over the house after its master. One morning, after breakfast, the officer was sitting smoking his hookah, with a book in his right-hand, and the hookah-snake in his left, when he felt a slight pain in the left hand, and, on attempting to raise it, was checked by a low angry growl from his pet leopard: on looking down, he saw the animal had been licking the back of his hand, and had by degrees drawn a little blood. The leopard would not suffer the removal of the hand, but continued licking it with great apparent relish, which did not much please his master; who, with great presence of mind, without attempting again to disturb the pet in his proceeding, called to his servant to bring him a pistol, with which he shot the animal dead on the spot. Such pets as snakes nineteen feet long and full-grown leopards are not to be trifled with. The largest snake I ever saw was twenty-five feet long, and eight inches in diameter. I have *heard* of sixty-foot snakes, but cannot vouch for the truth of the tale.

In my enumeration of animals dangerous to man, I omitted the alligator, which infests every river and muddy creek in Java, and grows to a very large size. At the mouth of the Batavia river, they are very numerous and dangerous, particularly to Europeans. It strikes one as extraordinary, to see the copper-coloured natives bathing in the river within view of a large alligator: they never seem to give the animal a thought, or to anticipate injury from his proximity. Yet, were a European to enter the water by the side of the natives, his minutes in this world would be few. I recollect an instance that occurred on the occasion of a party of troops embarking at Batavia for the eastward, during the Java war. The men had all gone off, with the exception of three sergeants, who were to follow in the ship's jolly-boat, which was waiting for them at the wharf: two of them stepped into the boat; but the third, in following, missed his footing, and fell with his leg in the water, and his body over the gunwale of the boat. In less than an instant, an alligator darted from under the wharf, and seized the unfortunate man by the leg, while his companions in the boat laid hold of his shoulders. The poor fellow called out to his friends, "Pull; hold on; don't let go"; but their utmost exertions were unavailing. The alligator proved the strongest, and carried off his prize. The scene was described to me by a bystander, who said, he could trace the monster's course all the way down the river with his victim in his immense mouth.

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The inhabitants of Java are, generally speaking, a quiet, tractable race, but rather lazy withal. The Dutch Government could never have made the Island produce half the quantity it now yields of either sugar, coffee, or rice, without a little wholesome coercion;—coercion that seemed somewhat tyrannical at first, but which has ultimately pleased all parties concerned, and done wonders for Java. If my memory serves me, it was in the time of Governor Vandenborch that this system of coercion commenced. The inhabitants of the villages, in various parts of the Island, were compelled by an armed force, when milder means had failed, to turn out at day-light, and labour in the fields planted either by Government itself or by Government contractors, which naturally caused a great deal of discontent; but, as the labourers were regularly paid in cash for their day's work every evening, they very soon became reconciled to a system that not only provided amply for their families, but gave them the means of indulging in their favourite pastime, gambling. To this vice, all classes are passionately addicted; and nothing is more common than to see a gang of coolies sit down in the middle of the road, and gamble for hours on the few pieces they may have just earned for having carried a heavy burthen a couple of miles. The inhabitants of the districts in which the coercion I speak of has been put in force, are now better satisfied with their rulers than ever they were before.

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The extent to which the growth of coffee and sugar has been carried, has rather checked that of rice, which has been twenty-five per cent. dearer the last fifteen years, than during the preceding twenty: it is, however, still cheap enough as an article of food, though the price is too high to compete, in the China or Singapore markets, with the produce of Lombok, Bally, Siam, or Cochin China.^[5]

Slavery still exists in Java, and every Dutch family has its domestic slaves. The law forbids the importation of fresh ones, and provides for the good treatment of those now in bondage. It also prohibits the slave-owner from separating a family; so that the wife and husband cannot be parted from each other, or from their children, except in the case of a crime having been committed by a member of the family. In that case, the guilty party is, on application to the chief magistrate, put up to auction, and sold to the highest bidder. This, however, is a rare occurrence, though I have witnessed such sales. The slaves, knowing well the consequence of an act of dishonesty, are cautious how they venture to trespass on the rights of *meum* and *tuum*. I may safely say, I have never, in all my wanderings, seen a race of people better treated than the slaves of Java: they are well fed and well clothed; and adults of both sexes receive a monthly allowance of two guilders (3*s.* 4*d.*) under the name of pocket-money. This sum may seem small; but, when we take into consideration, that a free man can be hired for eight guilders per month in Batavia, and for six in the country, on which sum he has to feed and clothe himself and his wife and children, it will be sufficiently evident that the slave's allowance is ample, his master feeding and clothing him and his family. I object *in toto* to slavery in any form; but I confess I do not think the slaves of Java would be benefitted, were their liberty given them to-morrow.

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The natives of Java are by no means free from that prevalent Eastern vice, or luxury, opium-smoking; and the Dutch Government derives an immense revenue from the article. I have, in various parts of the Eastern world, seen the evil effects of opium-smoking; but am decidedly of opinion, that those arising from gin-drinking in England, and from whisky-drinking in Ireland and Scotland, far exceed them. Let any unprejudiced European walk through the native towns of Java, Singapore, or China, and see if he can find a single drunken native. What he will meet with are, numbers of drunken English, Scotch, and Irish seamen, literally rolling in the gutters, intoxicated, not from opium, but from rum and other spirits sent all the way

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from England for the purpose of enabling her worthy sons to exhibit themselves to Chinese and other nations in this disgraceful light. That spirit-drinking at home is no excuse for opium-smoking abroad, I admit; but I would recommend the well-intentioned persons who have of late been raising such an outcry on the subject of opium, to begin at home, and attempt to reform their own countrymen: they may then come to China with a clear conscience, and preach reform to the poor opium-smoker.

Among other improvements in Java, its rulers have lately turned their attention to the cultivation of tea, and with considerable success so far as regards the quality, I have no means of ascertaining the quantity of tea at present produced yearly; but have no doubt it will, before long, become an important article of export from the Island.

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Before quitting Java, I must say a word about the far-famed upas-tree. Such a tree certainly exists on the island; but the tales that are told of its poisoning the air for hundreds of yards round, so that birds dare not approach it, that vegetation is destroyed beneath its branches, and that man cannot come near it with impunity, are perfectly ridiculous. To prove their absurdity, a friend of mine climbed up a upas-tree, and passed two hours in its branches, where he took his lunch and smoked a cigar. The tree, however, does contain poison, and the natives extract the sap, with which they rub their spear and *kriss* blades: wounds inflicted with blades thus anointed, are mortal. Such I believe to be the origin of the many fabulous stories that have passed from hand to hand, and from generation to generation, about the upas-tree of Java.

FOOTNOTES:

- [3] The Java poney in Her Majesty's stable at Windsor, is certainly no fair specimen, being the worst-favoured brute under the sun.
- [4] A name derived from the Malay words, *sallah*, "a fault or crime," and *tiga*, the numeral "three"; consequently meaning the "third fault." How this pretty spot came by such a name, I never heard.
- [5] By the last overland papers from Singapore (Sept. 1845), I observe, the Dutch Government has been importing rice from Pondicherry to Java;—a proceeding quite unprecedented in my time, and to be accounted for only by the extent to which the cultivation of sugar, indigo, and coffee is carried, in order to satisfy the constant demands on the colonies of the Netherlands for money. To this cause may be added, however, the occurrence of one or two dry seasons;—a rare phenomenon within the tropics, and attributable, probably, in some degree, to the vast extent of country recently cleared of forest and jungle to make way for the plough. No policy can be so blind as that which compels the poor Javanese to eat imported rice, while living in a country capable of yielding food for all Europe.

CHAPTER III.

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SINGAPORE.

ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION OF SINGAPORE—CULTIVATION OF THE NUTMEG AND
COCOA-NUT—ROADS AND SCENERY—MOTLEY POPULATION—EUROPEAN RESIDENTS
—CHINESE EMIGRANTS—KLINGS—SAMPAN-MEN—PLACES OF WORSHIP—TIGERS.

In the month of May 1824, I returned from my trip to the eastward, and was kept tightly at work in Batavia, till fate sent me wandering in July 1826. Singapore was the first place I visited; and to it, therefore, I must devote the next few pages of these retrospective lucubrations.

Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles deserved a great deal of credit and praise from the mercantile community of Britain, for having established this emporium of trade. A more lovely or better situation could not have been chosen; and its surprising prosperity has more than realized its founder's expectations, sanguine as they were. Since 1826, I have resided some considerable time in Singapore; have witnessed its progress towards its present nourishing condition; and am sufficiently well acquainted with its trade and its inhabitants to enable me to speak confidently respecting them. The Island itself, though only seventy-six miles from the Equator, enjoys a delightful climate, and is remarkable for salubrity. Its proximity to the Line secures frequent refreshing showers, and its foliage is in consequence always in the full bloom of summer. During an acquaintance with it of eighteen years, I have never known a drought of more than three weeks' duration. Its soil, with little tillage, produces the nutmeg, the clove, coffee, the cocoa-nut, the sugar-cane, the pepper-vine, gambia or terra japonica, and all the fruits common to Malacca and Java. The East-India Company's regulations regarding land checked, for a few years, the spirit of the agriculturist; but, within the last ten years, a few spirited and praiseworthy individuals have laid out considerable sums of money in nutmeg, coffee, sugar, and cocoa-nut plantations. It is a somewhat doubtful point, in my opinion, whether sugar or coffee plantations on this island will ever pay; but, of the nutmeg and cocoa-nut groves, I have the best opinion, and think their proprietors have a very fair chance of ultimately being well paid for their outlay. Of the nutmeg gardens, that of Dr. Oxley's is by far the finest on the island. This gentleman has spared neither trouble nor expense in bringing his plants forward, and has now five thousand of the very finest nutmeg-trees I ever saw. Nothing can be finer than their beautiful position, tasteful outlay, and luxuriant foliage. It is now eighteen months since I last saw those trees: they were then just coming into bearing; and they are now, I hope, paying their spirited proprietor for his monthly outlay at all events, though it may be a few years yet before they return him interest for his money, and adequate remuneration for his trouble.

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A plantation of ten or fifteen thousand cocoa-nut trees is a more valuable property than many people imagine. As soon as they come into bearing, which they do in five years from seed, they are worth three-quarters of a dollar each per annum net profit, after paying the labourers: thus, fifteen thousand of them will yield their proprietor 10,250 dollars per annum, (*i. e.* at the moderate calculation of 4*s.* 2*d.* to the dollar,

2135*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.* sterling,) a sum that would cover all the outlay incurred during the five nonproductive years, and be a secure revenue to the owner of the estate for ever, provided that he is careful in replacing the old trees, as fast as they die, with new plants.

My reasons for doubting the success of coffee-plantations in Singapore are, that there is not sufficient depth of soil for the tree, and that, if there were, labour is too high to enable the planters to compete with those of Java. As regards sugar, Singapore being a sugar-importing colony, its own produce pays, on being imported [42] into England, 8*s.* per hundred-weight more duty than the produce of non-importing British colonies.^[6] The high price of labour is also against the sugar-planter. An able-bodied labourer costs, in Singapore, four dollars per month, while the same man can be had in the mountains of Java for three guilders in money, and the value of two in rice. Thus, the Singapore planter pays more than double the rate of wages for his labour; and, as his lands are not so rich as his neighbour's, he stands, I fear, but a poor chance in the competition with him.

To the eastward of the town of Singapore, extends a considerable plain, on which the sugar and cocoa-nut plantations stand. To the westward and inland of the town, the country consists almost entirely of hill and dale; and its aspect is very striking and picturesque. On many of these miniature (for they are but miniature) [43] hills, stand pretty *bungalows*, surrounded with nutmeg and fruit trees: they are delightful residences, and have the very great advantage of cool nights, when the tired planter or merchant can enjoy a sound sleep after the fatigues of a hot day.

A great deal has been done for Singapore by gangs of convicts from Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, who, under an experienced and able superintendent, have cut and made excellent roads, that now extend east, west, north, and south, for several miles. Cutting these roads has drained, and thereby rendered available, large tracts of land that were recently quite valueless: they also add much to the enjoyment of the Singaporean, by enabling him to extend his ride or drive of an evening. The scenery along the different roads consists of hills and dales, covered with the richest and most luxuriant foliage, with here and there a clearing, where some industrious China-man has squatted, in defiance of tigers and East-India Company's regulations. Now that land can be got on better terms than formerly, these clearings are being purchased by Europeans of the squatter,—whose prior right the Government always protects to the extent of a fair remuneration for his labour,—and are being turned into gardens or plantations. This drives back the squatter, who, like his brethren all over the world, is ever willing to sell and move further inland; thus [44] materially increasing the extent of cleared land from year to year. The primeval jungles of Singapore are so thickly timbered and covered with underwood and large, tough creepers, that the man who undertakes to clear them has before him an Herculean task. According to the best information I could obtain, it requires a cash outlay of sixty dollars to clear a single acre; and even that large sum does not thoroughly stump it (*i. e.* clear off all the large roots and stumps of the larger trees) for the planting of coffee, nutmegs, or pepper. For these, however, this is less necessary, as the plants are placed at a considerable distance from each other: for sugar, it is very desirable to have every stump taken out.

Swamps abound on the island: fortunately, they are all salt-water swamps, and flooded daily by the tide, which keeps them sweet, so that no one suffers from residing in their neighbourhood.

A full description of the inhabitants of Singapore would fill a volume, they are of so many countries. Here may be seen, besides Europeans of different nations, and Americans, the Jew, the Armenian, the Persian, the Parsee, the Arab, the Bengalee, the Malabaree, the China-man, the Malay, the Javanese, the Siamese, the Cochin Chinese, with the native of Borneo, of Macassar, and of every island of the Eastern Archipelago; all in [45] the costumes of their respective countries, and forming motley groupes that can nowhere be surpassed. With the exception of the Europeans, Americans, and Armenians, each class occupies a distinct quarter of the town, mixing but little with the rest, except in business hours, when one and all may be seen in eager converse on the all-important subject of money-making.

Europeans generally live in garden-houses in the suburbs. The favourite situation is along the beach to the eastward of the town, from which the merchant has a full view of the harbour, as well as of both its entrances, and can see every vessel that comes or goes. Pleasant, however, as is this part of the suburbs, it is gradually being deserted for country situations, where the hot winds of July, August, and September are not so much felt, and where the nights are cooler than on the sea-shore. The houses generally occupied by these gentlemen, are large and roomy, with verandahs in front and rear, enclosed with Venetian blinds: these are kept shut from ten A. M. till four P. M., which darkens the house so much that a visiter can with difficulty see his host or hostess for two or three minutes after entering a room, till the pupils of his eyes, contracted by the glare on the road, expand, and enable him to distinguish objects. This custom keeps the house wonderfully cool, and is universally adopted by newcomers after the first few months of their residence. [46] The Chinese occupy the next best part of the town, and many of them have built substantial and commodious houses. A portion of this class are the descendants of Chinese who settled at Malacca two hundred years ago: they have never been to China, and speak Malay much more fluently than they do their own language. Numbers of them keep their families at Malacca, having superstitious objections to a final removal far from the graves of their ancestors. The real Chinese emigrant looks on Singapore only as a temporary home, and invariably remits something every year, according to his means, to his aged parents, wife, or sisters. He usually consoles himself for his absence from his wife, by taking to himself another of the country he resides in: the offspring of this second marriage is always properly cared for on the father's return to China, where he probably takes the eldest boy to be educated.

The Chinese junks bring annually to this part of the world, from six to eight thousand emigrants, ninety-nine-hundredths of whom land without a sixpence in the world beyond the clothes they stand in. The consequence of this is, that those who cannot succeed in obtaining immediate employment, take to thieving, from necessity; and some daring gang robberies are committed every year. They do not, however, long continue [47] this mode of life; for the eight thousand new comers soon scatter, and find employment either on the Island, in the tin-mines of Banca, or on the Malayan peninsula.

Ship-loads of these men have been sent to the Mauritius, where they have given general satisfaction; and no better class of emigrants could be found for the West Indies. A tight curb on a China-man will make him do a great deal of work: at the same time, he has spirit enough to resist real ill treatment. All the mechanics and house-builders, and many boatmen and fishermen of Singapore, are Chinese.

Of the other inhabitants, the most numerous are the Malabarees, who are principally employed as shopkeepers, and are as knowing in the art of bargain-driving as any tradesmen of London or Paris. They generally go here under the denomination of "*Klings*," an appellation synonymous, in the Singapore

vocabulary, with "scamp," to which I have no inclination to dispute their title. The boats employed to carry cargoes to and from the shipping in the harbour, are almost all manned by these *Klings*; and excellent boatmen they are. When pulling off a heavily-laden boat, they cheer their labour by a song, led, in general, by the steersman, the crew joining in chorus. They are a willing, hard-working race, though rather given to shut their eyes to the difference between *meum* and *tuum*. The original Malay inhabitants of this Island are now the most insignificant, both as to numbers and as to general utility, of the many races that are found on it. From this remark must be excepted, however, the *sampan*-men, who are of great service to the mercantile community. In their fast-sailing *sampans* (a superior sort of canoe, peculiar to the place), they go out ten, fifteen, and even twenty miles, to meet any ship that may be signalized as approaching the harbour. They are usually employed to attend a ship during her stay here, few masters choosing to trust their crews on shore in boats. Of late years, reports have been in circulation of a suspected connection between the sampan-men and the Malay pirates in the neighbourhood; but I question their having any foundation in fact. Those Malay families whose young men are thus employed as *sampan*-men, are called *Orang-Laut*, or "People of the sea," from their living entirely afloat. The middle of the river just opposite the town of Singapore, is crowded with boats about twenty feet long by five wide, in which these poor people are born, live, and die. They are wretched abodes, but are preferred, from long custom I fancy, by their inhabitants, who, if they chose, could find room on shore to build huts that would cost less than these marine dwellings.

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Each different class of the inhabitants of the Island have their own place of worship. The English Church, built in 1836 by a contribution from the Government and a subscription among the European inhabitants, is a handsome building in a central situation, capable of holding four times as many people as are likely to be ever collected within it: it is neatly fitted up, but lacked a steeple, or even a belfry. This deficiency, however, is about to be supplied by a subscription raised at the suggestion of the Bishop of Calcutta, during his last official visit to this portion of his immense diocese.^[7]

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The Chinese pagoda is a splendid building, according to the celestial taste in such matters, and is really well worth seeing: the carving and general fitting-up of the interior are very beautiful, and substantial enough to make one believe they will last a thousand years, as the Chinese say they will. In the centre, the Queen of Heaven is seen decked forth in robes of the most superb figured satin, richly embroidered with gold; robes that the wealthiest dames of the proudest cities of Europe might envy, but the like to which they never can possess. Her Majesty was brought from China; and the owner of the junk in which she came, would not receive a penny as freight for the room she occupied. On her arrival in Singapore harbour, the whole Chinese population of the Island turned out to see her land, and paraded her through the town, with all the noise they could by any possibility extract from about a thousand gongs. The building in which she has taken up her quarters, cost 40,000 Spanish dollars, and does credit to the Chinese workmen of Singapore. One day, shortly after the building of this temple, I asked an intelligent and wealthy Chinese, how often he went to it. His answer, in broken English, ran thus: "Sometime one moon, sometime two moon. Suppose I want ask God for something, I go churchee. Suppose I no want ask any thing, what for I go?" On my asking whether he never went to return thanks for past favours, he seemed to think my question a very silly one, and said, "No use."

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The American Chapel is a remarkably neat little building. Besides these, there is no other place of worship in Singapore worthy of notice.

Before quitting the subject of the inhabitants of this land of perpetual summer, I must mention one class which the others would gladly get rid of: I allude to the tigers of a large size which abound here, and which, having cleared the jungles of wild-hog and jackalls, and nearly so of deer, have lately commenced preying on man, to whom they have become a most formidable and dreaded foe. Were I to set down the number of unfortunate individuals who have, since 1839, been killed by these lords of the forests, I should scarcely expect to be credited. Let any one look over the newspapers of the Island for the last five or six years, and they will tell him a tale of horror that will make his blood freeze. Many of the more distant gambiaplantations have been deserted by their proprietors in consequence of the ravages of these monsters. Government, in the hope of remedying or mitigating the evil, offered a reward of one hundred dollars for every tiger brought in alive or dead; but so dense are the jungles in which they seek shelter, that their pursuers have hitherto been far from successful. One is brought in now and then, for which the captor receives his reward, and sells the flesh for some forty dollars more; for the reader must know, that the flesh of a tiger is readily purchased and eagerly eaten by the Chinese, under the notion that some of the courage of the animal will be thereby instilled into them. Some time before I left the Island, a Malay fell in with two tiger cubs in the woods, and captured one of them: next day, he went back, like a fool, alone, in search of the other, when the dam captured and made a meal of him; a lesson to his countrymen, which has effectually cured them of meddling with tiger-whelps. On another occasion, a China-man, having set a trap for tigers, took a walk out about midnight, to see if his plan had been successful. He paid dearly for his temerity, being carried off by some prowling monster; and his mangled body was found near the place a few days afterwards.

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FOOTNOTES:

[6] Since my arrival in England, an Act has been passed, removing, in some measure, this bar to the prosperity of the Singapore sugar-planter;—I allude to the recent reduction in the duty on all sugars, excepting slave-grown. The Singaporeans are naturally anxious to be allowed to send their sugars to the English market on the same terms as their brethren of Prince of Wales' Island have lately been permitted to do. This they can hardly expect, however, while they continue to be such large importers of Siam and other foreign sugars as they are and always have been. To require them to give up this foreign trade, would do them far more injury than the granting of their planters' petition would benefit them.

[7] Since this was written, the Chapel has been much improved, and an elegant steeple added to it. There seems to be some fatality attaching to Clergymen at Singapore. The last three incumbents, Messrs. Burn, Darrah, and White, all died young, and of the same complaint, namely, diseased liver. My own opinion is, that they were all three too strict adherents to teetotalism. In warm climates, a moderate and rather liberal allowance of wine, I believe to be absolutely necessary.

CHAPTER IV.

SINGAPORE.

TRADE OF SINGAPORE—CHINESE TRADERS—BUGIS TRADERS—SIAMESE AND COCHIN
CHINESE—ARAB SMUGGLERS—BORNEO—TRADE WITH CALCUTTA—COMMERCIAL
PROSPECTS.

The trade of Singapore has, until within the last three years, gone on increasing; but it has now, in the opinion of many people, reached its ultimatum. The harbour is visited regularly by native vessels from all the neighbouring islands, as well as from the Continent; and I shall proceed to notice the nature and value of their trade, respectively, class by class.

And first as to the China junks. These unwieldy vessels visit the Island in numbers varying from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty per annum, their size ranging from fifty to five hundred tons: they are manned and navigated entirely by Chinese. They of course come with the monsoon, and reach Singapore in the months of January, February, and March. Their cargoes form a very material item in the trade of the place, and consist of tea, raw silk, camphor, Nankin (both yellow and blue), immense quantities of coarse earthenware, and supplies of all kinds for the myriads of Chinese that reside on this and the neighbouring islands. The season of their arrival is one of great activity in the Chinese bazaars, and gives an impulse to the trade of the importer of Manchester and Glasgow manufactures. Their commanders and supercargoes are cautious dealers, and usually sound the market well before disposing of their commodities. Sometimes, however, they overstand their market, and suffer by refusing the first offers made. This was particularly the case in the season of 1841, in the article of tea, which fell in price with every overland mail that came in, making these wary men rue their having declined the offers that had been made them previously. Most of them are opium-smokers; and their countrymen, with whom they deal, take care to keep them well supplied with this luxury, and obtain many a good bargain from them when under its influence. [54]

The export cargoes of this class of vessels consist principally of raw cotton, cotton yarn, cotton goods, opium, béche-de-mer or sea slug, pepper, tin, rattans, edible birds'-nests, deers' sinews, sharks' fins, fish maws, &c. Of the first three articles, they have of late taken annually the following quantities:—raw cotton, 20,000 bales of 300 lbs. each; cotton goods, 50,000 pieces of 40 yards each; opium, 2000 chests of 164 lbs. each; the aggregate value of which I put down, in round numbers, at two millions of dollars. [55]

Many of the small junks that arrive with the last of the north-east monsoon in April, are fast-sailing craft, and come expressly for opium, to pay for which they bring nothing but bullion: they take their departure early in May, and smuggle the drug into Canton by paying the usual bribe to the Mandarins. All the large junks have sailed on their return voyage by the end of June. Some few of them that waited in 1841 till the middle of July, in the hope of getting opium cheaper than their neighbours who sailed earlier, encountered heavy gales in the Chinese sea; and one or two of them were lost with valuable cargoes. This lesson has not been lost upon their successors, who have since taken care to run no such risks. Advantage is taken of the opportunity afforded by the return of these junks, every season, by the Chinese residents, to make remittances to their families in China; and the masters of them are entrusted with their remittances, which usually consist of money, though, occasionally, rice and other useful articles are sent. The shipper pays the master a percentage on the sum transmitted; and instances of fraud on the part of the latter are extremely rare. A boy about fourteen years of age whom I had as a servant in my house at Singapore, used to ask me for a month's wages in advance, to send to his mother in Macao. Hundreds of similar instances might be adduced. This is one of the bright traits in the Chinese character. [56]

The native traders next in importance to the Chinese, are the Bugis. These arrive in October and November, bringing in their uncouth-looking vessels, large quantities of coffee of very good quality, gold-dust, tortoise-shell, native clothes (celebrated all over the Archipelago for their durability), béche-de-mer, deer-sinews, rice, &c. They come from the different ports on the islands of Celebes, &c., but principally from Macassar. They are a shrewd race, but are no match for their Chinese competitors. On the arrival of a boat, her *hakoda* (or commander) lands with nearly every man on board; and he may be seen walking all over the place for a few days before making any bargain. They are a troublesome set to deal with, and require the exercise of more patience than a European in these parts generally possesses. They are, however, always received with a hearty welcome by the Chinese of the Island, who, inviting them to be seated, immediately hand round the *siri-box* (betel-nut, arica leaf, &c.) among them; and over this universal luxury, they will sit and talk on business matters for hours, during which time it may be fairly calculated that both host and guests tell a lie per minute, without betraying by their countenances the slightest consciousness of having been thus engaged. This strange sort of preliminary negotiation goes on, probably, for a week; at the end of which the passer-by may see the contents of the different Bugis boats entering the Chinese shops or stores, as the case may be. On getting rid of his import cargo, the Bugis trader takes a few days more to rest and refresh himself, before he begins looking round for a return cargo, which usually consists of opium, iron, steel, cotton yarn, cotton goods, gold thread, &c. He seldom or never takes money away with him. On an average, two hundred of these boats come to Singapore in the fall of the year, each manned by about thirty men. Their crews are not allowed to land armed with the *kriss* or any other weapon; a wise precaution, as they are rather too fond of having recourse to them in the event of any quarrel or misunderstanding with those with whom they deal. Notwithstanding this salutary regulation, I have witnessed serious disturbances, ending, on more than one occasion, in bloodshed, between these traders and the bazaar shopkeepers of Singapore. What I refer to occurred many years ago, however, and is not very likely to happen again, as the reins are kept much tighter over them than of yore. They are essentially a maritime people, and are not, as far as I have ever heard, addicted to piracy. They generally sail in small fleets, and are quite prepared to defend themselves against the common Malay pirate, who meets a stout resistance when he meddles with them. Like most, or, I may say, all the inhabitants of this part of the world, they deal more or less in slaves; and it would not be difficult to prove their having sold boys and girls in Singapore within these ten years, though I firmly believe that the disgraceful traffic has been put an entire stop to of late. These men visit, during the months in which the south-east monsoon prevails, Torres Straits, and the numerous islands in that neighbourhood, for the purpose of gathering béche-de-mer and tortoise-shell. They pick up, also, slaves from Papua (New Guinea), for whom they find a ready market in Celebes. Our settlement of Port Essington has long been a favourite resort of the Bugis trader; and were the Government to encourage Chinese and other [57]

settlers, by giving them grants of land, to establish themselves there, there can be no doubt that it would soon become a very important place, instead of a mere military station, or rather place of banishment, for some fifty royal marines. As for its being a refuge for shipwrecked seamen, I have never heard of an instance of a crew of the numerous vessels annually lost in Torres Straits seeking shelter there. This state of affairs would be altered, however, were the port thrown open to the commercial world. As it is, a shipwrecked crew landing there, might have to remain a twelvemonth for an opportunity to get away again; consequently, every seaman placed in that unfortunate position, pushes on in his open boat to the Dutch settlements on the island of Timor.

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Next in importance to the Bugis, I may rank the Siamese and Cochin Chinese traders, who arrive at Singapore during the north-east monsoon. The trade of these two countries used to be carried on entirely in junks peculiar to each of them respectively; but the state of things has been materially altered of late. The sovereigns of Siam and Cochin China have recently built and fitted-out several square-rigged vessels, those of Siam being commanded by Europeans, and manned by natives of that country. These vessels are the private property of the kings whose flags they bear, and are loaded on their account and at their risk. Their cargoes consist principally of sugar and rice, which find ready purchasers in Singapore. The sugar of Siam is of very superior quality, and is sent up in large quantities to Bombay, whence it finds its way up the Indus and the Persian Gulf. The rice of Siam is a superior article, and has of late been sent in considerable quantities to London. The grain is liable to the disadvantage of not keeping so well as that of Bengal or Java; but this fault might, I think, be obviated, partially at all events, by adopting the Calcutta plan of putting a pound or two of rice-dust and lime into each bag: this not only tends to preserve the rice, but repels the destructive weevil; a little black insect that makes its appearance in wheat and rice, in immense numbers, in those warm latitudes.

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The Cochin Chinese ships generally bring each four thousand *peculs* of sugar, which is of three qualities; namely, sixteen hundred *peculs* of first quality, the same quantity of second, and eight hundred *peculs* of the third sort. The first two are good articles, though not equal to the sugars of Siam. The cargoes of these ships are so carefully put up, that I have purchased and re-shipped them without opening or weighing more than five bags out of each hundred, and have never had cause to repent the confidence thus placed in the seller, who is an *employé* of His Cochin Chinese Majesty. In addition to sugar and rice, the Siamese vessels bring gamboge and cocoa-nut oil of a superior quality: the former is bought up for the London and Continental markets, and the latter for consumption in the Straits' settlements. Notwithstanding the monopolizing system of the sovereigns of the two countries just mentioned, the trade by junks is still carried on to a limited extent: their cargo consists of the same articles as the kings' ships bring; and their owners make money in spite of monopoly and of the iron rod with which they are ruled.

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At the commencement of the rupture between Great Britain and China, His Siamese Majesty thought proper to follow the example of his Celestial Brother, and to interdict the trade in opium, which used to flourish in his dominions. His proclamation prohibiting the trade, came so suddenly upon the parties concerned in it, and took effect so immediately, that many of the opium-traders went into his capita of Bang-kok with their usual cargoes, in utter ignorance of what had taken place, and found their vessels seized, their cargoes confiscated, and themselves put in irons and thrown into prison, where they were kept till the interference of the Singapore Government procured their release as British subjects trading under the English flag. The restriction on this trade has not yet been removed (1844); nor is it likely to be, till the king finds himself in want of money, when he will be glad to allow his subjects to resume a traffic that yielded him a large revenue in former days.

Siam produces teak timber of excellent quality, which can be had on very reasonable terms; and of this, the ship-builders of Singapore do not fail to take advantage. A portion of the Cochin Chinese trade is carried on in vessels so small and so frail, that it is astonishing that men can be found to navigate with them the dangerous Chinese Sea: they do not exceed thirty tons burthen. Being wholly unprovided with defensive weapons of any description, many of them are annually taken by the Malay pirates as soon as they make their appearance inside Point Romania, at the mouth of Singapore Strait. They are lateen-rigged with mat sails, are fast sailers, hold a good wind, and have a very pretty appearance when entering the harbour in fleets of fifteen or twenty sail.

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Singapore is annually visited by a large fleet of vessels from all parts of Java: the most important of these are what are commonly called Arab ships, that is, ships fitted out and owned by Arabs residing in Java. They carry the Dutch flag, are commanded by Arabs, and manned by Javanese. If fame does not belie them, these Arab commanders are notorious smugglers. This is certain; that they take goods from Singapore in exchange for the coffee, sugar, rice, &c., which they bring from Java, and that they give prices that would leave them no margin for profit, if His Netherlands Majesty's duties were paid on them. For this sort of illicit trade, the coast of Java offers many facilities in its numerous small rivers, with which the Arab ship-master is intimately acquainted. The article of opium, though strictly prohibited by the authorities of Java, is taken by the Arabs from Singapore in considerable quantities, notwithstanding the pains and penalties attached to its being found on board their vessels; and smuggled into Java the drug most undoubtedly is, let the Dutchmen boast of their spies and custom-house establishment as they will. These Arab ships are built of teak, ranging from one hundred and fifty to five hundred tons per register, and are altogether remarkably fine vessels.

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From the islands of Lombok and Bally, directly eastward of Java, the market of Singapore receives a large annual supply of rice of fair quality, a small quantity of coffee, and some coarse native cloths, to which I may add, a few good stout poneys. The boats from these islands resemble those from Celebes, and are sometimes classed among the Bugis traders: they carry back, as return cargoes, opium, muskets, copper cash, a little gold and silver thread, cotton yarn, and cotton manufactures. These islands have their own Rajahs and laws, but are narrowly watched and kept in check by their neighbours, the Dutch.

Borneo, notwithstanding its vast extent and immense internal wealth, has but a limited external trade. Boats from Sambas, Pontianack, and Borneo Proper, visit Singapore every year, from May till October, and bring with them black pepper, Malay camphor, gold-dust, rattans, &c. Most wretched boats they are, and, according to the accounts given to me by their *hakodas* (commanders), very difficult to keep afloat when laden. Little can be said in favour of the natives of the sea-coast of Borneo, which is, and has been for ages, the haunt of pirates. Many vessels, particularly native *proas*, have been plundered, and their crews murdered or carried into slavery, by the marauders of this inhospitable shore; and it is not twenty years since a visit to it was considered as highly dangerous even in a well-armed vessel. Whole fleets of piratical boats ascend from time to time the rivers of this island, and plunder the native villages, carrying off the females and children as slaves, murdering the adult males, and setting fire to the houses. The proceedings of these

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vagabonds have received some severe checks, of late years, from the operations of a spirited and enterprising individual, Mr. James Brooke, whose well-known zeal and activity are beyond all praise. An occasional visit also from one of Her Majesty's ships, has done much good; and the recent operations of Capt. Keppel of the Dido, gave them a check they will not soon get over. The ascertained existence of extensive veins of coal on the banks of the river of Borneo Proper, will render that neighbourhood of great importance, on the completion of the line of steam communication from Ceylon to Hong Kong, *viâ* Singapore. I believe there is no doubt either as to the large quantity of coal to be had there, or as to its superior quality. But, upon the subject of Borneo, I shall have a few words more to say hereafter.

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The trade between Calcutta and the Straits' settlements, is both extensive and important. Vessels from the Hooghly visit Singapore throughout the year, bringing large supplies of raw cotton, Indian cotton goods, opium, wheat, &c. In return, they carry back vast quantities of gold-dust, tin, pepper, sago, gambia, and treasure. It is no unfrequent occurrence, to find the Singapore market pretty nearly cleared of the circulating medium after the departure of two or three clippers for the "City of Palaces." Indeed, treasure and gold-dust are, in nine cases out of ten, the only safe remittance from the Straits of Malacca to Calcutta; and those who remit in other modes, frequently sustain heavy losses, which not only affect the individuals concerned, but check the trade generally.

I have now given a rapid view of the principal features of the native trade of Singapore, without pretending to give a perfect account of it. Before taking leave of this pretty little Island, I will add a few general remarks upon its condition and prospects. Its actual state, when I left it in 1842, was far from being as prosperous as I could wish. An emporium of the trade of the whole of the Eastern Archipelago, its aggregate imports and exports may be estimated, in round numbers, at three millions sterling per annum. Trade by barter is the system generally adopted; and notwithstanding long-continued exertions on the part of the European mercantile community to establish the cash system, their success has been so very partial, that nine-tenths of the remittances to Europe and India in return for goods consigned here for sale, are made in produce. Severe losses have been sustained here, from time to time, by the European mercantile firms, in consequence of their giving credit, to an almost unlimited extent, to Chinese and other dealers, many of them mere men of straw. During last year, these losses have amounted to very considerable sums. This has led to renewed and more strenuous exertions to establish a cash system, but, I fear, with indifferent success. The present state of the bazaars is very far from satisfactory: my last accounts state, that no one knows who can be trusted. The natural consequence of such a state of things is, a serious decrease in the amount of sales; and had it not been for the demand for Glasgow and Manchester manufactures, caused by the high price of those articles in China, the importers would have had four-fifths of their stocks left on hand.

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Of the state of the public health in Singapore, I am able to report most favourably. Let any one go there and see the European residents of sixteen and twenty years' standing, and he will be able to judge for himself. During an intimate acquaintance of eighteen years with this part of the world, I have never known any endemic disease to prevail; never heard of more than one European dying of cholera, or of more than three Europeans being attacked with that disease; never knew but one or two cases of liver-complaint in which the sufferers had not their own imprudence to thank for the attack; and, as far as my memory serves me, cannot reckon up two deaths among the European inhabitants in that long period. Some one may here whisper, "Look at the state of your Singapore burying-ground." My reply is, that it is filled by the death of numbers who have, from time to time, arrived from Calcutta and other parts of India in a dying state, and who would have died six months sooner, had they not come to breathe the pure air of Singapore. On this point, I boldly challenge contradiction.

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As to the commercial prospects of this Island, I have some misgivings. The recent establishment, by Her Majesty's Government, of the British colony of Hong Kong, and the opening of the northern ports on the coast of China, will, I fear, give its commerce a check: indeed, it seems inevitable that it should suffer from these causes. When we consider the vast importance of the Chinese junk-trade to Singapore, and take into account the cheaper rate we can supply them, now their ports are open, at their own doors, with every commodity they require from the Malay islands, the risk, trouble, and expense they will save by supplying their wants or disposing of their superfluities, in the harbours of Shang Hae, Ningpo, Foo Chow, or Amoy, instead of undertaking the long voyage to the Straits of Malacca for that purpose,—one is at a loss to conceive on what grounds the sanguine expectation can rest, that the opening of China will do Singapore no harm. Some of its merchants evidently share in my anticipation, as they have completed arrangements for forming establishments at Hong Kong, in order to avail themselves of the change they expect to take place in the course of the trade. It will not be this year, nor, probably, the next, that this change will take place; but, that it must ultimately come to pass, I can see no room to doubt.^[8]

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In other branches of its trade, Singapore will, probably, not suffer so much from the late arrangements with China; but it will suffer more or less. It is extremely likely, that a large portion of the rice of Bally and Lombok, the pepper of Borneo, and the béche-de-mer of Celebes, will be carried direct to China in European vessels, instead of passing, as hitherto, through the hands of the Singapore merchants. Whenever a new mart is opened, there is no want of men, money, or ships to take advantage of it; and we can place pepper from Borneo, and rice from Bally, in any port on the coast of China, for less money, by carrying them there direct from the place of growth, than the Chinese can by carrying them from Singapore in their junks. These vessels only make one voyage in the year; whereas a square-rigged vessel can make three with ease; and it is on account of the greater service performed by the latter, that she can carry goods to market cheaper than a junk. I repeat, therefore, that I think the trade of Singapore has reached its maximum; and that the town has attained to its highest point of importance and prosperity. Indeed, it is at this moment rather over-built. A beautiful and healthy town, however, it is; and that it may not suffer materially or permanently from the causes above mentioned, but continue to prosper as formerly, is a wish that comes from the very bottom of my heart.

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Singapore is under a Governor, (who also rules over Malacca and Penang,) Resident Councillors, a Police Magistrate, and some half-dozen under-strappers. The establishment is altogether an economical one, and, on the whole, well conducted. It has, moreover, a Court of Justice, with civil, criminal, and Admiralty jurisdiction, which is presided over by a Recorder appointed by the Home Government. His authority also extends over the neighbouring settlements of Malacca and Penang. The Governor and three Resident Councillors are members of this court. In the absence of the Recorder, they can and do hold court, and, in extreme cases, carry into execution sentences of death passed on their own responsibility. The late Governor, the Honourable S. G. Bonham, held the post for many years, and left the Island with the good wishes of every inhabitant. To his credit and honour be it said, that, out of the many hundreds of civil cases tried and adjudicated by him, I never heard of one in which his decision was reversed, in the event of the parties

petitioning for and obtaining a new trial from the Recorder. Such petitions, owing to the well-known love of litigation inherent in the Asiatic character, were very numerous; but, in nine cases out of ten, the Recorder saw no reason to grant a new trial; and the few who succeeded in obtaining new trials, would have been better off without them, as Mr. Bonham's verdict was always confirmed.

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Five, ten, fifteen years ago, the society of Singapore was much more agreeable than it is now. Not that the parties who composed it then, were more pleasant people than the present residents; but we met oftener in those days, and were more sociable when we did meet, and, perhaps, opened our doors to the stranger oftener than is practised at the present time. One is apt, however, to be biassed in favour of the times and the people that seemed to ourselves the most agreeable; I shall therefore say no more on this delicate subject.

The revenue of Singapore is more than sufficient to pay its expenses: it arises principally from land-sales and land-tax; from farming out the privilege of retailing opium and spirits; from the rent paid for public markets; and from pawnbrokers' licenses. The sums derived from these sources are increasing every year.

The local police are paid, and roads and bridges are maintained, from a fund raised by an assessed tax of eight per cent, on the annual value of fixed property. From this fund, Mr. Tom C— withdraws a few thousand dollars occasionally, in order to build a new bridge or to make a new road; a proceeding that does not give entire satisfaction to the rate-payers, and is indeed hardly fair towards them, since the new bridges and roads render available large tracts of land that would otherwise be valueless, and for which Tom C—'s honourable masters obtain a handsome price in consequence. The inhabitants grumble at these proceedings, but can do no more, the sole and whole management of the fund in question being in the hands of the local Government.

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Singapore is a free port; and vessels of all kinds and from all nations come and go, without paying one penny to Government in any shape. All that is required of them is, to give in a list of the goods they either land or ship. This regulation is intended to enable the authorities to keep a correct statement of the trade of the place; but it is, I am sorry to add, often evaded by ship-masters and their consignees, who seem to think that no trade can be profitably conducted without a certain portion of mystery attaching to it.

FOOTNOTES:

- [8] *Sept. 1845.*—Recent accounts from Singapore in some measure confirm this view. It is noted, among other things, that the quantity of tea imported by the Chinese junks in the season of 1844-45 was only 6000 quarter-chests; whereas, in that of 1843-44, the imports exceeded twenty times that quantity. Camphor, however, continues to come in as large quantities as ever. The opium trade again, has diminished three-fourths; and my prediction that pepper &c. would be carried to the northern ports of China in European vessels, has been fulfilled, though, from this branch of commerce, Singapore, or its merchants, will still derive benefit as carriers. The Chinese of Singapore have taken up this trade with great spirit, and will doubtless continue it.

CHAPTER V.

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DUTCH SETTLEMENTS.

DUTCH SETTLEMENT OF RHIO—ISLAND OF BANCA—BENCOOLEN—PADANG—CHINESE
SLAVE-TRADE—NATIVE TRIBES OF SUMATRA—PEPPER TRADE.

In September 1826, I visited China for the first time; but, having recently paid that country a much more extended visit, I shall reserve for a future chapter my observations upon Chinese affairs; and shall now proceed to give an account of some of the smaller Dutch colonies or settlements which I visited about this time.

About forty miles to the eastward of Singapore, on the island of Bintang (Star), is Rhio, a small Dutch settlement, producing a large quantity of gambia and some thirty thousand *peculs* of black pepper per annum. The bulk of the former article finds its way to Java, where it is extensively used for dying purposes. Nearly all the pepper is sent to Singapore in small trading-boats, and is bought up there for the London and Calcutta markets. My visit to Rhio lasted only thirty-six hours, during which time I was too busy to be able to look much about me; but I have since frequently sailed past the town, and through the beautiful strait of the same name, and can vouch for it, that the lovers of picturesque scenery will find objects in abundance to attract their attention. Shortly after entering Rhio straits from the southward, the navigator is completely land-locked, and appears to be sailing in a large lake, amid the richest possible scenery; nor can he discern the slightest appearance of an outlet from this fairy scene, till he is within half a mile of the west end of the island of Luborn, when, all at once, the view opens at that part which leads him into the straits of Singapore. Rhio has the character of being very healthy, and, from its soil and position, might be rendered productive. It is governed by a Dutch Resident, and protected by a small garrison and fleet. Of the activity of this little fleet against the neighbouring pirates, I am glad to be able to speak most favourably; and I am bound to add a word in testimony to its Commander's hospitality and kindness to shipwrecked British seamen, which have been frequently put to the test of late years, and have on more than one occasion called forth from the Singapore Chamber of Commerce a vote and letter of thanks.

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Shortly after the establishment of Singapore, the Dutch Government proclaimed Rhio a free port. This measure, fortunately for us, was adopted rather too late in the day to do any injury to the trade of Sir Stamford Raffles's pet settlement, or much good to its neighbour. It must be somewhat galling to the good folk of Rhio, to see some hundreds of vessels of all descriptions under the Dutch flag sail past their harbour every year, bound for Singapore, where they transact business to a large amount; favouring this port,

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probably, with a short visit on their return, for the purpose of purchasing a few hundred *peculs* of gambia for the Java market.

On the north-east point of Bintang, is a dangerous reef, on which the clipper-bark Sylph struck in 1835, and on which she lay for four months, defying the fury of the north-east monsoon and the heavy rolling swell from the Chinese Sea; thus proving beyond a doubt the great strength of a teak-built ship. An English ship in the same circumstances would not have held together a week; as was subsequently proved in the case of the Heber.

Mintow (Muntok according to the Dutch) is the capital of the island of Banca, so long celebrated for its tin-mines. This is a poor town, and very unhealthy: it is situated on the west side of the island, and faces the straits of Banca, having the low, swampy shore of Sumatra opposite. When Banca was occupied in common with the other Dutch colonies by the British, it proved fatal to nearly the whole of the garrison. The Banca fever is, perhaps, one of the most dangerous diseases with which man is afflicted: those who are fortunate enough to recover from it, are subject for life to severe nervous attacks at the full and change of the moon. I well remember two gentlemen in Batavia, who could scarcely lift their hands to their heads at these periods, though twenty years had elapsed since they had had this terrible fever. The Dutch troops still continue to suffer severely from this cause; and to be sent to Banca from Java, is looked upon as the hardest lot that can befall a soldier. Its tin-mines continue to be very productive, and yield 60,000 *peculs* of pure metal per annum. From this source, the Dutch authorities derive a considerable revenue. They employ Chinese miners, to whom they pay six dollars for every *pecul* of tin delivered on the coast in a pure state, which they sell readily in Java for sixteen dollars per *pecul*; thus getting ten dollars clear profit, less about half a dollar per *pecul*, which it costs to send the tin to Batavia for sale. As far as I know, Banca yields nothing else; and the rice eaten by the Chinese miners, is sent regularly from Java.

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The rivers on this island are infested by very large alligators, which, from the scarcity of food, become highly dangerous. Their hunger drives them sometimes to attack boats, as they are rowed up the rivers; and serious accidents occur from time to time in this way. I could tell one or two marvellous tales about the ferocity and bold attacks of these river-monsters, but refrain from doing so, lest they should lead the incredulous reader of these rambling sketches to doubt my veracity. The straits of Banca were at one time the resort of numerous Malay pirates: the activity of the Dutch cruisers has, however, rendered their once dangerous neighbourhood perfectly safe, so far as the attacks of these marauders are concerned. I have sailed many times through the straits of Sunda, Banca, Rhio, Dryan, Malacca, and Singapore, since 1823, and have known some few European vessels and many native proas taken; but, in all my voyages up and down, I never saw a boat or proa that I felt certain was a pirate. I have, indeed, seen many very suspicious-looking craft off Singin, and between that island and the north end of Banca; but, as they never molested us, I am willing to let their characters pass free, so far as I am concerned.

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The once thriving settlement of Bencoolen, (or Fort Marlborough,) which I visited at different times between 1828 and 1830, I found, even then, to have declined very seriously from its former prosperity. Previously to its transfer, in 1825, to the Dutch, great exertions were made to render this settlement important for its exportation of spices of all descriptions; and, so far as regards nutmegs, mace, and cloves, those exertions were eminently successful. Planters and others, however, soon found that, on the hauling down of the British flag, and the hoisting of the Dutch, their prospects underwent a very material change, arising from duties and other charges laid on the commerce of the place. Most of the capitalists retired with the British establishment, of which, indeed, they formed a part. A hard struggle was maintained by those planters who remained behind, but without success; and the place is now very little more than a station for a Dutch Assistant-Resident and a small garrison.

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Bencoolen harbour is a dangerous one, particularly during the prevalence of the boisterous north-west monsoon, which blows with such violence on this part of the west coast of Sumatra. Ships generally anchor close under the lee of Rat Island and reef, where they find smooth water, unless the weather is unusually severe. This anchorage is seven miles from the wharf where merchandise is landed, and considerable risk is occasionally incurred by the cargo boats in making good this short distance. In very stormy weather, ships and boats also are compelled to seek shelter in Pulo Bay; a vile, unhealthy place situated about twelve miles south-east of Rat Island, and surrounded with a low, swampy, agueish-looking country. The Siamese suffer severely in this harbour from fever and ague, and ship-masters are glad to leave it as soon as the weather moderates. In my time, there was a convenient covered wharf at Bencoolen for landing goods, but not a vestige now remains: it was originally built by the English, and the Dutch have not cared to preserve or replace it. In the present wretched state of the settlement, indeed, it is of trifling consequence, since little difficulty can be found by the few merchants from Java who from time to time visit Bencoolen, in landing the small quantities of goods they may have to dispose of.

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The climate of Bencoolen is the worst it has been my fortune to encounter since I left Europe. The land wind that sets in about seven P. M., is the most trying breeze I ever encountered. To sit in an open verandah when it is blowing, is quite out of the question; at least with impunity. I tried the experiment more than once, and never escaped without a severe seizure of trembling something like ague, within less than half an hour. The injurious effects of this land wind may be traced to the swamps between the hills in the vicinity of the town, which, unlike those of Singapore, are formed by fresh water, and are no better than stagnant puddles. In passing over these, the wind becomes of course charged with malaria, which it distributes in every house between it and the sea; and woe betide the European who fails to keep out of its way! Most places that I have visited, have a healthy, as well as an unhealthy season. Bencoolen is an exception to this rule, being unhealthy all the year through. Even vegetation suffers here from the south-east monsoon; and a nutmeg-plantation exposed to its dry, parching influence, has the appearance of a plantation of heather-brooms more than of any thing else.^[9] The natives do not appear to suffer from the climate, but seem to be as healthy and long-lived as Asiatics generally. Of the character of these natives, I can say little that is favourable. They are indolent, proud, though poor, gamblers, vindictive, and far too ready with the knife on little or no provocation; they are very fond of dress, and not over scrupulous how they gratify this taste; for which purpose I have known them have recourse to theft, lying, robbery, and even murder. Had they one single spark of energy in their composition, they might be a thriving and contented people, possessing as they do a boundless extent of rich virgin soil, which they are too lazy to clear and cultivate. The place is overrun with a race of petty Rajahs and other nobles, who are a social pest, being poor, and yet too proud to strain a nerve to support themselves and their families. Sir Stamford Raffles succeeded in rousing the ambition of these men a little, by giving some of them commissions in the local corps, which gratified their taste for gay attire, and supplied them with a few hundred rupees per month to keep up a little state. From my sweeping

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reproach of the chiefs, I would except these *Radins*,^[10] with whom I have spent many pleasant evenings, and who really possessed gentleman-like feelings and tastes.

The transfer of this settlement to the Dutch (in exchange for Malacca) in 1825, was a severe blow and great disappointment to all the natives, both high and low. At a meeting of chiefs held at the Government house, at which the English and Dutch authorities were both present, for the purpose of completing the transfer, the senior Rajah rose to address the assembly, and spoke to the following effect:—"Against this transfer of my country I protest. Who is there possessed of authority to hand me and my countrymen, like so many cattle, over to the Dutch or to any other power? If the English are tired of us, let them go away; but I deny their right to hand us over to the Dutch. When the English first came here, they asked for and got a piece of land to build warehouses and dwelling-houses upon. That piece of land is still defined by its original stone wall, and is all they (the English) ever got from us. We were never conquered; and I now tell the English and Dutch gentlemen here assembled, that, had I the power, as I have the will, I would resist this transfer to the knife. I am, however, a poor man, have no soldiers to cope with yours, and must submit. God's will be done." This was a bold, straight-forward speech; but it was thrown away upon the callous ears of the hearers. Delivered in pure Malay, it sounded stronger than in this translation. The speaker was an old man, with whose power and will for mischief, in former days, the British had good cause to be acquainted.^[11]

The country round Bencoolen is, with the exception of the spice-plantations, covered with a thick forest. The soil is rich, and, as I have said, might be turned to good account, by means of a small portion of energy on the part of the natives. The forests abound with the tiger and the elephant. The former finds plenty of game to feed on, and, consequently, seldom molests man. It is not an unusual occurrence for a single tiger to attack a herd of cattle when grazing in the neighbourhood of their owner's grounds: singling out his intended victim, he pursues it to the last, without, in general, attempting to injure any of the rest. As soon as the cattle see or *smell* the approaching tiger, they become quite wild, and run at their full speed towards their herdsman, whom they surround apparently for their own protection, and continue in great commotion, though without attempting to run, till their enemy is either driven away, or has succeeded in capturing one of their number. The elephant is here of a large size, and is occasionally caught in snares by the natives for the sake of his tusks, which I have seen weighing one hundred and twenty pounds each. This huge animal is not dangerous to man, unless his path is crossed, when, particularly if a single male one, he becomes a formidable neighbour. He is easily tamed; but the native here is too indolent to trouble himself with the task. The only one I ever saw made use of, was sent by the King of Acheen to Sir Stamford Raffles, and was, in my time, the property of my friend, Mr. Robert Bogle. Strange stories are told of the power, sagacity, and cunning of this monarch of the woods. Among other feats, the natives say, it is not uncommon for one elephant to lie down, and let another stand upon his back, in order that he may reach higher up a cocoa-nut tree, and have a better chance of pushing it down. I tell the tale as it was told to me, not caring to vouch for its truth.

Bencoolen is occasionally visited by the hill tribes from the mountains in its neighbourhood: they come down in bands of ten, fifteen, or twenty men, bringing with them gold-dust to barter for opium. As neither rice nor cocoa-nuts grow in the elevated region inhabited by them, they usually bring also a few bags of potatoes to exchange for those luxuries. They are a hardy race of men, strongly built, of middle stature, and have very thick black beards; a singular feature in an inhabitant of this island. I am sorry to add, that they sometimes visit the coast for other and less legitimate purposes than barter; and that their kidnapping children to make slaves of, is no uncommon occurrence. Several instances of this kind took place in 1829, within my certain knowledge.

I have frequently heard it said, "Go where you will, you are sure to find a rat and a Scotchman." My having visited Bencoolen enables me to contradict this aphorism; for I there found abundance of rats, one Englishman, and not a single Scot. I must confess, however, that this is the only place in which I have ever found the Englishman without the Scot.

Cock-fighting is carried on to a great extent here, and is indulged in by the natives, high and low. On market-days, vast numbers of natives may be seen wending their way to the cock-pit attached to each market or bazaar, with one of the celebrated Malay game-cocks under their arms. At the pit, some hundreds of these birds may be seen in the hands of the fanciers, who weigh and examine them thoroughly before betting on them. As soon as the bets are arranged, the two birds first on the list are brought into the centre of the pit, and armed by their owners with a fearful spur about four inches long, of the shape of a scythe, and as sharp as a razor. The combat seldom lasts a minute, the first charge generally rendering one, and frequently both the combatants *hors-de-combat*, by inflicting on them mortal wounds. Then begins the most disgusting part of the scene. The owner of each bird takes him up, blows into his mouth and eyes, and uses every exertion to make the poor tortured victim give the last peck to his adversary. Failing this last peck, the battle is a drawn one. Bets are usually paid, particularly in the country, in gold dust, which is weighed out in small ivory steelyards kept for the purpose. The Dutch, with their usual policy, derive a revenue from every cock-pit within their boundary here. For my own part, I am not inclined to blame them, and think our revenue at all the three Straits' settlements might be materially increased, and the scamps of those places kept in better order, by having every gambling-house in them registered and subjected to a tax. To put a stop to gambling in any Asiatic town, is beyond the power of man; and the attempt to do so, only drives the gamester to the secret haunts where he may indulge his propensity, and where, I fear, too often he becomes a witness of, if not a participator in deeds of blood. As a grand juror in Singapore, I have had evidence enough of this.

From Bencoolen, I proceeded to Padang, another Dutch settlement, about two hundred miles up the coast of Sumatra. Padang, as its name implies, is situated in a plain, and is a very few feet above the level of the sea; yet, it is a healthy place. It was once in possession of a considerable trade, but this has diminished of late years, in most articles, except coffee, of which I am told it now exports 60,000 *peculs* per annum. The harbour or anchorage is about five miles from the mouth of the small river on the banks of which the town stands, and is a dangerous one in boisterous weather, having little or no protection from the fury of the north-west monsoon. The trade from Java to this part of Sumatra, consists principally of rice, salt, native clothing, and a few supplies for the European and Chinese inhabitants of the place: in return, it sends coffee and pepper. There is a disgraceful traffic carried on between Padang and the island of Nias, a little further up the coast, by Chinese, who visit that island, and purchase hundreds of its inhabitants, for whom they find markets all along the coast. Those brought to Padang, are not, indeed, sold as slaves; but they are registered at the Resident's office, and held as bond-debtors for different terms of seven, fifteen, and even twenty years: during this servitude, they are treated as slaves, but are free at its expiration; they have also the option of buying their liberty in the meantime, if they can raise the means; and the proprietor is not at liberty to refuse

a sum equivalent to the value of the unexpired term of service. This value is fixed thus: on the registering of a debtor, a certain sum is put down as his value or debt; say 400 rupees; of this sum, a certain proportion, say 20 rupees, is placed to his credit for every year he serves; so that, if he serves his master for five years, his debt is reduced to three hundred rupees; and this sum, the master is compelled to accept as the price of his liberation. If a debtor has a hard master, he is at liberty to induce another to buy his services; and the transfer cannot be declined, if the sum due is forthcoming. These Nias people are, men and women, a much fairer race than Malays, and speak a language of their own. Many of the men become expert carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, &c., which enables them to earn money and purchase their freedom; and for such skilled artisans, the master can demand no more as the price of their freedom than the balance due upon their services. I have seen boat-loads of these poor creatures landed at Padang, consisting of old men, women, boys, girls, and mere infants, looking wretched enough, and marched off to the police-office to be registered and sold. This is a black spot in the Dutch administration of affairs in Sumatra. [88]

The proceedings of the Dutch on the coast of Sumatra, are a sore subject to the Singaporeans, as having interfered with their trade with the north-west coast of the island. By means of the extension of the Dutch posts from Padang into the interior, they compel the native to carry his coffee thither, instead of taking it, as formerly, down the Siak river, and thence to Singapore. This accounts, in a great degree, for the increase in the export of that berry from Padang, from thirty to sixty thousand *peculs* per annum, between the year 1828 and 1838.

Padang is very subject to frequent earthquakes, being surrounded with volcanic mountains. To look at its houses, one would think that a single shock would level the whole town. The best of them consist of a frame of wood, each post standing on a single stone, which is simply laid on the ground, not let into it; the vacancies between the posts and the cross-pieces of framework, are filled up with lath and plaster; and the roof is almost invariably of thatch. They resemble huge stools resting upon stones, to keep the legs from sinking into the earth, and look as if the first breeze would upset them. An earthquake shakes them, and makes them vibrate, but seldom or ever injures them; whereas a brick and mortar house, subjected to the same severe trial, would certainly give way, unless it were of very substantial workmanship. I have experienced several severe shocks of earthquakes, both here and at Bencoolen, and at first felt very much disposed to quit the house; but custom reconciles one to almost every thing, even to seeing your dwelling-house dancing, or "Jumping *Jim Crow*." [89]

Since the Dutch got possession of this part of Sumatra, they have almost constantly been at war with a neighbouring tribe of natives, who, from their fanatical zeal in the cause of the Mohammedan faith, have obtained the name of *Padres*; and the war is called the *Padre* war. These men have occasioned the Government a vast deal of trouble, and cost it a mint of money, as well as many valuable lives. When beaten in the field, they suddenly disperse and retreat to their mountain fastnesses, where they remain to strengthen themselves, and watch their opportunity to make a fresh attack on the Dutch posts. In this manner they harass their opponents, and occasionally inflict upon them a very severe blow. I heard at Padang, that, when the country was ceded to the Dutch, in 1818, these *Padres* had said, they would never submit to their power; and well have they kept their word. [90]

Sumatra, were it under a European power, and peopled as well as Java is, would soon rival that island. Its soil is, for the most part, equally fertile, and yields coffee, pepper, nutmegs, &c. Only a small portion of the territory is subject to the Dutch: the remainder is inhabited by various tribes, who speak different languages, and mix but little together. They are mostly an indolent people, and require driving by their chiefs to make them work for a day or two now and then. The comparatively small produce exported from this large and fertile island, is obtained almost entirely by forced labour.

The pepper trade of the ports to the northward of Padang, has ceased to be a profitable one, and is now neglected. European shipmasters used to complain bitterly of the roguery practised upon them by the native dealers; but who taught the native his roguish tricks? Who introduced false weights? Who brought to the coast 56lb. weights with a screw in the bottom, which opened for the insertion of from ten to fifteen pounds of lead, *after their correctness had been tried by the native in comparison with his own weights*? Who made it a regular rule, in their transactions with the native dealer, to get 130 *catties* of pepper to the *pecul*, thus cheating him of thirty per cent, of his property? I challenge contradiction, when I assert, that English and American shipmasters have for thirty years been addicted to all these dishonest practices. The cunning and deceit of the native traders, at the pepper ports of Sumatra, have been taught them by their Christian visitors, and forced upon them in self-defence. An acquaintance of mine, who had made some purchases from a native, went on shore next morning to receive the goods. When the pepper was being weighed, he told the native clerk, he was cheating. The man denied it, and told the party he lied. The European raised his fist, and threatened to chastise the native, who coolly put his hand on his ever-ready *kris*, and said, "Strike, sir." The raised hand dropped to its owner's side, and well it was that it did so; or the party would not have lived to tell the tale of his having threatened the clerk of a Sumatra Rajah. A large portion of the pepper used to be paid for in dollars; and it is a singular fact, that, notwithstanding the number imported in this way, no one ever saw a single dollar exported, or seems to know what becomes of them. It is generally supposed, that the Rajahs buy them, and that they often die without revealing where their treasure is deposited. Be this as it may, it is very difficult, under any circumstances, to extract a dollar from the chiefs of this coast. [91]

The trader in this part of the world, works hard for whatever he may earn, having to encounter much severe weather, and to go through a heavy surf every time he lands. Indeed, so heavy and dangerous is the surf, that few ships' boats are fit to go through it. The shipmaster generally rows to the back of it in his own boat, and obtains one from the shore to land in. Of this, the native does not fail to take advantage in the event of any dispute, knowing that his customer cannot leave the shore without a boat, to be had only through his influence; and it is no uncommon thing for the European to be detained all night, and made to settle accounts in the morning before going off. The coast of Sumatra, from Acheen Head to Flat Point, (its two extremes in this direction,) is a highly dangerous one, being iron-bound, with a heavy surf and many reefs off it. I envy not the man who has to make his voyage here against the north-west monsoon. The Dutch are extending their ports on the sea-board from Padang northward, and will ere long reach Acheen Head; when they will have a struggle, if the Acheenese people possess a moderate portion of their ancient gallantry and hatred of Europeans. [92]

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- [9] This remark applies to the side of the tree that faces the south-east only. The north-west side is perfectly healthy-looking and green, when its opposite is the very picture of blight and decay.
- [10] Radin, a noble next in rank, in the Malay world, below a Rajah.
- [11] This chief will long be remembered in Bencoolen for his reckless daring, when a desire of vengeance for any insult, real or imaginary, stirred the devil within him. Many a midnight murder was laid at his door, and with justice too, if I am not very much mistaken. The last time I saw him, he was very near his end, and spoke of his death as calmly and tranquilly as if he had lived the purest life imaginable. He is long since in his grave, and his family has sunk into insignificance. I do not believe a more thorough villain ever walked the earth.
- [12] Since my return home, I have seen an account of the proceedings of two of Her Majesty's sloops on the coast of Sumatra from Acheen eastward. Sir W. Parker, with his usual promptitude, sent them there from Penang, to punish the perpetrators of some acts of piracy lately committed on British vessels. The service has been most effectually performed; and the marauding native has been taught, that, distant as he may be, punishment is the certain result of meddling with the flag of England. The ships of war in and about the straits of Malacca, would do much good to the commerce of their country by an occasional visit to Acheen and the coast of Pedir. There is nothing like the sight of a few eighteen-pounders for keeping the domineering Malay Rajah in check.

CHAPTER VI.

MALACCA AND PENANG.

Malacca, which I first visited in 1829, and have repeatedly revisited, is completely shorn of its ancient glory, and is no longer of the slightest importance, either as a military position or as a trading mart. Penang, at one end of the Straits, and Singapore at the other, have destroyed its prosperity; and it is now a poverty-stricken place, with little or no trade. The town is built in the old Dutch fashion, each house with its out-offices forming a square with a yard in the centre. The Government offices are still held in the ancient Stadt-House, a venerable pile built by the worthy Dutch burghers some hundred and fifty years ago, and retaining to this day its ancient furniture of ebony, many pieces of which, by the way, have lately supplied patterns for modern sofas and other furniture. The European population is composed almost entirely of the civil servants of the Government and the military men, who reside principally in the immediate neighbourhood of the town, not liking their Malay neighbours well enough to feel inclined to spread far into the country. Some few attempts have been made, within the last fifteen years, to establish nutmeg and other plantations at Malacca; I fear, without much success. Not that the trees do not thrive, but that labour is scarce, owing to the prevailing indolence of the people in this part of the world. Moreover, occasional disturbances among the natives render a residence on the spot (without which little success can be expected) any thing but pleasant. The place is a burthen to the East-India Company, as its revenues do not pay half its expenses.

The country round Malacca is mountainous, and covered with large timber. In its neighbourhood are several tin-mines, which yield a metal some twenty per cent. inferior to that of Banca. This tin finds its way, like every thing else in the Archipelago, to Singapore, where it has of late fetched only thirteen dollars and a half *per pecul*.

There is a race of men at Malacca, who appear to be the descendants of some natives of Malabar who settled there a century ago, and Malay women; a bad breed certainly, and the men I speak of seem to possess all the *devilry* of both races. Numbers of them visit Singapore from time to time, bringing among other things, thousands of the Malacca canes which are so much esteemed in England. They have other employments, if fame does not belie them, not quite so creditable to their characters. Here, also, may be found many descendants of the old Portuguese inhabitants, who have here, as elsewhere all over the East, degenerated sadly, and, but for their dress, could not be distinguished from the other natives, except that the latter are a much finer race. These Portuguese are, for the most part, wretchedly poor, and, apparently, will soon become extinct. Very few of the descendants of the old Dutch inhabitants are to be found here now: those still remaining are principally shopkeepers, and are much more respectable in every way than their Portuguese fellow subjects. Slavery, until lately, existed in a domestic form in Malacca; it has, however, been completely done away with through the representations and exertions of the late Governor, Mr. Bonham.

Malacca forms a pretty picture from the sea, and, to the passer-by, seems an attractive spot: his disappointment, on landing, however, would be great, and few inducements to prolong his stay will be found, excepting the climate. This, to the invalid from Bengal, is a treat, on which I have heard many expatiate in glowing terms after their return, with renewed health, to Calcutta.

Penang, or Prince of Wales Island, is, perhaps, the most beautiful of the three Straits settlements, though it is certainly not the most salubrious, being occasionally visited by a very severe fever, which, in my time, carried off many of the European inhabitants.^[13]

Here, the nutmeg and the clove come to perfection; and the produce of Penang commands higher prices in the London market, than the spice of any other country with which I am acquainted. The estates of Mr. Brown are the finest on the Island; and the hospitality of their proprietor is unsurpassed. Of late years, the profits of spice-plantations have become somewhat precarious, as the supply in the European markets has exceeded the demand. This has turned the attention of several of the leading people on the Island to the sugar-cane, which thrives here well, and is now to be seen covering large tracts which very recently were lying waste. The sugar-planter here, however, labours under the same disadvantage, as to import-duty in England, as his brother planter of Singapore, which, if not altered, will mar his prospects. Strong representations on the subject have been made to the Bengal Government, and (I believe) to the Court of Directors, as yet without effect.

The revenue of Penang is derived from the same sources as that of Singapore, but falls short of the annual expenses of the place. This may be accounted for by the falling off in its trade, and the decrease in its

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population, since the establishment of the last-named settlement. It still retains a considerable trade with Sumatra, the coast of Coromandel, and Calcutta, but its direct trade with England is almost entirely cut up. It is also the *dépôt* for the tin collected at Junkseyton, and other places on the Malay coast immediately opposite. Altogether, however, the establishment of Singapore has very much injured Penang, and thinned its population, rendering its houses of little or no value, and giving to its streets a deserted appearance from which they will never recover.

The plain on which the town stands, is bounded on two sides by the sea, and, beyond the town, is dotted over with pretty garden-houses: it is intersected in all directions by good roads, which are lined throughout with the prettiest of all hedges, composed of the dwarf bamboo. Beyond this plain, the country becomes hilly and covered with woods, except a spot here and there, where the spice-planter has made his clearing, and built his bungalow. On the tops of several of these hills, which are higher and more extensive than those of Singapore, may be seen bungalows for convalescents, approachable only by a bridle path, up which the stout little ponies of the Island carry bravely the health-seeking or pleasure-seeking party. These spots are delightful residences; and the climate is cool enough at night to make a blanket on the bed most welcome and comfortable, I have my doubts whether these are fit places for the invalid to resort to, particularly if his complaint be of a pulmonary nature. Immediately after sun-set, the hill top is enveloped in a dense fog, which makes every thing in the house feel damp, and which does not disappear till ten A. M. next day. It were worth while to ride up one of these hills, for the sole purpose of watching the clearing off of the fog in the morning: the visiter taking his stand in the verandah about nine A. M., and looking down, in the direction of the plain, on the dense mass of fog hanging over the town and suburbs, sees it by degrees clear away like a curtain slowly withdrawn, and the houses, roads, bridges, &c., appear below him as if springing up there by magic. Add to this, the fleet of shipping in the harbour, the opposite plains of Province Wellesley, and the distant mountains towering in the sky beyond, and a scene may be imagined, that can scarcely be described; at least, not by my feeble pen. When I first visited Penang, Province Wellesley was a wilderness, inhabited only by a thin Malay population and numerous tigers.^[14] It now wears another and more pleasing aspect, large tracts of its fertile soil having been cleared and brought under cultivation. I know no better spot for the culture of sugar; and if it does not pay the planter here, those of Penang or Singapore have but a poor prospect.^[15] Penang harbour is a very commodious and safe one, formed by the narrow strait between that island and the main land. Ships of three hundred tons may here lie within pistol-shot of the wharf in perfect safety. I have never seen the phosphoric light occasionally thrown out by salt-water, so brilliant as it is here. I recollect being very much struck with it, while sailing out of the harbour about eight o'clock P. M. We had a fresh breeze, and each tiny wave looked like a flash of very bright flame, while the ship's wake resembled the tail of a brilliant comet, more than any thing else. I leave the naturalist to account for this.

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FOOTNOTES:

- [13] At this moment, I cannot recollect to recollection a single existing resident of Penang who has not arrived there since 1829. The Europeans of that time have all, or nearly all, been removed by death.
- [14] Although the jungles of Penang abound with tigers, I have seldom heard of their preying on man, as they do in the neighbouring settlement.
- [15] Oct. 1845.—Penang has increased in importance since the foregoing was written. Its sugar-planters have continued their exertions with energy, sparing neither trouble nor expense to make their plantations profitable investments. It gives me much pleasure to be able to add, that their success seems certain, and that their perseverance in petitioning Government on the subject of duties, has at length been rewarded, as it ought sooner to have been.

CHAPTER VII.

[101]

CALCUTTA.

FIRST VIEW OF CALCUTTA—STATE OF SOCIETY—MERCANTILE CHANGES—
UNPLEASANT CLIMATE—SIGHTS AT AND NEAR CALCUTTA—IMPROVEMENTS IN
TRANSIT AND NAVIGATION—CUSTOM-HOUSE NUISANCE—PILOT SERVICE—
CHARACTER OF THE BENGALIEES—RIVER STEAMERS.

In 1829, I visited for the first time the far-famed city of Calcutta, and have since then paid it four visits. So much, however, has been written about the "City of Palaces," that it must be nearly as well known to the English reader as London itself; and I shall therefore say less respecting it.

The feeling I experienced on first making the land at the mouth of the Hooghly, was extreme disappointment. To a stranger coming, as I did, from Java, Singapore, and Penang, nothing can have a more dreary and desolate appearance than the land about and below Kedgerree. The very sight is almost enough to bring on the ague; and the abominably filthy water of the holy stream heightens the feeling of disgust. From Kedgerree to Diamond Harbour, the view on the low banks of the river improves but little. Above Diamond Harbour, the river banks are somewhat higher, buildings are more numerous, and the country appears more cleared and brought under cultivation. On arriving at Garden Reach, the stranger may begin to imagine that not wholly without reason Calcutta has acquired the proud title of the "City of palaces." From the lower part of this Reach, on the right, the river bank is laid out in large gardens, each with a handsome mansion in its centre; and the whole scene speaks of opulence and splendour. Of late years, these magnificent residences have been much neglected, and what was once the most fashionable part of the suburbs, has been nearly deserted by the great folk. The reason assigned for this, is, that the river, in very wet seasons, overflows its banks, breeding malaria and fever, from which, at the time of my second visit, the inhabitants suffered not a little. For a year or two, these mansions stood empty; but, when I last saw them, in 1840, they were nearly all

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occupied by mercantile men, who find them pleasant retreats from the bustle of the city, and seem willing to brave the chance of fever. On approaching the head of Garden Reach, the stranger all at once beholds Fort William and the town of Calcutta spread out before him; and a splendid view it is. Should he arrive in the month of November or December, he will behold, perhaps, the finest fleet of merchant shipping the world could produce. Here are seen, besides the flag of Old England, those of America, France, Holland, Spain, Portugal, and Arabia. I must not forget to mention the floating taverns or large passenger ships, which carry home from twenty to forty passengers every voyage; and besides the fleet of large ships, the river presents steamers, pleasure-boats, and native craft of all sorts and sizes, from the gay *budgerow*, to the wretched and more than half rotten *dhingy*. The scene has, however, its drawbacks. The stranger is shocked and disgusted at the sight of some half-dozen dead bodies floating down the river, in all stages of decomposition, some with a vulture perched on them, gorging himself as he floats down the stream on his hideous raft. Government has placed people above the town, for the express purpose of sinking dead bodies and similar nuisances; but they have not succeeded in effecting their object. The last time I went up the river, four human corpses passed my boat between Kradd's Dock and Colvin's Grant, a distance of two miles. [103]

Nothing strikes the stranger, on landing for the first time in Calcutta, so much as the extraordinary aggregation of palaces and mansions, ordinary dwelling-houses, warehouses, shops, bazaars, stables, huts, and hovels, all mingled together in glorious confusion, a few streets forming the only exception. This is a great eye-sore even to the old resident. I know no part of the world where society is divided into so many ranks and classes as it is here, nor where pride and pomp hold their heads higher. To hear some of the great ones of this city talk, you would think they had sprung from a long line of princely, or, at least, of noble ancestors. It is often observed, however, that they seldom or never mention their immediate progenitors, nor the whereabouts of their birth-place, which, in nine cases out of ten, would be found to be some humble cottage on the bank of a modest brook in England, or burn in Scotland. The more obscure or lowly their origin, the more difficult of access they are generally found. The real gentleman is easily discovered by his superior breeding and genuine urbanity. [104]

In former days, a young man arriving at Calcutta as a writer, had no difficulty in raising money by borrowing from some wealthy *circar*; and many of those very young men are still hampered with debts they can never pay: though high in office, and enjoying large salaries, they are tied to the country by their creditors, to whom they are obliged to give a large portion of their earnings. Times have now changed, and the native has learned from dear-bought experience, that the European is not always so worthy of confidence as he at one time thought him.

When I first knew Calcutta, some half-dozen mercantile firms swayed the trade of the place, and carried every thing before them. Their influence with the monied natives was great, and their command of ready cash was proportionably large. This led them into all sorts of wild speculations, and ultimately proved their ruin, the whole of these houses having failed (if my memory does not deceive me) before the end of 1832. In spite of these failures, (which ruined hundreds of widows and orphans,) the confidence of the natives was not utterly shaken till very recently, when another batch of similar misfortunes took place, in which many of the old hands were concerned under new firms. This has entirely broken up the system, and scattered the commerce of Calcutta among numerous smaller establishments, setting the wits of the native capitalist to work to find other employment for his cash. Many of them have entered upon the opium trade, principally as speculators on the spot, who buy at the public sales, and re-sell at a small profit; preferring this to running the risk of the China market. Previously to the mercantile break-up just mentioned, the members of the leading firms were, with few exceptions, as exclusive in their society as the leading civilians: their fall has upset these lofty pretensions, and the mercantile society of the place is much improved in consequence. [105]

For the hospitality of Calcutta I cannot say much; nor do I know a place where a friendless stranger landing without good introductory letters, would meet with a more chilling reception. I do not speak from experience, having fortunately been properly provided with credentials; but I do not say it without good authority. Of the hospitality of the military gentlemen of the Presidency, and especially of the Dum Dum Artillery, I have pleasure in reporting more favourably. Calcutta has its theatre, its clubs, its races, and its fox-hounds. On the race-course may be seen some fine specimens of the Arab horse, small compared to the English racer, but unsurpassed for spirit and symmetry. Its amusements and attractions, however, are so outweighed by its wretched climate, that I would rather pass my days growing sugar in Singapore, than live amid all the splendour of this proud city. [106]

From April to October inclusive, the weather is oppressively hot, with a closeness in the atmosphere that renders respiration difficult, and existence, without a punkah, almost insupportable. I have sat for days suffering from the heat, and longing for sun-set in hope of relief which never came; for, even through the long night, the thermometer did not fall one degree. This extreme heat is occasionally relieved by a thunder-storm accompanied with a deluge of rain, which clears the atmosphere, cools the burning soil, and renders breathing an easy process. The European inhabitants have many ways of rendering the interior of their dwellings cooler than the external air; but, with all their means and appliances, they are generally terribly exhausted before bed-time comes. During this period, the European lady suffers more than the gentleman, and, by the time the cold weather approaches, looks haggard and woebegone. Children also suffer much during the summer. In November, the weather becomes cool, and people begin to think of balls and other gayeties. The winter, however, is not, in my opinion, a healthy season, as the bills of mortality will indicate. A heavy fog then settles over the city and neighbourhood every night, through which, at sun-rise, one can hardly see ten yards, producing not a bracing cold, but a chilling damp. This does not last all day, for the heat is severe from ten A. M. till three P. M., even in mid-winter. The lower class of natives suffer much, and great numbers die during this season of the year, as they are very careless, bathe in the river daily as usual, and are too poor to make any change in their dress, which is far from sufficient to protect them from the damp nights. The wealthier native wraps his shoulders in an ample cashmere shawl; but even he leaves his legs and the lower half of his person with only summer clothing. [107]

During the autumn, Calcutta is a very gay place, and makes up for its dullness during the summer. This is the season for horse-racing, hunting, shooting, and theatrical amusements, into which the numerous indigo-planters who come to town from their plantations about this time, enter with spirit, if the crops have been good and prices fair. [108]

Among the sights in and around Calcutta, I would recommend the visiter to make a point of seeing, the Mint, the native Bazaars, the Dum Dum Artillery Station, the Ishapoor Gunpowder Manufactory, and Mr. Wakefield's farm at Acra. I mention these as having been myself gratified with examining them. The Mint is, perhaps, the finest in the world. Captain (now Colonel) Forbes, who kindly shewed me over every part of it,

said, I think, they could turn out 500,000 coins in twenty-four hours. In the different bazaars, the stranger will find the most extraordinary collection of commodities, Indian, European, American, Chinese, and of other countries, that he could ever have conceived. The zeal of the different vendors in crying up and bepraising their own goods at the expense of their neighbours, will amuse him, while he will feel not a little surprised at the cheapness of many European articles, such as crockery, millinery, hosiery, &c. &c. Should he be a military man, his visit to Dum Dum will delight him, that station being the head-quarters of the Bengal Artillery, and its officers are celebrated for their kindness and hospitality to strangers. With my visit to Ishapoor, I had every reason to be pleased. I not only saw the whole process of powder-manufacture on a very large scale, but met with a hearty welcome from Major Timbrel, of the Artillery, who at that time superintended the establishment. The river scenery near Ishapoor is much superior to what it is lower down; and a good view of the pretty town of Chinsurah,^[16] on the opposite bank of the Hooghly, is commanded from Major Timbrel's verandah. Acra farm is situated some twelve or fifteen miles below Calcutta. I visited it as a stranger, while waiting in a ship for the flood tide; and its proprietor gave me a most hospitable reception. Mr. Wakefield has completely established the practicability of curing meat all through the year in this climate, so as to keep at sea for three years. He told me, he killed 25,000 hogs per annum; and, on my asking whether he suspended operations during the hot months, his reply was, "No, we go on at all seasons." I can vouch for the goodness of the hams, bacon, sausages, lard, &c. &c., which he exports, and shall be very glad if these remarks should lead a purchaser to his door. The muddy creeks near Acra farm swarm with alligators, (whether attracted by the smell of blood or not, I cannot say,) and they occasionally become very troublesome. The day before my visit, Mr. Wakefield had had a mortal combat with one sixteen feet long, which he succeeded in destroying single-handed, and had brought home in proof of his prowess. [109]

One of the most remarkable objects in or near Calcutta, is the celebrated Banian-tree in the East-India Company's Botanical Garden on the banks of the Hooghly, immediately opposite Garden Reach. This tree is, without exception, the most splendid vegetable production I ever saw: and its immense size and great age may be judged of, when I mention, that a friend in whom I place the utmost confidence told me, he measured the circumference of the space it shaded at noon-day, and found that, allowing eighteen inches square per man, there was sufficient room for eighteen thousand men to stand under the shade of this venerable patriarch of the forest. This could be effected, however, only by removing the many stems of the tree which now occupy nearly the whole space covered by the branches, and are so numerous and thick, that it is impossible to trace the parent one. It is a mighty tree, and worthy of the proud place it occupies in the first botanical garden in the world. [110]

What a wonderful change a few short years bring about in these days of improvement! When I first knew Calcutta, there was no such thing as an overland conveyance for letters; and, as for sending a ship to China against the monsoon, no one ever dreamed of it. The whole world is now a witness of the regularity of the monthly communication with England *viâ* the Red Sea; and the passage to and from China is made at all seasons of the year, in defiance of monsoons and all other impediments. The spirited owner and commander of the barque, "Red Rover," has the credit of first shewing to the world, that the north-east monsoon in the Chinese Sea was to be conquered by perseverance in a small vessel: his success exceeded, I believe, his own sanguine expectations, and it is pleasing to add, that he was amply rewarded in a pecuniary point of view for his exertions. His example was soon followed by other parties connected with the opium-trade; and the communication between China, Calcutta, and Bombay is now regularly kept up all the year through, by as fine a fleet of clippers as ever rode the sea, commanded by men who appear to defy the weather. They make their passages in a wonderfully short period of time, and stand high in the opinion of the mercantile community of India. They are well paid, as they deserve to be, for the trying work they have to go through; and many of them have recently returned to their native country with comfortable, if not ample independencies. [111]

Another improvement of great importance to the trade of Calcutta, is the facility with which powerful steamers can now be procured, to tow ships up and down the Hooghly. Any one who has gone up and down this river, must be aware of the dangerous nature of its navigation, owing to the many mud banks, shifting sands, and very rapid current; and must be sensible of the comfort of having a powerful steamer towing ahead. The saving of time by leaving the port under steam, is immense. I remember, on one occasion, overtaking, in thirty-six hours from town, two ships that had left three weeks before us. The number of lives saved every year by these steamers, is beyond calculation. This is now so well understood, that passengers make a point of ascertaining whether a steamer is to be employed, before taking their passage in any ship; and the under-writers willingly contribute towards the expense thus incurred, considering themselves as repaid by the great saving in what is called "River Risk." [112]

I have heard many complaints against Dutch Custom-houses, but the Customs in Calcutta, I can state from my own knowledge, are far more troublesome and unreasonable. Go to any Dutch Custom-house in Netherlands India, and produce your invoice through some known agent; your goods will be cleared and passed without further trouble. At Calcutta, no man's word is taken, but every package landed or shipped must actually *pass through* the Custom-house. Even opium purchased from Government, and delivered to the purchaser from a Government warehouse, is subjected to this annoying process. Surely the authorities might allow merchandize purchased from themselves, and delivered from their own premises, to be taken direct to the wharf, and put on board ship. A Custom-house officer might accompany the drug, if it was deemed necessary, and see it fairly afloat before leaving it. The present arrangement involves a useless waste of the merchant's time and trouble. [113]

The Semaphore established from Kedgerree to Calcutta, is of very great advantage to the shipping interest of the place. Any vessel getting on shore, or coming from sea in distress, can send intelligence of her situation to town in fifteen minutes, and have a steamer down to aid her in twelve hours.

It would hardly be fair to leave Calcutta without saying a word in praise of the pilot service. The pilots here are paid by Government, and are a highly respectable body of men: they enter the service when very young, as volunteers, and rise by degrees to the rank of masters and branch pilots, the latter being the highest grade. Branch pilots generally command pilot brigs, which cruise off the mouth of the Hooghly for the purpose of supplying vessels that come from sea with pilots to take them up the river, and of taking the pilots out of ships bound to sea. Master pilots, mates, and second mates are engaged in taking vessels out and in, while the youngsters are employed in heaving the lead, and studying the navigation of the rivers. The whole service is remarkably well conducted. The work undergone by its members is very hard during the south-west monsoon; and they are generally short-lived. This may be easily accounted for, in such a climate, by their constant exposure to heat and rain, to say nothing of gales of wind and frequent sound duckings from the spray of the sea. [114]

The natives of Bengal are not favourites of mine: they are much given to lying and thieving, and are sad cowards. It is true, they are not pirates, like the Malays; but this is owing, I suspect, to want of courage, more than of inclination. A Malay servant, should his master threaten to strike him, will say: "Cut my pay, sir, or turn me away if I am in fault, but (emphatically) don't strike me." A Bengalee, under similar circumstances, would cringe under his master's feet, *salaam* to the ground, beg to be whipped, but "Oh," would be his cry, "don't cut my pay, sir." Nothing used to annoy me so much as this excessive servility of the Bengalee servants: they will do any thing for *pice, pice*; that word being repeated by them at least ten times oftener than any other in their vocabulary. With all this, they are lazy, and require more looking after than any other servants I know. They certainly work for little pay, but that little is sufficient to supply their families with the necessaries of life, and to leave a trifle to put by, if the head of the family does not gamble. The palanquin-bearers are the most useful men to a stranger: for thirty-five rupees (3*l.* 10*s.*) he will get a palanquin and six men who will carry him all over the town, a whole month, for that trifling sum; they will take him out in an evening, wait patiently in the street till he is ready to return home, and be at his door by six the next morning, ready to obey his orders. The *circar*, too, is a useful character, but, generally, a sad scamp: he will conduct the stranger all over this vast city, shew him where any thing is to be had, pay his bills for him, and save him a world of trouble; which he makes answer his purpose by deducting one *pice*, or about two per cent, from every rupee you may order him to pay for you, and by charging a *moderate* percentage on what he may be commissioned to procure for "Master." It is astonishing how quickly these *circars* find out when an old customer or "Master" returns to Calcutta. I have been visited by mine within an hour after reaching town. In one instance, I had come up the river in an express boat, and had arrived as soon as the mail; but, presently, in came Master's *circar*, bowing low, and "hoping Master has had a pleasant voyage, and made too much money." [115]

The mighty current of the sacred Ganges is now thoroughly conquered by all-powerful Steam; and the Indian officer ordered up the river to join his corps, can now perform in three weeks, the journey that, fifteen years ago, would have taken him as many months. Never having travelled in the river steamers, I can say nothing about the voyage; but, from their being constantly filled with passengers and cargo, I presume they give entire satisfaction. The fact of their carrying the European traveller so much more rapidly than the native boats can do, through the unhealthy Sunderbunds, is of itself sufficient to induce every wayfarer to take advantage of them. [116]

FOOTNOTES:

- [16] Chinsurah was, until 1825, a Dutch settlement; and we then obtained it and Malacca in exchange for Bencoolen.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

VOYAGE FROM SINGAPORE TO SYDNEY—PORT JACKSON—FIRST IMPRESSIONS
PRODUCED BY SYDNEY—THE PUBLIC-HOUSE NUISANCE—SYDNEY JURIES—CATTLE
DEALERS—TOWN IMPROVEMENTS—LAWYERS, DOCTORS, AND CLERGY.

Circumstances induced me, in the early part of 1836, to proceed to New South Wales, where I passed three years; at the expiration of which I returned to the Straits in much better health than I had enjoyed for years before. [117]

The voyage from Singapore to Sydney, *viâ* Java Head and Bass's Straits, occupies generally from sixty to seventy days; a much longer period than it ought to do, considering the distance, but much time and space are lost in getting southward from Java Head. Crossing the south-east trade-wind, a ship makes nearly as much westing as she does southing, and of course has all the former to run back again on getting the westerly winds in the latitude of 38° to 40° south. We were unfortunate in this part of our voyage, and got no westerly winds till we reached the forty-first parallel of south latitude: from that point they took us to within a few miles of the entrance to Bass's Straits, where we met a strong easterly gale, which detained us several days. This was in March; and I would advise ships bound from India to New South Wales, in the month of January, February, or March, to go to the southward of Van Diemen's Land altogether: they will thus carry the strong westerly winds longer, avoid the easterly gales that blow during these months in Bass's Straits, and probably shorten their passage ten or twelve days. Up the bold and iron-bound shore of this mighty island, from its south-east promontory to the heads of Port Jackson, we ran with a strong southerly gale, and entered the most magnificent of harbours after a seventy days' passage. [118]

The entrance into Port Jackson is between two rocky heads, called, the North and South Head. As the former projects rather further into the Pacific than the latter, and somewhat overlaps it, the stranger would have some difficulty in finding his port, were it not for the light-house on the South Head; but, even with this guide, the inexperienced eye cannot perceive the entrance till right opposite it. We ran in with a heavy sea outside, and had scarcely got a ship's length inside the Heads, when we were in water as smooth as a mill-pond. The steep black rocks on our right looked fearfully near to us, but the water is deep close to them, and no difficulty is experienced in beating up to Sydney Cove, a distance of six miles. The only danger in the way is a shoal or reef, bearing the strange name of the "Sow and Pigs": on it, however, there is a light-vessel, so that it may be safely passed, even at night. [119]

Were all the fleets in the world congregated in Port Jackson, they would not half occupy it. From the Heads to a mile above Sydney Cove, there is a succession of beautiful bays, with deep water close to the rocks, and good anchorage in all directions. The scenery is magnificent, though, to an eye accustomed to that of

Singapore, the green is not quite brilliant enough. A succession of hill and dale, with here and there a neat cottage perched on some rocky point, the soil clothed with trees, the waters of the many bays glistening in the sun, and the distant view of the heights and windmills beyond Sydney, form a picture that can scarcely be surpassed.

On landing in Sydney, the traveller from India is ready to exclaim, Surely this is not a town some seventeen thousand miles from England! Every thing reminds him of home: he sees English servants, English tradesmen, English shops; in a word, a regular English town, with its inns and every thing conducted on the English principle. I took up my quarters with my family at the Pulteney Hotel, where we were made very comfortable, and found the terms moderate: the only thing that disappointed us was, the smallness of the bed-rooms. Sydney is a regularly built town, its spacious streets running at right angles with each other. The houses are well built, close to each other, with narrow fronts, and generally three stories high. Here we have George street, Prince's street, King street, Pitt street, Hyde Park, the Surrey Hills,—all recalling, by their appellations, the mother country. Hyde Park, though it comes far short of its namesake in London, is nevertheless a very pleasant spot for a promenade, being nicely shaded by trees planted during Sir R. Bourke's government, and is an ornament to the town. "Government Domain" is a piece of ground in the rear of the Governor's house, reserved by Government for a garden and pleasure-grounds: it is tastefully laid out, and intersected with numerous walks, which are open to the public; and many a pleasant party is formed by the industrious classes, who have only Sunday to spare for a little recreation in the open air. The Surrey Hills are being fast covered with gentlemen's houses, for which a better situation could scarcely be chosen. *Woolloomoolloo*, or Darlinghurst, as it is now called, is the favourite suburb, and boasts of many handsome mansions, each with its garden. Among these are the respective residences of the Chief-Justice, the Bishop of Australia, and other members of the *élite* of this metropolis. These houses all command a fine view of the harbour with its shipping and the surrounding scenery.

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Sydney has its theatre, its club-house, its stage and mail coaches, while steamers ply all about the harbour, and up and down the coast; an immense convenience to the inhabitants of the northern districts of the Colony. It has a large and well-supplied market, where the gardeners, farmers, &c. from the neighbourhood collect their produce for sale, and where, in good seasons, (that is, seasons in which rain has been abundant,) the housekeeper may procure supplies on reasonable terms. There is also, immediately outside the town, a hay and cattle market, where large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep are constantly for sale, and generally find ready buyers among the numerous emigrants who are daily landing on these shores.

The greatest drawback upon the prosperity of the lower orders in Sydney, arises from the public-houses, of which there are some three hundred, nearly all filled, from morning to night, with men and women, too often spending the last penny they possess in the world. The magnitude of this evil may be estimated from the fact, that, in 1838, the revenue derived from ardent spirits and public-house licences amounted to the enormous sum of 110,000*l.* sterling. No stranger can take a walk through Sydney without remarking with astonishment the number of these nuisances; and the list of drunkards exhibited at the police every Monday morning, will increase his surprise and disgust. So enormous is this evil on the sabbath-day, that bands of constables patrol the streets for the purpose of clearing them of drunken men and women, whom they consign to the "lock-up." These constables, by the way, are extremely brutal in their manner of handling any unfortunate wight that may fall into their hands; and I have been frequently disgusted at their barbarity. What better conduct, however, can be expected from men, nine-tenths of whom either are or have been convicts? When I was at Sydney, the jail was a most wretched place, not half large enough for the many unfortunate beings it had occasionally to receive. A more commodious one has since been erected, with space enough to allow of the separate classification of debtors, highway robbers, bush-rangers, and felons, which could not be always attended to in the old building. The jail is cleared four times a year by holding criminal courts. The calendar is usually very heavy, and the crimes are generally of a heinous nature. The prisoner has the privilege of choosing whether he will be tried by a civil or by a military jury. Many prefer the latter, knowing that, whatever the verdict may be, it will be a conscientious one. The civil jury is generally composed of publicans, and is always chosen by the Sydney scamps, in the hope that a *chum* or *pal* may be found in the list, which is not unfrequently the case. The hardest task the Attorney-General has to perform, is, to get together a respectable jury. When it is composed of civilians, the prisoner is sure to challenge every respectable man in the box. By this means, he generally succeeds in getting twelve men sworn, of whom two or three are of the stamp he requires,—men that will, in vulgar phrase, "swear through a six-inch plank" to get him off. It is no uncommon case for Sydney jurors, on retiring to consider their verdict, to exclaim that their minds are made up, and that they will be d—d if they will give a verdict of guilty. Another source of trouble to all persons concerned with a court of justice here, is the extreme difficulty experienced in extracting truth from witnesses. It is almost impossible to conceive the effrontery with which nine-tenths of these men will swear any thing: they invariably prevaricate and contradict themselves when cross-examined, and are not unfrequently sent from the witness-box to prison, to take their trial for perjury. I remember, on one occasion, seeing a father, mother, and three grown-up daughters, who came into court to sustain a charge against a farmer for an assault on one of the daughters, committed for perjury, while the prisoner was released without a stain on his name. The crime of cattle-stealing, probably, comes oftener before the Judges of New South Wales than any other, particularly since the punishment for it has been changed from death to banishment for life. When death was the penalty, many graziers put up with their loss, rather than prosecute the offender: now, the cattle-stealer is shewn no mercy, from one end of the Colony to the other. The Judge has no discretionary power with this class of offenders, but, in the event of a verdict of guilty, must pass the sentence of banishment for life. If the prisoner came free to the colony, he is banished to Van Diemen's Land: if, on the other hand, he is an old convict, he is sent to rusticate for the remainder of his days on Norfolk Island. Whole droves of stolen cattle are, nevertheless, continually offered for sale in the neighbourhood of Sydney, and ready purchasers are found for them, the risk of being brought up as a receiver not being so great as might be supposed. The regular cattle-stealer has stations in the bush, where he collects his ill-gotten herds, defaces and alters their brands, and keeps them till the new brand has healed and assumed the usual appearance; he then boldly starts for market in open day, and, though he may be met by the former owners of the beasts he is driving, he fears nothing, proof of identity being a difficult task, when a P has been made into a B, and, perhaps, three or four other brands have been added.

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During the administration of Sir Richard Bourke, great improvements were made in the streets of Sydney, particularly in the direction of the different wharfs, from which the ascent used to be frightfully steep. To remedy this evil, and at the same time to improve the appearance of the town, Sir Richard cut away the brows of the ridges, and filled up the hollows with the rubbish. This proceeding caused a great outcry among those persons who had property where the cuttings took place, and whose dwellings, in some cases, were many feet above the new level of the street. In the course of time, these proprietors descended from their

airy posts, knocked down their old unsightly tenements, cut down their ground to the proper level, and built new and more sightly houses; so that the Governor's proceedings have improved both the streets and the general appearance of the town, as well as enhanced the value of the property wherever the cuttings were made.

Sydney abounds with doctors, lawyers, and parsons, all of whom thrive here. The lawyer especially reaps a rich harvest among a population notoriously fond of litigation, and prone to give cause for it in various ways. As usual, however, the supply has of late exceeded the demand; and the barristers do not now lounge in such stylish carriages as they were accustomed to be seen in some years ago. The medical men's harvest, a sickly season, is not a rare occurrence in Sydney, though the Colony generally is remarkable for its salubrity. The last summer I spent there, the deaths were very numerous, and cast a gloom over the place. Influenza and fevers were the prevailing complaints, and were probably attributable to the dry, hot winds prevalent at the time, together with the badness of the water in common use, and the intemperate habits of the people. The want of a supply of good water is much felt. Every house has its pump, but the water is not fit for any thing but washing, and is, for the most part, so hard, that soap will not dissolve in it. Government had commenced laying pipes to supply the town with this necessary article; but, when I left the Colony, they had not been brought nearer than to within a mile; and I have not heard of their being since carried any further. Water-carts go round, selling water at a penny or sometimes three halfpence per bucket, which is of a good quality.

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Previously to the arrival of Sir Richard Bourke, the clergy of the Church of England were the only persons in the Colony that were authorized to marry, to bury, or to christen. Sir Richard put an end to this extraordinary state of affairs, by his celebrated Church Act; and now, every one may be married by the minister of his own persuasion, and follow, in religious matters, the dictates of his conscience. Strange as it may appear, Sir Richard's proceedings in this matter gave great offence to the magnates of the Church of England; and the Archdeacon went home to remonstrate with Her Majesty's Government on the subject. His Reverence took nothing, however, by his motion, Lord Glenelg, the then Secretary for the Colonies, highly approving of all that had been done. But the Archdeacon returned to the Colony a Bishop, and, when I left it, was busily engaged in erecting a cathedral by public subscription.

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CHAPTER IX.

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NEW SOUTH WALES.

TOWNSHIP OF MAITLAND—THE PATERSON DISTRICT—WINTER SPORTS—THE KANGAROO—AUSTRALIAN HUSBANDRY—CONVICT SERVANTS—BENEFIT OF ENFORCING AN OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY—THE HOT SEASON.

From Sydney, I proceeded northward, by steam, to Maitland, on the river Hunter, and thence up the country bordering on those pretty little rivers, the Paterson and the Allyn.

Maitland puts a Scotchman in mind of the "lang toon of Kirkaldy," consisting of merely one long street. From its situation, at the head of the navigation of the Hunter, and the centre of the very first agricultural district of New South Wales, it is likely to become a large, thriving, and important place. The country in the immediate neighbourhood is flat, and the soil rich, yielding most luxuriant crops of wheat and Indian corn.

The season of 1838-39 was a poor one for the farmer: flour rose in price to 60s. the cwt.; and the quartern loaf, before I left the Colony, was selling as high as two shillings and eight-pence. This was a time to test the fertility of the soil round Maitland, as well as the benefit it derives from its proximity to the sea. During this summer, the whole district was favoured with occasional refreshing showers; its crops were forward, and the yield good; and while crops in the southern districts had failed from drought, the Hunter-river farmers were sending their surplus produce to Sydney for sale.

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The township of Maitland is divided into two towns or villages, called, East and West Maitland. The former has been fixed upon as the site of the town by Government, and the latter by the public, who have, as usual, shewn more wisdom in their choice than their masters have, inasmuch as they have planted their town within a few hundred yards of the head of the navigation; whereas the Government town is three miles further up the river, and is unapproachable by steamers, or even by small craft. The two, however, will be joined together ere long, (most likely they are by this time,) as they are rising rapidly into importance. For the beauty of the country between Maitland and the sea, I cannot say much: it used to remind me of Lower Bengal, being so very flat, and, in some places, so low as to be frequently flooded.

Like the houses in almost all new towns, those in Maitland form a motley assemblage of buildings of all sizes, shapes, and colours. Many of the smaller and inferior ones were, however, disappearing, even in 1839; and more sightly as well as more commodious buildings were rising up in their place. The traveller will find comfortable accommodation at either the Union or the Rose Inn; and the charges are moderate. He will also have the advantage of meeting settlers from all parts of the neighbouring country, from whom he will readily obtain any information he may require. Frequent cattle-sales are held here; and the beasts are, without trouble or much expense, conveyed to Sydney by steam in twelve hours.

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The country from Maitland, going up the Paterson, is undulating and generally fertile; particularly the flat lands on the banks of the river. As you proceed towards the village of Paterson, you observe numerous prettily situated farm-houses with their smiling gardens in front, and fields of wheat between them and the river. At the village, the navigation of this little river ceases; and the country becomes more and more hilly as you proceed higher up: the banks of the river, however, maintain their high character for fertility all the way to its source, and many thriving establishments are seen as the traveller pursues his journey. This part of New South Wales, being so hilly, and consequently somewhat humid, does not answer the sheep-farmer's purposes; but the grazier finds his cattle and horses thrive well on these hills, and the agriculturist finds the valleys yield him excellent crops of tobacco, wheat, and maize. The first is becoming an article of great importance to the Paterson farmer, and has helped many of those gentlemen through the difficulties from

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which the Colony has been recently suffering.

Land on the Upper Paterson was selling, in 1837, at 20s. per acre, in lots of six hundred and forty acres, of which not more than forty or fifty were arable land, the rest being what is called here, common bush land, thinly covered with trees, and affording tolerable pasture for cattle. Purchasers of land at the above-named rate, have, I believe, found their bargains profitable, notwithstanding the heavy expense they had to incur in clearing and fencing the arable portion of it, in addition to the outlay for a dwelling, out-offices, &c. The settler on a small farm of this description is almost sure to do well, if he is industrious, and provided that he keeps clear of that colonial pest, the public-house. He will have very hard work the first two years; but his returns will well repay him even in moderately favourable seasons, while, in good times, they will be very profitable. A neighbour of mine raised, in the season of 1837-38, on eighteen acres of fresh cleared land, a crop of tobacco, which he cured and manufactured into negro-head on the spot: it yielded one hundred and fifty kegs of 100lb. weight each; and the whole was sold at 1s. 4d. per pound, thus giving a total of 900*l*. This farmer had fifteen hands, who, in addition to the tobacco, enabled him to cultivate wheat and maize sufficient to supply the farm, and to leave 200*l*. worth for sale. The outlay for the twelve months, including every thing, did not exceed 350*l*.; and I have shewn the returns to have been 1100*l*. This slight sketch will afford an idea of what an industrious farmer may do in the Paterson district. As soon as he can collect a few pounds, they may be profitably invested in the purchase of some good cows, which will not only supply him and his family with butter and milk, but will pay well by their annual increase. In 1838, stock was worth, in this neighbourhood, as under:—Cows, 5*l*.; Fat Cattle, 7*l*. 10s.; Working Oxen, 10*l*.; Brood Mares, 40*l*.; good Roadsters, 40*l*.; Sheep,—Ewes, 2*l*., Wethers, 17s. 6d. Things have changed since that time: but more of this hereafter.

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During the three years I resided in Australia, I lived almost entirely on the banks of the Paterson, and the reader may therefore depend upon the correctness of my information regarding every thing in that neighbourhood. It bears a high character for the salubrity of its climate; and very justly so, according to my experience. Not a member of my establishment was ill the whole time we were there; nor do I recollect a serious case of illness among our neighbours. The winter is mild,—just cold enough to make a fire comfortable; while the fine frosty mornings do great good to one who has arrived from India. I used to enjoy them exceedingly, and invariably walked out before breakfast to breathe the fine clear air. The cold weather sets in in April, and continues till September. This is the season to enjoy a gallop in chase of that most extraordinary animal, the kangaroo. Notwithstanding that this part of the country is rather hilly, the hardy horses manage to carry their riders across it in safety. The river abounds with wild duck at this season, as well as with perch and a small fish here called herring, from its resemblance to that fish. The settler may thus not only find amusement for himself in shooting or fishing, but may make a very agreeable addition to his bush fare by his morning's ramble. The flesh of the kangaroo is literally good, for nothing: the tail makes very good soup, but the carcass of the full-grown animal is otherwise of no value to the European, though the native contrives to make an occasional meal of it. The young kangaroo of two or three months old, makes a tolerable substitute for jugged hare, and is frequently on the tables of the settlers. As population advances up the country, the kangaroo retires. I have, however, seen some hundreds of a large size in their native woods, skipping about, and bounding off on the approach of man. The notion, that a kangaroo makes use of his tail in leaping, is a mistaken one. I have watched them bounding along a plain, and could see distinctly that the tail never touched the ground. The female, when pursued, will retain its young one in the pouch with which nature has provided it, till very closely pressed by the dogs: it will then drop the little one, leave it to chance, and make off with increased speed. A full-grown male ("old man," the aborigines call them) is more than a match for a single dog, and will frequently severely punish a couple of assailants before surrendering. These animals are easily tamed, and make very pretty pets in a garden. Speaking of a garden, we had an excellent orchard, which supplied us with abundance of apricots, peaches, nectarines, figs, green-gages, apples, pears, and oranges, while the garden furnished many a dish of strawberries: for gooseberries, the climate is not cold enough.

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In March and April, the farmer is busied in preparing his fields for wheat-sowing, which ought to be finished by the middle of May. Of this grain, the ground here yields a fair crop, though not equal to that usually reaped near Maitland: it is, however, generally more than sufficient for the use of the district, which may be called a grain-exporting one. Some farmers sow wheat on land from which they have just reaped a crop of Indian corn: this proves, I need scarcely say, in the long run, very bad economy. On a farm where wheat, corn, and tobacco are grown, there is always abundance of employment for old and young. Should field labour be suspended by the inclemency of the weather, or by any other cause, the farmer finds his servants full occupation in husking maize, threshing wheat, stripping, shifting, and curing tobacco. I used to keep my convict-labourers employed in light work, such as the above-mentioned, till ten o'clock at night: this I had no *right* to exact; but my plan was, to keep a regular account current with every convict on the place, giving him credit so much for every extra hour he worked, and letting him know, every Saturday night, how much was due to him, which I allowed him to take out in any shape but money or spirits. Giving him the former, would have enabled him to procure the latter. It was generally taken out in tea and sugar; and I never had the slightest trouble in settling these little accounts. I had ten convicts assigned to me by Government; and I confess that I would rather have had those men than most of the free emigrants that came to the Colony. Over the convict, the master has great power, the knowledge of which on the part of the servant, with good treatment and a firm hand held over him, will make him do a great deal of work. The Government allowance of rations does not include tea, sugar, or tobacco; but most masters allow two ounces of the first and last, and one pound of the second per week; which not only makes the men contented, but gives the master more hold over them, as they stand in fear of his stopping the indulgence in the event of misconduct. From my own observation I should say, that nine-tenths of the misdoings amongst convict-servants, that one hears of in New South Wales, arises from bad masters. What, for instance, can be expected from men assigned to a drunkard, who not only drinks himself, but makes a point of inducing his servants, whether free or bond, to take out their earnings in rum, of which he has always a plentiful supply on hand? What from the servants of a master who neither pays any attention to the Sabbath himself, nor makes those under him observe it; who, on the slightest provocation, drags his men before the magistrate, and swears literally to any thing, to have them flogged; who never affords them the slightest indulgence, and whose whole aim is, to get the greatest possible quantity of work out of them for the smallest possible outlay? Nothing tends more directly to promote the good order of a farm, than mustering everybody on it at noon on Sunday, for the purpose of reading Divine service to them. Setting aside the moral benefit that this practice may be supposed to produce, it puts an effectual stop to distant wandering on that day. A man who has to appear cleanly dressed on Sunday at noon, cannot stray far from home either before or after that hour. On farms where this custom is not kept up, the convict starts at daylight for some haunt where spirits are to be had, to pay for which he has most probably robbed his master; there he spends the day in riot and ribaldry, and reels home about

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midnight in a state that renders him very unfit for resuming his work on Monday morning. The convict-servant soon finds out what sort of a master he has to deal with, and, to use their own slang, after trying it on for a bit, in nine cases out of ten, he yields to circumstances. Two of mine tried a few of their old pranks at starting; but a timely, though moderate application of "the cat," put an entire stop to them. It is, however, useless to say more on this subject, as the system of assigning servants to private individuals has been done away with by orders from the Home Government. The female convicts are much more difficult to manage than the men, and often set their masters at defiance: they are generally of the lowest and most wretched class of women.

The summer sets in in October, and wheat harvest begins in November. The weather then becomes exceedingly hot, and the heat is occasionally increased by the hot winds that blow from the north-west. These generally (I speak of what I have observed on the Paterson) blow for three days successively, with considerable violence, and do no small injury to the farmer: they are very dry, make the lips crack, and the skin feel as if about to crack; and should they come across a field of wheat just shewing the ear, they would blight it to a certainty. After expending their force for three days, they are usually succeeded by a sharp southerly gale, which is frequently accompanied with rain, and soon makes every thing not actually blighted look green again. Though the sun, during summer, has, apparently, as much power as in India, I have never experienced any injurious effects from it, though frequently exposed to its rays all day, both on foot and on horseback. The European labourer works in the field here through the day, the same as in England, and does not seem to suffer from the heat. During the hot winds, indeed, he is liable to an almost unquenchable thirst, to relieve which, he may drink with perfect impunity a large quantity of sugar and water; but those who have recourse to water only, are sure to suffer for their imprudence, though not seriously.

November and December are the busy months at sheep-stations, all hands being then employed in clipping the wool and preparing it for market.

CHAPTER X.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

BUSH-RANGERS—THE DROUGHT OF 1838-9—THE SETTLER'S TROUBLES—
ORNITHOLOGY OF AUSTRALIA—ABORIGINAL TRIBES.

On the Paterson, we were never troubled with those dangerous characters called in the Colony, Bush-rangers. I can give no reason for their avoiding this neighbourhood, but know that they did avoid it, and that none of the residents in the district ever gave them a thought. Other parts of the Colony are not so fortunate; and loud complaints are constantly being made, of want of protection against those daring marauders. They are runaway convicts, who take to the bush, either to get clear of hard masters, or from a love of old habits; and, now and then, they keep a whole county in a state of alarm. Frequent instances of their daring occurred during my residence in Australia, some of a ferocious character, while others tended more to excite laughter. Three of those scamps visited, at noon-day, a settler's house, and, coolly walking in, called for luncheon, and made themselves quite at home. While thus regaling themselves, they happened to see a violin hanging against the wall, and asked their *host*, whether he could play. On being answered in the affirmative, they made him strike up, while they danced to his music. When tired of this amusement, they helped themselves to whatever struck their fancy, and then went to the stable, picked out three of the best horses, leaving their own tired jades behind, and rode off. The master of the house was the only person at home at the time, and was unarmed; all his men were engaged in a distant field; and he was threatened with instant death, should he give the slightest alarm. Resistance, therefore, was impossible. Such depredations have latterly been much checked by the exertions of the mounted police. This very efficient body is composed of men drafted from Her Majesty's regiments stationed in the Colony, who are mounted and dressed at the expense of the local Government, and trained for their work. They patrol the country in all directions, and have captured and brought to justice many of the most desperate Bush-rangers, as well as given a check to the several organized bodies of cattle-stealers.

Those parts of the Colony most distant from the capital, are, naturally, most annoyed by bad characters of all description; and many of the settlers trust to their own strength, more than to the police, to defend their property. A friend of mine residing in Wellington Valley, three hundred and fifty miles west of Sidney, used to arm himself and his groom, and sally out in search of any desperate character he might have heard of as being in the neighbourhood: he was more than once successful, and became quite a noted man among the Bush-ranging fraternity, who took good care to keep at a respectable distance from him. Were some other settlers blessed with as much nerve and courage as the gentleman I allude to, Bush-rangers would soon become less numerous.

A settler's life in an agricultural district, is pleasant enough, but it has its drawbacks. A season of drought makes sad work in his fields, and among his flocks. In the season of 1838-39, water became so scarce, that many of the best pasture-lands in our neighbourhood were of necessity abandoned, and the sheep as well as cattle were kept down on the banks of the river, then reduced to a mere chain of pools, the intervening channel being quite dry. The herbage was completely eaten up, and the trees in many parts were cut down, in order that the hungry animals might eat the leaves. One of my neighbours, to save his flocks, turned them on his half-grown crop of wheat, by which means he saved some thousands of sheep, but lost his wheat. Tens of thousands of sheep and cattle, all over the country, died during this season; and grain crops failed everywhere, except on the banks of my three favourite rivers; namely, the Hunter, the Paterson, and the Allyn. There was scarcely a settler on either of these rivers, that had not a little to spare; while, in less favoured parts of the Colony, the farmer had to pay enormous prices for flour to feed his men; and the cart-hire came to nearly as much as the cost of the flour. I knew one gentleman who despatched from Sydney four drays loaded with stores for his stations near Bathurst, each dray drawn by seven oxen; and so great was the scarcity of water and fodder on the road, that only four of the poor animals reached their journey's end, the others having died on the road from sheer starvation. Flour rose during this season to 60*l.* per ton, and the

quartern loaf in Sydney was sold at 3s. 4d.

One of the greatest discomforts attendant upon a summer's residence in the bush of Australia, arises from the swarms of flies, large and small, that infest the house. The large blow-fly is a serious nuisance: many a good joint of meat they spoil, in spite of every precaution. These insects find their way everywhere, and destroy whatever they come near. In the dairy, the greatest care is necessary to prevent these pests from reaching the milk and butter, which they will taint in a second. Scarcely less of a plague than the swarms of flies, are the myriads of fleas which torment the tired farmer, and cheat him out of many an hour's sleep: these noisome disturbers are in the soil, and not all the care the best housewife can bestow, can diminish the number. [143]

While on the subject of the settler's troubles, I may mention, that the cockatoos annoy the farmer in Australia, as much as the crows do in England: they attack his wheat and maize when the grain is ripening, by hundreds; indeed, I may say, by thousands; and it requires a very active watchman to keep them from doing serious injury to the crop, not so much from the quantity they eat, as from what they destroy and scatter. These birds, which, by the bye, furnish an excellent dish that occasionally formed part of our dinner, are remarkably cunning: while the flock are busily feeding on the farmer's wheat, two of their number are left on some neighbouring trees to keep watch; these, on the approach of danger, give a loud, shrill scream, which at once puts the thieves to flight, and renders it very difficult for the sportsman to get a shot at one of them. Besides the common white red-crested cockatoo, the woods are the home of the black species; a rare bird, that I have never seen elsewhere. Those brought to Singapore by the Celebes traders, are a bastard species. On what they feed, I am not aware, never having seen them in the wheat or maize fields. During the winter months, neither white nor black cockatoos are to be seen; nor have I ever heard to what place they migrate. The bird-fancier might here make as beautiful a collection as I have ever seen. The different varieties of the parrot tribe are countless, and extremely pretty: the king-parrot, the lowrie, and the mountain parrot, are, perhaps, the most beautiful. Then, there is the pretty little diamond sparrow, so called from its size, its habits, resembling those of the common sparrow, and its plumage, which exhibits a diamond pattern of black, white, and blue. Of the hawk tribe, the varieties are numerous: the largest is the eagle-hawk, which now and then carries off a lamb from the flocks of careless shepherds. Were I an ornithologist, I might write a goodly volume on the birds of this country; but I must content myself with these few notices; not forgetting, however, to mention the stately black swan, a bird becoming every year more rare. [144]

We used frequently to be visited by tribes of the aboriginal inhabitants of this vast continent. They are, without exception, the most complete savages I have ever come across. They have no homes, no occupation beyond procuring food for the day, and think nothing of to-morrow, which they literally leave to take care of itself. They resist almost every attempt to induce them to labour, and, if clothed to-day by some good Samaritan, will, in all probability, appear naked at his door to-morrow, having given away their clothes to some convict, in exchange for a pound of flour or an ounce of tobacco. In their habits, they are literally wanderers on the face of the earth, shifting their camp from place to place as game grows scarce. In rainy weather, the only precaution I ever saw them take, with a view to protect themselves from wet, was the building a small hut, not much larger than a bee-hive, constructed of the boughs of trees, with a small aperture on one side, into which the "black-fellow"^[17] thrusts his head and shoulders, and sleeps as sound as a top, his legs and the lower half of his body being exposed to wind and rain. In winter, they may be seen encamped round a fire after their day's hunting, all naked, and stretched on the ground, with their feet towards the fire; the men smoking, if they have any thing to smoke, and the wretched-looking women composing themselves to sleep in the same *natural* state as their lords and masters.^[18] They suffer much, occasionally, from hunger, and may then be induced to do a day's work about the farm, for which they will consider themselves well paid by a pound of flour and an ounce of tobacco each. This reward must not be given them, however, till their work is done: give it beforehand, and not a hand's turn will they do, but decamp at once to enjoy their dinner. As soon as they have eaten their bread, they light the pipes, and never cease smoking till their tobacco is finished. Some of the men are remarkably well made, and strong, able-bodied fellows. One who spent a week now and then in my kitchen, doing any thing the cook told him, for the promise of a supper, was a tall, good-looking fellow, named Jamie. They are one and all christened in the bush by any European they may ask for a name. A father applied to me one day for a name for his little boy, and I forthwith called him "Donald;" at which the old man and the rest of the tribe laughed heartily, saying, "All same your horse." I had then a pony called Donald. To resume: Jamie was frequently clothed by me, and was asked to sleep in the kitchen, or in one of the out-offices, but all to no purpose: his clothes, he never kept a week, and he invariably took his departure at sun-set to sleep in the open air. In our district, I believe, the blacks were harmless people; but, on the Upper Hunter, on Liverpool Plains, they have been not only very troublesome, but even dangerous neighbours. Many settlers have suffered severely from their depredations; and several shepherds and stock-keepers have been murdered by them. Would they content themselves with killing a single bullock or two or three sheep, when suffering from hunger, one might excuse them; but I have known twenty-five cows killed by a single tribe in one night, the fat and kidneys taken away, and the carcasses left on the ground. This, to say the least of it, was a mischievous waste of property; and such proceedings naturally led the settlers to retaliate. The consequences were serious, and led to extreme measures, ending, in more than one instance, in bloodshed. There seems to be no room for doubt, that many of these poor creatures have been murdered by stock-keepers on the mere suspicion of being concerned in such crimes. This fact, however, does not justify the Government in offering a hundred pounds reward for the discovery of the offender, when a black happens to be murdered by a white, and only twenty-five pounds reward, when the murderer is black, and the victim white. [145]

What would my fair countrywomen say to the "black-fellow's" mode of taking unto himself a wife? On making up his mind as to the object of his choice, he proceeds by night to the camping-ground of the *fair* one's tribe; searches her out among the sleeping beauties; deals her a blow on the head with his club, (to which an Irishman's shillelah is a twig,) and carries off the stunned and senseless wretch to his own camp. This ceremony makes them man and wife, and no further notice is taken of the affair. The different tribes are constantly at war: but I have never heard of any very serious consequences arising from their feuds. The day of battle is generally spent in painting themselves red, dancing the war-dance in presence of their foes, and, probably, exchanging a few spears towards its close. Their arms consist of spears, clubs, and the *boomerang*. The latter is a very extraordinary weapon, which they throw to a great distance, making it *return to the thrower* when it has described its revolution, and probably hit some unfortunate wight on the head in its course through the air. This weapon is of hard wood, about three feet long, two inches broad, a quarter of an inch thick, and in the form of a crescent: it is thrown against the wind, and describes a circle in its course. The spear is of cane, hardened by fire at the end, and is thrown with great force and dexterity. No black who can by any means obtain a tomahawk, is ever without one, generally of English make: with this, they are very [149]

expert at felling trees, and, with its aid, will climb a tree which it would take two pair of arms to encircle. The "black-fellow" cuts a small notch about three feet from the ground; in this, he inserts the toe of one foot, holding on by one hand while he cuts another hole three feet further up to receive the other foot; and thus he proceeds till he reaches the top. The dead trees of Australia, which are all hollow, are a favourite resort of the opossum. In search of them, the black-fellow will ascend a tree in the manner just described; and there he will sit while his companions below dig under the roots, and light a fire, the smoke from which ascending the trunk of the tree, as a chimney, speedily dislodges the game. This is dexterously pounced upon by "blacky," the moment its head appears peeping from the aperture at the top of some of the branches. I have never known the tomahawk thrown by them, as it is by the Indian of America.

My family was once thrown into considerable alarm by an ill-looking tribe of blacks who formed their camp immediately in front of our cottage: they were strangers, and had no business there. On making inquiries about them, I found that they came from a neighbouring district, and were endeavouring to evade the police, who were in search of them for the murder of an unfortunate shepherd. Not at all liking such neighbours, I took advantage of their absence, one day, when they were gone kangaroo-hunting, and set fire to their beehive huts. On their return at sun-set, they took the hint, and we saw no more of them. [150]

Among these tribes, it is a rule, that blood must be had for blood; and this leads them, when one of their number falls by the hand of a white man, to kill the first European they happen to meet, in retaliation. It would scarcely be reasonable to expect these ignorant savages to see the injustice of this proceeding; yet, it is hard, that an unoffending person like the shepherd above referred to should be slaughtered in revenge of the murder of a man he had never seen.

The number of dialects, or apparently different languages, spoken by the aborigines of Australia, is very remarkable. Those residing in and about Sydney cannot converse with those on the Hunter, who, in their turn, are ignorant of the dialect spoken on Liverpool Plains; and this is the case throughout the Colony. When Sir Edward Parry was manager of the Australian Agricultural Company's affairs, he made a tour of inspection through its estates, taking with him some few black followers as guides. They were not fifty miles from their home, when, to Sir Edward's astonishment, he heard them speaking English to their countrymen of the districts through which they were passing. On inquiring the reason, he was told, that the two parties were entirely ignorant of each other's language. [151]

I never could make out the religious notions of these aboriginal tribes, further than that they believe in a future state. They do not appear to have much affection for their children, if one may judge from the way in which they treat them; yet, the mother bemoans the loss of one of her little ones very piteously, daubs her face and arms with lime in token of mourning, and spends many days in the neighbourhood of the grave. In common with all savage nations, the Australian blacks treat their women ill. These poor creatures get the worst of all their food, with the hardest of all their work; and are frequently very severely beaten by their hard and ruthless taskmasters. Degraded as are these aborigines generally, those in the immediate vicinity of Sydney are a more abject race than their more fortunate brethren who inhabit the distant parts of the Colony. This may be partly, if not wholly accounted for, by the facility with which at Sydney they can obtain ardent spirits, to procure which they will do almost any thing. I have never seen human beings elsewhere reduced to a state of such utter degradation and misery as these poor people exhibit. To shew how much they dislike any thing like labour, I may mention, that Government, on one occasion, set aside a piece of land for a tribe near Sydney, and had it cleared, tilled, and planted with maize for their use, exacting from them a promise that they would tend the growing corn, keep it clean, and gather the crop when ripe: they did neither the one nor the other, but, when called on to gather the grain that was to be their own, said, it was too much trouble. The result was, that the corn was plucked for them; and no further attempt was made to induce them to work. [152]

Several praiseworthy individuals have from time to time endeavoured to educate and civilize young boys of this unhappy race. One was sent to England, where he was kept at school till he was fifteen years of age; and he then returned to his native country. He had not been two days on shore in Sydney, when, meeting with some of his countrymen, he threw off his European clothing, and started for the bush, whence there was no getting him back.

Like most savages, the natives are seldom if ever known to express surprise or astonishment under any circumstances. Shortly before leaving the Colony, I saw a native, early in the morning, standing on one of the heights overlooking the harbour of Sydney. On my asking what he was about, his reply was: "I belong big river (300 miles distant); first time come Sydney; come here see ship; *budgerie su* (pleasant sight); never see ship or salt water before." This poor savage had come three hundred miles on foot, assisting a drover with a herd of cattle; he had never before seen either the sea or a ship in his life; and yet there he stood, looking at these, to him, most extraordinary objects, with a countenance as placid and unmoved as if they had been daily sights from his infancy. On questioning him, I could extract nothing further from him: he *would not* allow that he was astonished, but simply repeated, "*budgerie su*." While idling away an hour one day in the criminal court, I saw an aboriginal black tried for murder. Nothing could exceed the perfect indifference that he exhibited throughout the whole scene. When called upon, through an interpreter, to plead guilty or not guilty, his reply was: "I did it because he (the deceased) stole my wife." He would not condescend to deny an act which he considered himself justified in committing. This plea of justification, the learned Judge directed to be taken as one of not guilty; and the result was, the prisoner's acquittal. [153]

Sir F. L. Mitchell, the Surveyor-General of New South Wales, in his admirable journal of his three celebrated expeditions into the interior of Australia, has described the aboriginal inhabitants of that portion of the country named by him, "Australia Felix," as a race of men altogether superior to those found in other parts of this continent. This race may, and probably will be found formidable neighbours for the first settlers to encounter. Their country, from the description given by its discoverer, must be a very fine one; and should it prove to be regularly refreshed by rain, it will be an invaluable addition to the Colony. [154]

The fate of the tribes I have been endeavouring to describe, is a melancholy one: they are fast disappearing from the face of the earth; and one or two more generations will, in all human probability, see the last of them.

FOOTNOTES:

[17] The name given to the aborigines in Australia.

[18] It is a singular fact, that the aboriginal natives of New South Wales, as well as the cattle that roam at large in its woods, invariably choose the top of a moderately elevated hill to sleep on during the winter months. The reason is, that the hills are *always* warmer than the valleys, and are consequently resorted to in winter; while the latter are chosen in summer as camping-ground by man and beast. I have often been surprised, when riding about the bush in winter, at feeling a current of warm air on the top of a range of hills, having myself just ascended from the neighbouring valley where the breeze was chilling. These warm breezes on the hill tops blow from the north-west, and may be nearly related to the summer hot winds, cooled on reaching the latitude of 34° in the winter season. Be that as it may, they are not strong enough to warm the valleys, though their influence on the hills is very agreeable to the traveller.

CHAPTER XI.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

THE HOT WINDS—PROJECTED MAIL-ROAD FROM SYDNEY TO PORT ESSINGTON—
SHEEP-FARMS—GRAZING IN AUSTRALIA—HORSE-STOCK.

I have often heard the question raised in Australia, Whence proceed the hot winds? Hitherto, this inquiry has not, to my knowledge, been satisfactorily answered. These winds invariably blow from the north-west; but the question is, Whence do they derive the heat they are charged with? In the months during which they prevail, the north-west monsoon is blowing in the Java sea, and thence all the way to Torres' Straits; and northerly winds are prevalent on the eastern coast of Australia. The weather in those seas, at that season, is wet and cold for the latitude; consequently, the north-west wind, when it first reaches the northern coast of Australia, is the reverse of a hot one: whence, then, the heat it brings with it to the thirty-fourth degree of south latitude? From Torres' Straits to this latitude, the distance is, in southing alone, fifteen hundred miles, twelve hundred of which are entirely unexplored. I have heard it suggested, that, in this space, may, and probably does exist, a great inland desert, the crossing of which heats and dries the wind. Whether such a desert does or does not exist, is a problem that may not be solved for many years to come; unless, indeed, the expedition now in contemplation, for the survey of the country in search of a practicable overland route from Sydney to Port Essington, should lead to its earlier solution. To this expedition, should it ever start, I wish every possible success, though I have my misgivings as to its favourable result, and question the soundness of the judgment that advises the undertaking at this time. Supposing the route should prove practicable simply as a mail line, is the Colony at present in circumstances to bear the expense of keeping it up? The object is, to have the overland Indian mail carried from Singapore by steam to Port Essington, thence to Sydney overland; the distance being, in round numbers, two thousand miles, three-fourths of the way through an uninhabited and unknown country. To keep up such a line, the outlay would be enormous, and would far exceed any return that could be expected for the next fifty years. The good folks of Sydney seem bent on trying it, however; and on being refused pecuniary aid from the Government, they resolved on carrying it through at their own expense; but they have since cooled in their ardour. At least, I have not heard of the money being forthcoming.^[19]

I shall now proceed to offer a few observations upon sheep and sheep-stations. A sheep-station is, probably, the most desolate place at which a man could be sent to pass his time. Fancy three men in charge of one thousand sheep, which range over five square miles of country, of which five miles those three outcasts are literally the only inhabitants, and, strange as it may seem, seeing but little of each other. One is the watchman, who remains by the hut all day, shifts the folds, and sleeps between them at night, to protect their occupants from the prowling native dog: the other two are shepherds, who start every morning at daylight, in different directions, each in charge of his flock; they do not return to the hut till sun-down, when they are tired, weary, and eager for supper and bed. Thus, day after day, and month after month, pass in solitary wretchedness, relieved only on the Saturday for a couple of hours, when a man with the week's rations arrives at the station. These men live all the year round on salt beef and bread, the latter baked by themselves: they have no change either of diet, of employment, or of any thing else; for, be it known, a really good sheep-station in Australia yields nothing but grass and gum-trees, the soil being dry and poor. A shepherd on the hills of Scotland, who returns every night to his *bothie*, and finds a *warm* supper cooked for him by some kind female hand, is a prince compared to the exile of Australia, who comes home tired and sleepy at sun-down, and may then either chop wood to cook his meal, or go supperless to bed, as suits his fancy. It is under these circumstances that those unhappy connections are formed with native women, the offspring from which are invariably killed by the mother. Against these connections, the present Governor has very properly set his face, and positively interdicted them. Although he may check, he cannot, however, do away with the evil; which leads not only to the murder of helpless infancy, but to bloodshed and wrangling between the whites and the blacks.

Sheep, when I arrived in Australia in 1836, were in great request, and ewes with lambs at their feet were worth 30s. each, while wool was at 2s. 2d. per pound. In 1837-38 and 1838-39, stock of every kind rose in price; and in the former year, I paid as high as 3l. per head for a flock of four hundred ewes with lambs five months old at their feet. This purchase was not a safe one; it was made when I knew but little of the value of stock, but acted under the advice of others, and when the colony was in the very midst of that wild career of mad speculation which has since worked so much misery to thousands. I suffered in common with many others who invested money in sheep at the same time, and who left the Colony. Nevertheless, I look upon sheep as one of the best descriptions of stock in which a man can speculate, provided that he keeps within reasonable bounds as to price. Good ewes purchased from 20s. to 25s. per head, will, nine times out of ten, pay their proprietor from fifteen to twenty per cent, for his outlay. To do this, they must of course be properly tended, and be kept on what is here called, a good run, *i. e.* fine dry pasture on rather an elevated tract of country. The sheep-farmer ought to have a good homestead in an agricultural part of the Colony, (this, in my opinion, is indispensable to his success,) where he may grow grain sufficient not only to render him almost independent of bad seasons and high prices, but, generally, to give him a few hundred bushels of

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surplus wheat and maize with which to buy tea, sugar, and clothing. Hundreds of sheep-farmers have of late been ruined by having to purchase the actual necessaries for their stations on credit. Cash they had none, being unwilling to part with even their surplus stock at the miserably low prices alone obtainable. [160]

Another error that sheep-farmers fall into from time to time, is, the allowing their establishments to outgrow themselves, as it were, by not selling every year's surplus stock. I have known establishments become quite unmanageable from this cause, and have heard large proprietors frequently say, they were losers by holding so large a number of sheep: still, they went on in spite of their own better judgment, from year to year, without selling a single head of stock. This loss attendant upon overgrown establishments, arises as much from the difficulty of getting good and trustworthy servants, as from any other cause. The master's eye cannot be everywhere, and the overseer's is seldom to be trusted. Lazy shepherds keep sheep in till ten A. M. in place of turning them out at six. Idle watchmen shift the folds twice a week, instead of every day. Fifty other cases of this kind take place on a large sheep-farm, that never could occur on a small establishment. In damp weather, the watchman's neglecting to shift the folds, is sure to do harm. One of its first evil effects is to give the sheep toe-rot; a troublesome complaint that lames the animal, and is not easily got rid of. Then, a careless shepherd will allow his flock to stray on your neighbour's run, which may have been fed over by scabby sheep the day before. If no rain has fallen during the night, the disease is sure, in that case, to be caught by the trespassers, as I can testify from dear-bought experience. Scab, here, is a very different disease from what the sheep-farmer at home is acquainted with, and is much more difficult to cure. The remedies applied for it are severe, and of a kill-or-cure description: indeed, it requires a strong sheep to bear this application. Rubbing with tar, as practised in Scotland, has been found utterly useless. [161]

In advising sheep-farmers to have a good agricultural homestead, I am aware I am recommending what hundreds have not the power to obtain. As a general rule, however, it is a golden one; and I would adhere to it, even were I compelled to have three hundred miles between my stations and the homestead. Indeed, I have known those two establishments separated by two hundred miles.

Since 1838-9, sheep have been sold in New South Wales as low as ninepence a head: this, however, was under very extraordinary circumstances, and is not likely to happen again; more especially since the proprietor has found out that, by slaughtering the animal, and boiling down the carcase, he can get 3s. 6d. for the tallow it yields. During the recent distresses, thousands of sheep have been disposed of in this way, the proprietors being so much reduced as to be literally unable either to pay or to feed men to look after their flocks. I know many parties who purchased sheep between the years 1837 and 1840, at the rates then current, at three years' credit, paying ten per cent, per annum for the indulgence, who, after keeping their purchases and their increase for three years, were compelled, when their acceptances became due, to sell off original stock, increase, and all, and then had not half enough to satisfy their creditor. This, as I said before, arose from peculiar circumstances, being caused by the prevailing panic. I shall advert again to this subject, in offering a few remarks upon the recent distresses and their causes. [162]

Now as to cattle. The English or Scotch grazier, who has his cattle brought home and housed every night, can have no idea of the sort of work his brother grazier in Australia has to go through. Here, the climate is so mild, that cattle are never housed, but wander in the bush from year's end to year's end. The proprietor of five hundred head of horned cattle, must command the run of five thousand acres of pasture-land, of fair quality, as the grass in the woods of Australia is so thin, that it takes three acres to feed a sheep, and ten for a bullock. He generally employs two men, called stock-keepers, to look after them: these are mounted, and ought to employ their time in riding over and roundabout their master's run, to see that his cattle do not stray, and that his grass is not trespassed on by others. This, however, is more than most of these gentry condescend to do, many of them preferring the company of cattle-stealers and other vagabonds, with whom they are frequently leagued; and if I may judge from the money I have seen in possession of stock-keepers, they share largely in the cattle-stealers' plunder. With the exception of some twenty cows and calves usually kept about the house, to give milk, which are called the milking herd, the grazier sees nothing of his herds but on muster-days, which occur twice a year. For some time previously to muster-day, the stock-keepers have been very busy drawing their herds by degrees as near the stock-yard as possible; and when the day arrives, the whole are driven into the yard to be inspected. All the yearlings are then branded, and fat bullocks are picked out for sale or slaughter. At this time, the stock-keeper and his horse have no sinecure; for the cattle they have to collect, are as wild, and nearly as swift as deer; so much so, that a cattle-hunt in Australia is nearly as much enjoyed by the young men as a fox-hunt in Old England. Some breeds of cattle are much more easily managed than others, being naturally quieter; but, generally speaking, the wild way in which the Australian herds are reared, makes them intractable and troublesome. [163]

In spite of all this thieving and trouble, however, cattle-stock is a good investment for money in ordinary times. In extraordinary times like the last year or two, no investment is safe, except to the man who can hold on till things mend. In 1838, cattle were worth from 3*l.* 10*s.* to 5*l.* per head, for a herd consisting of cows, steers, and heifers from one to three years old, and calves under six months. Very superior herds were worth more; but I speak generally. Since that time, thousands of cattle have been killed and boiled down for their tallow. But times are mending, and this stock, like every other, is not likely to be again so unsaleable. [164]

It is of the greatest possible importance to a grazier, to have his herds near some place where there is communication by water with Sydney. In this respect, Hunter's river and Port Macquarie have the pre-eminence over the rest of the Colony. The possessor of fat cattle, in either of those districts, can at all times send them to market by steam, without their losing much flesh; whereas I knew in 1839, when fodder was so scarce, a man having three hundred head of beasts fit for the knife, running in Wellington valley, which, could he have got them into Sydney, would have brought 8*l.* per head ready cash, but which were utterly valueless to him, from the impossibility of driving them through a country almost bare of pasture. Had this man been on the banks of either of my favourite rivers, he could have turned his cattle into cash in three days. [165]

The wild way in which cattle are reared in Australia, makes the young steer a troublesome animal to break in for the plough; and then, the absurd system of turning all the working bullocks into the bush to feed after their day's work, adds very much to the farmer's cares. These bullocks are very cunning, and at daylight, when they well know the ploughman will be after them, invariably conceal themselves in some snug corner. I have had men out for hours, looking for a team of bullocks in this way, and have frequently been vexed to see them return as late as noon with only half the number.

Were I again to turn Australian farmer, I would stable my working cattle, keep a man to take care of them, grow ten acres of Lucerne hay to feed them, save their manure, (an article almost universally thrown away in Australia,) get double work out of them, and have the satisfaction of seeing my ploughs going at regular

hours, in place of being worried "from July to eternity," as Sam Slick says, by having to search for the cattle in the bush. It often struck me, that the Australian grazier loses a chance of making a good deal of money by neglecting his dairy produce. Had he a regular establishment in the bush where his herds run, to milk the cows and make butter and cheese, it would not only, in my opinion, pay well for the trouble, but would make his cattle much less wild. His having forty or fifty cows brought home every evening to milk, would not only make their calves quiet and tractable, but would also compel the stock-keeper to be more active, would keep him at his duty, and, I feel satisfied, would save the proprietor a great deal in the course of the year. The butter and cheese here are both of excellent quality, and might be made in large quantities; yet, both are regularly imported into Sydney from the Derwent (Van Diemen's Land) and Port Phillip; a state of things the settlers of New South Wales ought to be ashamed of.

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Many a fine cattle-run is rendered useless in dry seasons, by want of water. Nature has provided, all over the country, reservoirs (or tanks) for water, which are filled by every heavy rain; and their contents last a long time: still, in a very dry season, these fail; and many a thirsty bullock loses his life by tumbling, from excessive weakness, into one of those pits. Some parts of the country have no tanks, (or water-holes, as they are called,) except a few muddy puddles at the foot of the hills, and thus become unavailing sooner than other parts. This inconvenience might in a great measure be remedied, at trifling cost, by constructing dams at properly chosen places in the ravines or gulleys that intersect the hills from top to bottom, every two or three hundred yards. In one instance, I have seen this plan adopted with success. The owners of property between Sydney and Paramatta are compelled to make tanks, the water in the river being salt, and that procured by digging wells being very little better. Water, Water, is the cry, in dry seasons, all over this otherwise highly favoured country; and till the end of time, this want will prevent New South Wales from becoming a densely populated country.

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The horse-fancier may invest a few hundreds very profitably in the purchase of some really good brood mares. From these, he will not only draw a good return for his money, but will also derive a great deal of pleasant pastime in superintending the breaking-in of his colts and fillies. Horse-stock, like every other, has fallen much in price lately, but will doubtless recover itself when times improve. I am acquainted with more than one proprietor who has made no inconsiderable sum of money by rearing horses. There is a constant demand for them; and of late, a good market has been found in India for those suited for cavalry.

Another profitable investment for money is to be found, in Sydney, in the way of mortgage. Ten and twelve per cent, is paid regularly, and security given of an undoubted character,—security that has not in one instance failed the mortgagee, even in the recent desperate times. Large sums may be invested in this way; and for the absent capitalist, it is the mode of investment I would recommend in preference to any other. Bank Shares used to be in great favour with monied men when I was in Australia. The holders have, however, had a severe lesson since then, having suffered seriously by some failures among those establishments.

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FOOTNOTES:

- [19] The expedition just alluded to has never been attempted; and I think very wisely. The great commercial crisis under which the Colony of New South Wales, in common with all the Australian Colonies, has been suffering of late, has given the Colonists other and more pressing matters to think of; and if they will take the advice of one who wishes them well, they will look to some other route for quicker communication with the Mother Country, than that *via* Port Essington.—October, 1845.

CHAPTER XII.

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NEW SOUTH WALES.

CAUSES OF THE RECENT DISTRESSES—CONDUCT OF THE BANKS—MANIA FOR SPECULATION—LONG-ACCOUNT SYSTEM—BAD SEASONS.

I will now proceed to offer a few remarks on the causes of the late terrible distresses in New South Wales, and on what I consider as the best means of preventing the recurrence of such lamentable scenes.

The three main causes of those distresses were, undoubtedly:—

First, Harsh and illiberal conduct on the part of the Banks.

Secondly, A wild speculation-mania that took possession of the entire population.

Thirdly, The system that had obtained, of giving long credit to purchasers of stock, &c.

While I look upon these three as the primary and principal causes of by far the greater part of the suffering the Colony has recently undergone, I must specify another, though certainly a secondary cause; namely, two successive bad seasons. This last cause is, I am aware, by many persons, regarded as the chief source of all their distresses and losses; but I think I can shew that those parties are wrong in this opinion, which springs from their anxiety to frame an excuse for their very imprudent speculations.

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In the first place, then, I accuse the Banks of harsh and illiberal conduct; and I will state my reasons for this charge.

When I arrived in Sydney in 1836, the Banks, without exception, but more particularly the Commercial Bank (then under the management of a would-be shrewd Aberdonian), were doing every thing in their power to induce parties to open accounts with them. Bills for discount were eagerly sought after, and little attention was paid to the respectability of the names of either drawer or endorser. Cash-advances were publicly

advertised by the Commercial Bank. Parties, to my certain knowledge, were stopped in the street by the Aberdonian just alluded to, who solicited their business with a very bland smile. In short, no stone was left unturned by these money-seekers to add to their half-yearly dividends. This system went on till the latter end of 1839. I need scarcely say, that this unbecoming and greedy canvassing for business, tempted many an unwary merchant and settler to venture beyond his depth, and ultimately led to ruin and a prison. The amount of money represented by absolutely valueless paper at this time, is quite beyond calculation. Renewals were a matter of course. Cash payments, even in part, were the reverse of common. Bank-directors overdrew their accounts with perfect impunity to a large amount; and the whole Colony seemed intoxicated with the fond notion that the Banks would never fail them, and that, in those fountains, they would at all times find a never-ending supply of "the needful." In the midst of this mad career, the day of reckoning came suddenly upon them. The Banks took the alarm: they began to think they had allowed the kite-flying system to go too far; and they commenced a system of unparalleled harshness and oppression towards their *gulls*. Cash advances were not merely stopped, but those previously made were called in. Renewals would no longer be accepted, even for half or a quarter of the amount due; and the unfortunate "kite-flier" was, in hundreds of cases, ruined by the very men who had in the most unprincipled manner led him into the mire, and then left him. [171]

The Banks now took up a position the very opposite of that hitherto occupied by them; and, instead of trusting everybody, put no faith in any one. This conduct ultimately recoiled upon themselves; their shares fell in value; some of them became bankrupt, while the others had a hard struggle to avoid that catastrophe; and the public lost all confidence in banks and bankers. The worst part of the tale remains to be told; namely, that many widows and orphans, whose all was invested in bank shares, were utterly ruined and reduced to destitution by the failures alluded to. [172]

I come now to the second main cause of Australian distress, viz. the speculation-mania that took possession of the entire population of this fine Colony. No one who did not witness the effects of this mania, can imagine to what an extent it was carried. Scarcely a day passed without one or more public auctions of stock of all descriptions; and not a sale took place, that was not crowded with eager purchasers. Many large stockholders took advantage of the high prices obtained at those sales, to sell off, in the delusive hope that they would in this way be enabled to retire from active life, and perhaps to return to their native country. The terms offered at those public sales, were such as to induce many persons who never even dreamed of sheep or cattle farming, to enter the market and purchase to a large extent. These terms were, in general, something like the following:—

Ten per cent, on the fall of the hammer;

Thirty per cent, by bill at twelve months;

Thirty per cent, by bill at two years;

Thirty per cent, by bill at three years: these bills bearing interest at ten per cent, per annum.

I have seen tens of thousands of sheep and cattle sold in this way, many of the buyers being men who had never even seen one of the animals they were bidding for, and who knew literally nothing about the management of flocks and herds; being tempted to make the purchase by the long credit given. But, strange to say, many old settlers were led, with their eyes open, into extensive purchases at most exorbitant rates, thinking that nothing could check the career of splendid prosperity upon which the Colony was then supposed to have entered. How dearly those parties have paid for their folly, the world generally, and their creditors in particular, well know. Besides the numerous public sales of stock all over the Colony, and the large amount of property that changed hands on those occasions, many important private sales took place about the same time. There was not a sheep, cow, or horse in the Colony, too old or too bad to find a purchaser! Any thing would sell, provided only that *time* was given to find the money. Nothing could exceed the madness of the people, buying, selling, and exchanging accommodation-paper from end to end of the land. Then came the land-jobbers, a set of sharks who did great harm. It was a common practice with those jobbers, or rather robbers, to apply to the Surveyor-General's department, to have lots of land put up for sale, which they were aware that certain landed proprietors could never allow to fall into the hands of strangers, and then to go to the party whose estate the sale of the land in question would injure, and demand a bribe to stop their bidding against him. If this quietus was refused, these scamps would attend the sale, and bid the land up to some exorbitant price, knowing that their victim must be the buyer. Land once advertised by Government must be put up to auction; and the jobber's victim was obliged either to purchase, or to run the risk of having a stranger sit down as the proprietor of a few hundred acres in the midst of his thousands. Another class of scamps used to attend land-sales, who would conspire to keep down the prices of lots they wanted, by not bidding against each other, and by playing various other tricks, to the detriment of the revenue. The Attorney-General got hold of half a dozen of those gentry in 1839, and prosecuted them for conspiracy. He obtained a verdict of guilty against them, but assented to their petition for a new trial. Again they were convicted, and they were fined a hundred pounds each; the Court telling them, that the penalty would have been much heavier, had not the judge taken into consideration their humble petition for mercy, and the heavy expenses they had incurred in standing two trials. [173] [174]

This system of selling by auction and by private sale, large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep at high prices, went on till some of the twelve-month's paper became due. Cash not being then forthcoming, renewals were asked for in many instances, which somewhat damped the ardour of speculation; but the wild career did not receive any very serious check, till the two-years' paper began to come into play. Very little cash could be got from the drawers, who were, in many cases, obliged to bring a large portion of their stock to the hammer, in order to meet their acceptances for thirty per cent, of the purchase money. This alarmed people. The price of stock began to fall; and, long before the three-years' paper became due, ewes that had cost the buyers 3*l.* per head, could be got for 7*s.* 6*d.* [175]

Thus, many a poor fellow, after labouring hard for three years to keep his flocks and their increase together, had to part with the whole, and still had not enough wherewith to satisfy his original creditors. Hundreds of instances of this kind might be specified, did I feel at liberty to publish names.

As to the operation of the third main cause of the distress, the system that obtained, of giving long credit to purchasers of stock, the evils arising from this practice have been partly exposed in the foregoing remarks; but I will proceed to point out a few other evil consequences, as they occur to me. To begin with one that more than once came under my own notice; many persons of property, trusting to the long prices obtainable for stock of every description when sold on credit, and forgetting that there was absolutely no *cash price* at [176]

the time, deemed themselves much richer men than they were in reality. Giving to their overseers the charge of their country residences, they took and furnished houses in Sydney for their families, set up their carriages, and commenced a style of living far beyond their means. This fact (the want of cash) came upon them the moment the first half-year's bills for rent, household supplies, &c., became due: these proved to the deluded settler, that, though he had flocks and herds, he had no money, nor could any be got, except at a sacrifice. To a man, they had to sell off and return to their estates, where dire necessity has since compelled them to remain, and where, I hope, renewed prosperity and common sense will induce them to stay.

Another evil caused by the long-credit system, was its inducing many persons to purchase stock for the purpose of raising money upon it. This practice was carried to a ruinous extent, and caused immense distress in this way. A hundred head of cattle might be parted with to day, by a needy settler, say, at 3*l.* per head, six months' credit; the seller took the buyer's note of hand for the purchase money, 300*l.*, which was immediately taken to the bank, and discounted; and the settler returned to his farm, satisfied that he had made a good sale of his beasts. The buyer, having no use for the cattle, re-sold them, taking the second buyer's note for the money, which, like that of the first, went at once to the bank. This transaction was frequently repeated six or eight times, before the cattle found a *bonâ fide* purchaser; and it was no uncommon thing, to find paper in the market to the amount of 1800*l.* or 2000*l.*, the only representative for which was the hundred head of cattle originally sold by the settler; the whole of the parties concerned being, with the exception of the first seller and the last buyer, mere men of straw. When the six months expired, not a single bill of the six or eight negotiated, was taken up, excepting, perhaps, the last one: all the others had to be renewed; and it was the forcing the payment of such bills, that ruined so many people, and ultimately shook the credit of every bank in Australia.

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The credit system also led many mercantile men into speculations which they never would have entered into under a wholesome system of trade. From these many serious losses resulted, which have led to ruinous failures. Any man with a hundred pounds in his pocket, could get credit for a thousand; and numbers of adventurers of all descriptions, taking advantage of the times, opened stylish shops well-filled with goods bought on credit, carried on a flourishing trade till within a few days of their bills falling due, and then decamped, leaving their unfortunate and silly creditors to get paid from the wreck of the stock left in the shop. I knew an auctioneer who played this nefarious trick, leaving his creditors *minus* the enormous sum of 70,000*l.* He did not, however, long retain his ill-gotten wealth: how he got rid of it, I do not know; but I found him two years ago in Singapore, where he kept a small grog-shop, and lived in great wretchedness; and I have since met with him knocking about the streets of Macao, a disgrace to his country in a foreign settlement. The credit system ruined two thirds of the respectable auctioneers in Sydney, and upset the Australian Auction Company, absorbing every shilling of its paid-up capital.

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In addition to the evils inflicted on this Colony by these main causes, great losses were sustained by settlers through their becoming shippers of their own wool. At the time I speak of, wool was worth, in Sydney, from 2*s.* 1*d.* to 2*s.* 2*d.* per pound, and, in England, some 6*d.* or 8*d.* more. These high rates would not satisfy some settlers, who foolishly took an advance upon their clips, letting them go home on their own account, and at the risk of the agents of the parties who advanced the money in Sydney. In the meantime, wool fell in the English markets to 1*s.* and 15*d.* per pound. The nett proceeds of the shipment did not nearly cover the advance made; and the hapless shipper, already in debt to his agent for supplies, and without a penny of cash at his command, was called upon to make good the difference, which he was unable to do. His agent, pressed by others, must press him; his flocks are brought to the hammer, and sold at the now ruinous current prices; and he becomes a bankrupt. Dozens of cases like this, occurred during the late wretched times.

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I come now to the consideration of the bad seasons of 1838-39 and 1839-40. While I maintain that they were far from being the sole, or even the chief cause of distress, I allow that they added to it very materially. To shew that they were not the sole cause, I may mention, that, among my own personal friends in the Colony, not one who avoided speculation and putting his name on paper, has failed; while those who followed the stream have sunk, every one of them. During those years, every thing the unfortunate grazier had to sell, was cheap beyond all precedent; while every article he was compelled to purchase, was very dear. Tea, owing to the China war, rose from 5*l.* to 15*l.* per half-*pecul* chest of hyson skin. Flour of the very coarsest description could not be had under from 30*l.* to 35*l.* per ton of two thousand pounds weight,—a colonial cheat, calling two thousand pounds a ton! Sugar and other necessaries were equally high; and many a poor settler who had never refused his hard-worked servants their tea, sugar, and tobacco, was compelled to stop those indulgences.

To the working-classes in Sydney and other towns, the bad seasons were ruinous. Provisions were so dear, that many a father of a family found his earnings far from sufficient to provide food for his wife and children. Building was almost entirely put a stop to; and thus, hundreds of industrious men were thrown out of employment. To so serious an extent did this distress reach, that Government was called upon to afford pecuniary relief to the starving poor; a circumstance altogether unprecedented in Australian history.

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So low had these evils sunk the Colony and all its inhabitants, that failures of merchants and settlers continued to be of almost daily occurrence up to the end of the year 1843. No one durst push his neighbour for payment of debt: were such a thing attempted, an immediate surrender of his affairs to the official trustee of the Insolvent Court, was the consequence. Several of the first and oldest merchants in the Colony have sunk under the long-continued pressure; and, at the date of the last accounts, more failures were looked for. These, however, were expected as the result of old causes, not of new or recent transactions.

Upon the whole, I am disposed to think, that Australia has seen its darkest day, and that things are likely soon to improve, if, indeed, they have not already mended. The price of stock was looking up; and ewes that had actually been sold as low as 9*d.* each, were worth 7*s.* 6*d.* Men of capital lately arrived from England with ready money, had commenced purchasing land and stock; and their operations had given an impetus to affairs in general, that could not fail to be beneficial.

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NEW SOUTH WALES.

ELEMENTS OF PROSPERITY STILL EXISTING—HINTS TO THE COLONISTS—FUTURE PROSPECTS.

Notwithstanding the terrible shock from which Australia has been suffering ever since 1839, I still retain a high opinion of the Colony as an advantageous field for the employment of the spare capital of the mother country. The elements of prosperity still exist, and require only a little nursing in order to effect its recovery from the recent depression. The emigrant with a capital of three or four thousand pounds, must not, indeed, expect to make a fortune in a few years; but he may with perfect confidence look to make himself an independent man, at a much more rapid rate than he could by means of double that sum in England. If he is prudent, nurses his capital, sticks to his business as a settler, avoids *tempting* bargains of things he has no use for, and, above all, refrains from obliging his neighbours with the occasional loan of his name to a bill, I see not what can by possibility prevent his succeeding in such a country, even allowing that every third season should prove one of drought. To the industrious farmer with a small capital of 500*l.* or 1000*l.*, New South Wales offers a fine field: he can obtain a hundred acres of the finest arable land in the world on a clearing-lease, with two years free for the clearing, and three or five years more on a moderate rent. A capital even of 500*l.* will enable him to fence his land, build himself a *bush*-house and out-offices, and maintain his family for two years; by which time it will be hard indeed, if he has not land enough under crop to return him something handsome. I have known many settlers of this kind thrive, and many others "go to the wall:" the former had a small capital to start with, while the latter commenced upon credit for the very bread required for their families; a plan I never knew to succeed.

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Let but the settler stick to his business; the merchant be content with smaller profits than used to satisfy him, and cease giving long credit to all and everybody; let the banker be less grasping, and not quite so hard a creditor when he finds one of his customers in difficulties or reverses; let every one avoid speculations out of his strict line of business, and beware of accommodation-paper; and let the lower and middle classes avoid the public-house; and there is nothing to fear for Australia. It has had a severe lesson administered to it, that ought to be a warning to all its inhabitants for the future. I have no hesitation in saying, that nine-tenths of the evils from which the Colonists have suffered of late, have arisen from their own imprudence, and that these may be avoided in future by common caution, in spite of dry seasons and occasional failures of crops.

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Now that colonization is extending up the coast from Sydney northwards, and the inhabited parts of the Colony already approach the tropic of Capricorn, New South Wales ought, in a few years, to be a rice and sugar-growing country. The soil on the banks of the rivers in the neighbourhood of Moreton Bay, is, from all accounts, equal to any thing hitherto known in the Colony; and the climate is very highly spoken of. Should the winter there prove too long or too severe for sugar-growing, (I do not see why it should be so,) parties anxious to try the culture of the cane as a means of making money, must in that case just move a little further north. There is an extensive field to explore, before they reach Torres' Straits.

That New South Wales will become an extensive wine-growing country, I conceive there is no room to doubt. Its vineyards are magnificent, in every sense of the word. I have visited several of them, and was struck with the abundance and variety of their produce. Two proprietors of my acquaintance have been for years in the practice of making wine of different sorts, but principally of the lighter kinds resembling the Rhenish. I can vouch for their being very palatable, particularly during the summer months. One of the gentlemen alluded to has also made very good port wine and brandy.

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The greatest drawback on the commerce of New South Wales, is the deficiency of exports, the balance of trade being greatly against the Colony. Its wool and oil are what merchants have hitherto principally depended upon, though other exports are now coming into play; viz. cedar-timber, hides, tallow, and salt provisions. Still, I do not think that, even with these additions, the merchants of the Colony can manage to make their exports equal in value to their imports; and were it not for the very considerable sums drawn for on the Home Government, by the military department, for the pay and provisions of the troops, necessity would compel the merchants of England to reduce their shipments to Australia. The great fall in the price of the principal colonial staple, wool, has added very materially to the difficulties arising out of this state of affairs, by reducing the value of remittances made in that article to one half of what it used to be. The quantity of wool increases, it is true, from year to year, but not to such an extent as to counterbalance the fall in price; and it must be borne in mind, that, as fast as the wool increases, so does the population, and consequently the amount of imports in the shape of supplies, which have all to be remitted for. Since the opening of the coast of China to the commerce of the world, (the result of our late struggle with that country, —a struggle so much condemned by those who were ignorant of the merits of the case,) the merchants of Sydney seem to have entertained the idea, that their trade will benefit by the change. No one would rejoice more than myself at their anticipations proving correct; but I confess my judgment differs from theirs; and if we may judge by the result of their trial shipments, which arrived prior to my leaving China, it is to be feared they will find, to their cost, that they have reckoned without their host. The Sydney merchants, from what I have heard, expect to find in China a market for horses, cattle, and sheep, coarse woollens, wine, and salt provisions. The first three have been tried, and the experiment has proved an utter failure: the horses were sent to Calcutta, not a purchaser being found for one of them in Hong Kong. Cattle are out of the question: they cannot be transported five thousand miles to undersell the Chinese butcher, who gives fifteen pounds of good beef for a dollar—about 3½*d.* per pound. This price, the Sydney speculator cannot compete with, particularly as his beasts would certainly land in poor condition after so long a voyage, and either put him to the expense of fattening them, or compel him to sell at the low price of lean cattle. Sheep have also been tried by several ship-masters, and did not answer: the last lot that came, were slaughtered and sold in the market, the only way in which they could be got rid of, and which would not answer the purpose of a large importer. For coarse woollens, a market may certainly be found in China; but whether a profitable one, or not, to the Australian manufacturer, is, in my opinion, somewhat doubtful. Labour is so much cheaper in Britain than it is in Australia, that, I fear, the Sydney manufacturer would have but a poor chance, when his goods came into competition with those of Manchester, either in the Chinese or in any other market. Whatever kinds of goods may be required on the coast of China, will soon be supplied from Manchester and Glasgow at the lowest possible figure, the object of the manufacturers of those places being, I presume, a large trade with moderate profits; so moderate, indeed, as to leave the Sydney manufacturer no chance of competing with the means at the command of the British manufacturer. Australian wool, like Indian cotton, may be taken to England, be manufactured there, and sent out and sold in China, or anywhere else, for less

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money than it would cost the Sydney capitalist to produce the manufactured article. As to wine, it will be a long time before New South Wales has much to export; and the limited European population of China will not consume a sufficient quantity to be of importance to the Australian vine-grower. The Chinese cannot be counted upon as purchasers: they are not wine-drinkers, generally speaking; and the little they do consume, is manufactured to suit their own palates, in China.

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For salt provisions, there is a considerable demand in China, among the European shipping that visit its ports: they must, however, be cheaper in Sydney than they were in my time, to answer the purpose of even a remittance. The Americans bring to China excellent beef and pork, which they sell at ten and twelve dollars (about 42s. to 54s.) per barrel of two hundred pounds weight. If these prices will remunerate the Sydney shipper, he may try his luck as soon as he likes; but he must not send an inferior article: if he does, he will sink his capital. Cedar-timber has been tried recently, and has answered very well to a small extent: this, however, will last only till the town of Victoria on the island of Hong-Kong is completely built.

By every fresh outlet for surplus stock that can be pointed out to the Australian grazier, we shall be rendering him a substantial service. Sir Robert Peel's new tariff will enable him to dispose of many a spare fat bullock. Of this opening he has already taken advantage, by sending trial shipments of salt beef to England.

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It appears to me, that the imports and exports of Australia ought to be much nearer a balance than they are. To bring about this desirable state of things, it will be requisite to reduce the amount of the imports, which may be effected by giving up the importation of hams, bacon, cheese, butter, tobacco, and, in a great measure, grain. To see a pastoral country like New South Wales importing butter and cheese, is an anomaly, and only proves the waste and carelessness of the owners of herds numerous enough to supply all Europe with dairy produce. The importation of hams and bacon is another absurdity and evidence of wasteful husbandry. I have seen fruit, barn-sweepings, butter-milk, bran, &c. &c. wasted about a farm in Australia, in quantities sufficient to feed and fatten a hundred pigs, which would have kept the establishment in meat for half the year. Indeed, it is a common saying in the Colony, that the waste on one of its farms, would make an English farmer's fortune. These may seem minor articles, but vast sums of money are annually paid for them to London dealers. Besides these, are imported, pickles, preserved fruits, sweetmeats, shoes, clothing, and a thousand other articles, every one of which might be as well and as economically made in the Colony, thereby saving thousands per annum. A coat or other article of dress can be made in Sydney as well and as cheap as in London; and though the cloth must be obtained from England, there is no reason that the London tailor should benefit by the making, when the Sydney one is in want of work, and is willing to work as cheap as his London brother. Employing colonial workmen would keep vast sums of money in the country, that now go out of it.

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Tobacco and snuff ought never to be imported, the Colony being quite equal to producing more than sufficient for its own consumption. The quality of colonial tobacco used to be complained of; but that objection no longer exists. Moreover, people who cannot complete their remittances for necessaries, have no right to be nice in their choice of luxuries. I am confident that I am within the mark, when I say, that 50,000*l.* sterling per annum are paid to Americans and others who import snuff and tobacco! This is a sum assuredly worth saving, and which the Colonists could easily save, by encouraging the growth and consumption of their own produce.

After what I have written upon the subject of Australian agriculture, I may be thought to be making a bold assertion in saying, that the necessity for the importation of grain might, in a great measure, be done away with in Australia. Nevertheless, such is my opinion; and I will proceed to give my reasons. In the first place, there is a great waste of wheat, as well as of every thing else, on every farm in the Colony. There is no gleaning; and what with the bad and careless threshing and the ill-thatched and worse-built stacks, which admit the rain, whereby thousands of bushels of wheat are destroyed, the waste is beyond any one's conception who has not actually witnessed it. In the second place, there is not nearly so much wheat grown in Australia as there might and ought to be. A simple process of irrigation, such as the Chinese or the Javanese, the machinery for which would not cost 5*l.*, and would employ only two men when in operation, applied to the wheat-fields in dry seasons once a month, would save many a crop. All, or nearly all the wheat in the Colony, is grown on the banks of rivers, which, though they cease to flow in a season of drought, have always water in the deep parts of the channel or "water-holes." It requires no argument to prove, that irrigation, in such situations, is a very simple matter. Two Javanese, by means of a long lever attached to a tall tree on the bank of a river, with a large bucket and string at one end, and a string to hoist up by at the other end, will keep a small stream of water running over and fertilizing the neighbouring paddy-fields all day long, without fatiguing themselves. The Chinese water-wheel is also a simple and cheap contrivance, and would throw up water enough, in two hours, to irrigate, or even to inundate a tobacco or wheat-field. All that is wanted, besides the labour of two men, is a series of wooden troughs to convey the water from the river bank to the highest part of the field, whence it is easily guided over the other parts. A little attention to irrigation might, in my humble opinion, very soon make New South Wales independent of imported wheat.

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Another means of doing away with the importation of grain and flour, may be found in paying more attention to the cultivation of maize. Large quantities of it are grown at present, but they might easily be doubled.^[20] And here, irrigation would answer splendidly, the drills forming such convenient water-courses. Large as is the quantity of maize grown in Australia, it is not used as food for man;—why, I know not, but such is the fact;—and I have known a convict turn up his nose when offered corn-meal. Every one knows how extensively this article is used in America, and how wholesome a food it is. Were the Australian farmers firmly and unanimously to determine upon making their dependents take at least half their weekly allowance in maize-meal, in place of wheaten flour, the latter would soon become fond of it. There would then be an inducement to extend its cultivation; and the large sums of money annually remitted to Van Diemen's Land, Valparaiso, and Bengal, for wheat, would very shortly be reduced to a small cipher.

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To urge this most desirable object any further upon the Colonists of New South Wales, would be to insult their good sense. I will only express a wish that they may at once adopt measures to equalize their imports and exports, and that the few hints here thrown out to them, may be of use.

The supply of tea and sugar to the Australian Colonies, has, on the whole, been a profitable trade to the parties engaged in it; but it has, of late, been overdone. The quality of the tea and sugar now sent to Sydney, is far superior to what it used to be; and the coarser sorts of both are going out of use; a clear proof that the population are improving in respectability. Formerly, nothing in the shape of either article was too bad to send out to Australia. Things have changed, however, and several speculators have been serious losers

within the last three years, by sending goods that would have suited admirably six years ago. When I first went into the Bush, you might visit a dozen of the most respectable houses without being able to get any thing better than the most common hyson-skin tea and very dark moist sugar. A cup or two of the liquid made from these, would poison an old Indian; and I never ventured to drink it. A friend of mine, who absolutely dreaded being compelled to drink this stuff, used always to carry a paper of good black tea in his pocket, whenever he left his own house. He was in the right, though often laughed at. Mauritius sugar used to be the favourite at the time I speak of; but now, Manilla, Singapore, and Batavia are looked to for the supply of a better and cheaper article. From Manilla the Colonists import small supplies of coffee, chocolate, reed hats, and cheroots. Singapore and Batavia send them, in addition to sugar, quantities of rice, spices, Dutch gin, tea brought thither by Chinese junks, planks, &c. &c. Singapore sends also a ship or two annually to South Australia, Port Philip, and Van Diemen's Land.

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FOOTNOTES:

[20] I do not mean to say, that irrigating an acre of wheat or maize would double the yield of grain, but that double the number of acres now under the plough would in a few years, after the irrigating system had been fairly tried and found to answer, be brought under cultivation. In the neighbourhood of Bathurst, and in many other parts of the Colony where rain is very uncertain, there are thousands of acres of alluvial land lying waste, which, upon my plan, would yield tens of thousands of bushels of wheat and maize.

CHAPTER XIV.

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NEW SOUTH WALES.

CLASSES OF SOCIETY IN SYDNEY—DISAPPOINTMENT OF EMIGRANTS—
CHARACTERISTICS OF IRISH AND BRITISH EMIGRANTS—AVAILABleness OF
CHINESE LABOURERS—AUSTRALIAN COAL MONOPOLY—TORRES' STRAITS THE BEST
PASSAGE FOR STEAMERS—BOTANY BAY—PASSAGE FROM SYDNEY TO BATAVIA.

To obtain admission to good society in Sydney, when my family first arrived there, was no easy matter. Not that there was any lack of it in the place, but the residents were, very properly, shy of strangers, unless provided with testimonials as to their respectability. Fortunately for us, a kind friend in Singapore, who had been in New South Wales, and knew the value of the favour he was conferring, supplied us with a whole packet of introductory letters to the first families in the place; while we were further aided in the matter by my old friend, Thos. Macquoid, Esq., then Sheriff of the Colony. In a place like Sydney, where society is formed of such varied and extraordinary materials suspicion of strangers, on the part of the really respectable portion of the community, is natural enough; and those who have not been sufficiently wary in this respect, have had cause to regret their want of caution. The tide of emigration is now bringing numerous highly respectable families to Australia, as well as thousands of hard-working, honest labourers, while the importation of felons has ceased. This state of things will, in time, do away with the necessity for such extreme caution and mistrust. It will, however, take a number of years to clear the Colony of the half-reformed villain who still hankers after his old ways,—of the *emancipist*, whom the law looks upon as a reformed character, but whom experience has taught the world to look upon with a very different eye,—and of the convicts for life, who still amount to thousands. Until the Colony is pretty well weeded of such characters, society will not, and cannot, dismiss the suspicion with which it is now rendered necessary, by circumstances, to regard the unintroducted stranger.

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I found no lack of agreeable society, both male and female, in any part of New South Wales that I visited. In many instances, the conversation certainly turned rather too much upon sheep and cattle; but this ought to be excused, where ninety-nine hundredths earn their daily bread by means of those animals. In Sydney, we found the dinner and evening parties highly agreeable, and composed of elegant, accomplished, and intelligent persons of both sexes. What more can be said of any community? During the government of Sir Richard Bourke, an attempt was made by him to introduce into his own parties some emancipist families; and on one occasion, the grand-daughter of a late Sydney hangman actually made her appearance at a ball at Government-house. This fact being found out by the heads of families present, a representation was made to His Excellency through his aide-de-camp, and, after some show of opposition on the part of the Governor, a stop was put to it. I do not mean to say that, among the class called emancipists, consisting of persons who have been convicts, there may not be found men and women who have become thoroughly reformed and fit to adorn society. This, however, is the exception, not the rule. A large majority of the class in question are quite unfit for any company but that of a low pot-house.

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Some of the most stylish equipages in Sydney are the property of men who came to the Colony with fetters on their legs. In them may be seen, any and every day, gayly-dressed women, driving about the town, shopping and lounging away their idle mornings. Whether they are the wives, daughters, or mistresses of the owners of the carriages, it is difficult to tell; but the conclusion that every second one contains a mistress, would not be far from the truth. Such is the society the unwary stranger sometimes falls into, before he knows what he is about; nor does he become fully aware of the evil consequences of his imprudence, till he finds out with whom he has been associating, and that all access to the really respectable society of the place is closed against him. It is quite as requisite for a stranger arriving in Sydney to be on his guard as to his associates, as it is for residents to be careful whom they may admit into their families.

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There are many wealthy families in and near Sydney, whose heads came as convicts to the Colony. The days when such men could make rapid fortunes, are gone by; and the convict who looks for any thing of the kind now-a-days, will find himself woefully mistaken. There are too many respectable tradesmen in Sydney for ex-

felons to have much chance; and the time when a shopkeeper would not condescend to take a piece of cloth off his shelf to satisfy a customer, but would point to a lot with his stick, and ask, "Which will you have?" has also gone by. Every attention is now shewn to customers by Sydney shopkeepers, some of whom are not a whit behind their London brethren in the art of recommending their wares.

New South Wales had been for many years a British Colony, before any Israelites found their way thither as *free* men; and I have heard, that it was the return of a Jewish convict with well-lined pockets, that first attracted their attention to his place of exile. Be this as it may, there are more Jews than enough in Sydney now; they are to be found in every quarter of the town; and certainly, they keep up their ancient character for perseverance in search of their idol, money. I do not think, however, that I ever came across a Jewish settler: why they seem to avoid that occupation, I know not. [199]

It is common, in Australia, to hear persons talk of the Colony as their adopted country, and so forth. No faith ought to be put in these declarations; nor do I believe there is a family in the Colony, who do not entertain some hope of once more seeing their native land. During the time that high prices were obtainable for stock, hundreds of settlers who were wont to talk of their adopted country, used every exertion to realize their property in order to return to England. Many succeeded, and actually left the Colony, rejoicing in the idea of once more planting their foot on British ground. The exceptions to this general rule, are to be found in the emancipist class; in the persons of notorious scamps who could not shew their face in respectable society in England, and who have sense enough to know that they are better off in the southern, than, by any chance, they could be in the northern hemisphere.

From extensive experience, I am convinced, that a very large majority of emigrants are lamentably disappointed on reaching the shores of Australia. Not that I think they have cause for half the complaints they make; but they have received, before leaving home, such flattering representations of the good fortune that is in store for them, that their expectations are raised to a pitch far beyond the probable, and disappointment is the natural consequence. The tales told them prior to their embarkation, render them difficult to please on their arrival; they demand exorbitant wages, and more rations than they could possibly consume without waste; and the consequence of this is, that many of them remain weeks and months in Sydney, out of employment, living upon the little money brought from home, although, in the meantime, eligible offers may have been made them. This stay in Sydney not only empties the emigrant's pocket, but breeds idle habits, leading him to the public-house, where his last penny is soon extracted from him. Then comes want, with all the horrors of a starving wife and family; grown-up daughters are driven to prostitution; and the emigrant himself is ultimately compelled to accept any offer made him in his degraded state. This is no overdrawn or rare picture, as any one acquainted with the subject can testify. Emigrants that come to the Colony in what are called Government ships, and who are brought out at the public expense, are provided for on their arrival, till employment offers for them; but, the moment they are known to have refused a fair offer, Government aid ceases. Even that circumstance, however, has little or no effect upon the more stubborn of them, who abate or yield in their demands only when compelled by necessity. Many emigrants, from their fondness for a town life, refuse good offers of employment in the country. Great evils arise from this: one is, that it frequently happens, that Sydney is overrun with idle labourers in search of employment, while the settlers in the country are all crying out for help. To such a height had this evil risen, and to such distress were numbers of infatuated men reduced by remaining idle in town, that Government was recently applied to for its interference, and actually paid the expense of sending hundreds of men into the country, where they got immediate employment, which they might have had many months before, had they been reasonable in their demands. [200]

It is remarked all over the Colony, that the emigrants generally are very difficult to satisfy in the matter of rations; and that the man who had been the worst fed at home, was the most difficult to please abroad. An Irishman is generally found the chief grumbler here; a Scotchman ranks second; while an English peasant, who has all his life fared better than either, is found, in Australia, to be most easily satisfied. I do not attempt to explain or account for this; I have, however, not only frequently observed it, but have heard my neighbours make the same remark. I hired an Irish labourer and his wife, to whom I gave the following pay and rations: —22*l.* a year to the man; 12*l.* a year to his wife; weekly between the two, 14 lbs. of beef, 20 lbs. of flour, 3 lbs. of sugar, 6 oz. of tea, and 4 oz. of tobacco. With this allowance, for half of which thousands of families in England would be thankful, the couple were not satisfied, and actually complained that they had not enough to eat. It was summer time when they came to my farm; and they were warned, that the blow-flies would destroy their meat, if it was not covered up: they were too lazy, however, to take the slightest care of it; and, as I saw their second week's allowance lying on a table the day after it was served out, covered with a mass of blow-flies, I took them severely to task for their wanton waste and neglect. But it was of no avail. And this couple had lived upon potatoes and butter-milk all their lives! It is but just to add, that, on mentioning to a major in an Irish regiment, whom I subsequently met in China, the difficulty usually found in satisfying his countrymen in New South Wales, he expressed his astonishment, and remarked that the reverse was generally found to be the case with Irishmen in the army. [201]

Several ships with emigrants from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, arrived at Sydney during the years 1838 and 1839. These people were, in general, unwilling to accept of employment in any shape, but preferred taking clearing-leases of small patches of land on their own account. This plan, many of them succeeded in carrying into execution, much to the disappointment and annoyance of the community at whose expense they had been brought to the Colony; and it was reasonably complained, that these men, in place of supplying the labour-market, as was intended, actually created an increased demand for labour, by requiring aid in their own operations before the first twelvemonth had passed over them. Be this as it may, they are a hard-working, industrious set of men; and whether their plans raise or depress wages, they have added materially to the quantity of grain grown in the colony.

Now that we have a footing in China, I would draw the attention of the inhabitants of New South Wales to Hong Kong for an unlimited supply of cheap labour. There, by means of an agent on the spot, they may procure thousands of able-bodied labourers, who will go to Australia for five dollars (22*s.* 6*d.*) per month, with their food. This rate of pay is much lower than what is paid to European labourers; and the ration of rice for the China-man might be procured from Java, Bally, or Lombok, and laid down in Sydney at (or under) three halfpence per pound; which is as cheap as No. 3 flour in the most abundant seasons, and much cheaper than that article usually is. For field-work, the China-man is fully equal to the European labourer. I speak advisedly, having tried them together, side by side, for months at a time. In a recent Singapore paper I find it stated, that the Home Authorities have authorised an agent to treat for the transmission of Chinese labourers from the Straits' settlements to the West Indies; and, from my knowledge of those places, I have no doubt that thousands of men will be induced to avail themselves of this new market for their labour. Had New [203]

South Wales the same permission from Government, she might be equally, and probably more successful, because China-men always prefer emigrating to a country having frequent communication with their own. This advantage, New South Wales possesses over the West Indies, for as many as twenty or thirty vessels annually leave Sydney for China. There would be no difficulty in getting the Chinese labourer bound for five years, his pay to begin from the day he landed in Sydney, and his passage down to be paid by his employer. This last charge would add 30s. per annum to his wages; but even then, he would be the cheapest labourer within reach of the Australian farmer. Many gentlemen have turned their attention to Bengal for a supply of labour. The men procurable from that country, are not equal in physical strength to the China-men, nor are they to be had for lower pay. I had six Bengal Coolies in my employ in the Bush, and have no hesitation in saying, that three China-men would have done their work. The proper immigrant to obtain from Bengal, if the Colonists choose to apply to that part of the world, is the Pariah, the man of no caste, who will eat any thing, apply himself to any kind of work, even to the killing, curing, or eating a pig, and give far less trouble than any of the high-caste men. The best season for despatching ships with emigrants from China to New South Wales, is from November till February, both inclusive. [205]

A source of vast wealth will open to Australia on the expiration of the Agricultural Company's coal-monopoly. That body, on its establishment in the Colony, obtained the privilege of working coal for thirty years, to the exclusion of all others. The injustice of granting such a privilege to a Company who do not work more than one coal-mine, when there are literally thousands on the eastern coast of this Continent, is too obvious to require comment. Many landed proprietors who have rich veins of coal on their estates, are, under the present regulation, actually compelled to purchase the Agricultural Company's coal for the use of their own kitchens. It may well be imagined, that the money is paid with a very bad grace. Up to the time I left Sydney, the only coal-pit in operation was one at Newcastle, at the mouth of the river Hunter. From this source, an abundant supply of very fair quality was obtained, for which, if I mistake not, 12s. per ton was demanded at the pit's mouth. The Company's coal waggons descend the hill from the pit, by an inclined plane, on iron rails, the descending waggon dragging up the empty one. At the foot of this inclined plane, a wharf or jetty runs a little way into the sea, so that vessels of four or five hundred tons burthen can haul alongside, and have their cargoes shot by waggon-loads down their hatches. All this is as it should be; and when forty or fifty such pits are in full work, Australia may expect to reap some benefit from her mineral riches. The importance of a never-failing supply of coal in these days of steam travelling, is too evident to require a single word of remark. [206]

Talking of steam puts me in mind of the anxiety felt in Australia to secure the advantage of the Indian Overland Mail, and of a plan for effecting their object which I have frequently thought of. On the arrival of the mail at Port Essington, from Singapore, why should it not be sent to Sydney in a steamer by sea, *viâ* Captain King's *inner passage* through Torres' Straits, instead of adopting the far more expensive and *uncertain* overland route formerly mentioned? This may seem a bold, and, to most people, an extraordinary suggestion; the plan is, however, in my opinion, practicable at all seasons of the year, though more particularly so during the fine or south-east monsoon. I have sailed through Torres' Straits, and would not hesitate a moment to undertake to carry a powerful steamer from Port Essington to Sydney, through the admirably surveyed channel just mentioned. During the south-east monsoon, from April till September, the wind would be against her; but she would have the benefit of moderate and clear weather, and find no difficulty in seeing and evading every danger. In the north-west monsoon, the steamer would have a fair wind, but hazy weather, with frequent squalls to contend against. The thick weather would undoubtedly be a disadvantage, as it would render objects less easily distinguishable; but then, the strong north-west winds and squalls would knock up a heavy sea, which would make the water break on every reef, thereby rendering them easily both seen and *heard* in the thickest weather. On the coast of Sumatra, I have heard the breakers seven miles off. Allowing that they can be heard half that distance, this would give a steamer plenty of time and space to keep clear of them. Running in the night would, of course, be out of the question in any season. It appears to me, that there is as much real danger in beating through the Palaware passage in November and December, which dozens of vessels do every year, as there possibly could be to a steamer in passing to and fro between Port Essington and Sydney, at any season of the year, by King's inner passage. The weather in the Palaware, during the months I have mentioned, is as thick and stormy as can well be imagined; and the reefs, shoals, and other perils of navigation are numerous enough. The best route for passengers proceeding to Australia from Suez, would be *viâ* Ceylon, whence a steamer would run down south-south-east to the fortieth parallel of south latitude in thirteen days, under steam: then she would get the prevailing strong westerly winds, which would take her under canvas to Hobart Town in ten or twelve days: let her stop two days there to take in coal and land passengers, and, in three days more, she would be in Sydney. By this route, the passenger for Sydney would find himself at his journey's end in sixty-three or sixty-five days from Southampton, while the mail *viâ* Marseilles would be of four days shorter date. I have my doubts, indeed, whether New South Wales is in a position to bear the expense of such a plan: it certainly could not be a profitable venture for years to come; and whether the Colonists would be willing to be so much per annum out of pocket, in the meantime, remains to be seen. [207] [208] [209]

In describing Port Jackson, I omitted to notice the neighbouring harbour, called Botany Bay, originally discovered by Captain Cook, and subsequently abandoned for its rival. It is a noble and beautiful bay, entered through a gap in the cliff facing the Pacific. This being much wider than that leading into Port Jackson, and the heads not overlapping each other in the least, Botany Bay is exposed to the fury of the easterly gales, which renders it, during their prevalence, an unsafe harbour. From its great width, I was induced to suppose that this evil might be obviated by ships seeking shelter behind the heads; but, on inquiry, I learned, that the depth of water does not admit of this: the water is shallow all round the bay, which compels vessels to anchor a considerable distance from the shore, and leaves them exposed to the eastward. In short, as a harbour, it will not bear comparison with Port Jackson. The name of Botany Bay was given to it from the very great variety and beauty of the native flowers found on its shores. I am not botanist enough to describe these flowers, but I noticed them with surprise and admiration. I saw nothing else, however, to attract any one to the neighbourhood: the soil is wretchedly poor, principally covered with scrub, and, with the exception of a few spots in the hollows, utterly valueless to the farmer. A few half-starved cows only, belonging to Sydney families, and called the town herd, may be seen picking up the poor and scanty herbage. In this neighbourhood, the Sydney hounds meet, and occasionally amuse their proprietors, by chasing a miserable "native dog" to death. The only buildings of any interest on the shores of this bay, are, the monument built by the French Government to the memory of the unfortunate La Perouse, and a solitary mill on the banks of a little stream that runs into it from the westward. How this mill is employed in such a lonely place, where no cultivation is to be seen, I cannot imagine, but should not wonder if a few pounds' weight of tobacco and gallons of spirits found their way into the Colony hereabout, without benefiting the revenue. [210]

In April 1839, I left the shores of Australia, with my family, bound for Batavia and Singapore *viâ* Torres' Straits. We had a fine run up the coast, and made the celebrated Barrier Reef on the morning of the fourteenth day after leaving Sydney. We were fortunate in finding a magnificent entrance into the Straits, in latitude 12° 18' South, and were fairly inside the barrier by nine A. M. This entrance, which is at least three miles wide, it is worth any ship's while to seek for: it may be known by two small rocks on the south side, as you enter, resembling hay-cocks in shape and size: we saw them three miles off, and they were the only objects visible above water, on the portion of the Barrier within our view. From our entrance, we had a fine run, and found nothing to stop us for a minute (during daylight), till clear of Booby Island at the western end of the Straits, which we passed at 10 A. M. on the seventeenth day from Sydney. [211]

These celebrated Straits pick up and destroy some half a dozen ships annually, and are so much dreaded by underwriters, that they refuse to insure loaded vessels through them. From my own observation, and what I have heard from others who have passed through Torres' Straits on various occasions, it appears to me, that a great proportion of this loss of property arises from carelessness on the part of ship-masters. The current in the Pacific Ocean runs very strong to the north-west in the neighbourhood of the Barrier; and this current is often forgotten or not sufficiently allowed for by ship-masters the night before they expect to make the reef. At sun-down, the night before we made it, we were eighty miles from it; we went under easy sail all night, and, from the distance *logged* during the night, expected to make the reef at noon, having made all sail at daylight; instead of which, we came *suddenly* on it at 8 A. M., thus having been thrown four hours out of our reckoning since sun-set the night before. Many ships, by not heaving-to at all, or not doing so in time, the night previous to making the reef, drift too far to the northward during the night, miss the passage they were endeavouring to make, and are compelled to run along the reef in search of another; for there is no getting back to the southward against wind and current. This neglect throws many a vessel up to the Murray Islands' passages, which are notoriously the most dangerous, and are now generally avoided by shipping. Then there is hazy weather occasionally in those parts, even in the finest months: during its continuance, no vessel ought to approach the Barrier, though many are imprudent enough to do so, and too frequently pay the penalty. In the Barrier, there are many gaps, called "horse-shoes," which, in thick weather, look like real entrances, the breakers at the bottom of them not being visible from the ship. I have known many vessels lost by taking a horse-shoe for a real entrance in hazy weather. Other vessels get wrecked from paying too little attention to the dangers that beset them, after getting safe through the Barrier. There are small patches of reef here and there, in the middle of the many channels that run between the main reefs: these pick up many vessels that might be saved, were a careful look-out kept on board. I could give instances of losses happening in each of these ways; but the careless have suffered so severely from their neglect, that I would not hurt them by naming the ships. [212]

We had a fine run to Batavia, where we arrived in thirty-one days from Sydney. A sail from Australia to any part of the Malayan Archipelago, during the south-east monsoon, is, perhaps, the pleasantest voyage a traveller could undertake: he has smooth water and a fair wind all the way, with a constant succession of magnificent scenery among the numerous islands of perpetual summer with which those seas are studded. [213]

I have heard many seamen talk lightly of the dangers of Torres' Straits and the Barrier Reef, and have known more than one of those over-confident gentry subsequently wrecked there. For my own part, I have a great awe of those dangers, and can vouch for some ship's crews having the same feeling. On our approach to the Barrier, our crew, which consisted of as rattle-pated a set as sailors usually are, were doubly active, obeyed every order with alacrity, and so quietly, that the fall of a pin might have been heard at any part of the ship. Some ships avoid entering the Barrier towards sun-set: this precaution is unnecessary, if they are sure that the entrance they are approaching is a true one. Although, outside the Barrier, there are no soundings at a hundred fathoms, a ship is not twice her own length *inside* it, before she is in good anchorage with eighteen to twenty-five fathoms water. There, she may drop her anchor, and ride in perfect safety till daylight enables her to pursue her course. Were she to keep outside all night, the current would drift her to the northward, and compel her to seek a fresh entrance next day. The Barrier Reef extends from the coast of New Holland to that of Papua or New Guinea, with numerous gaps or entrances in it, which appear to be kept open by the current that, for six months in the year, runs through them from the Pacific to the Indian Seas, and in the contrary direction during the other six. Notwithstanding this current, however, I think it extremely probable, that the industrious coral insect, whose labours never cease within the Tropics, will, sooner or later, fill up the entire space, close Torres' Straits, and join those two mighty islands, between which the Barrier Reef, or, more properly, Reefs, now stand like a line of gigantic stepping-stones. The gaps in the Reef, in and about the ninth and tenth parallels of south latitude, are much narrower than those further south, some of them being not twenty yards wide; which looks as if, agreeably to my theory, the minute architect had commenced operations on the coast of Papua, and was gradually working his way southward. What a magnificent line for a rail-road this Reef will then make, with the boundless Pacific on one side, and the reefs and islands of the Straits on the other! What a splendid thoroughfare would this highway form to New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, and the countless islands in their immediate vicinity! But I shall be thought to be looking *rather too far* into futurity. [214]

On our passage from Booby Island to the Java Sea, we passed through the Straits of Alas, which run between the Islands of Lombok and Sambawa. The scenery in these straits is very fine. On the left, you have Lombok Hill, 7000 feet high, sloping gradually from the peak to the sea, and covered with thick forest. On the right, is the coast of Sambawa, exhibiting the most extraordinary collection of sugar-loaf hills I ever saw: they look as if they had been dropped there at random in a shower. The whole collection would hardly be seen on the top of Lombok hill. Half this island was laid completely waste in 1816, by an eruption of one of its volcanic mountains: thousands of the inhabitants, with their cattle and poneys, were killed; and the effects are visible on the spot to this day. Sambawa is celebrated for its race of poneys, which are certainly very fine, spirited little animals. Hundreds of them are brought by the native boats every year to Batavia and Singapore, at both which places they meet with a ready market. [215]

CHINA.

DESCRIPTION OF MACAO—ITS MONGREL POPULATION— FREQUENCY OF ROBBERIES—
PIRACIES—COMPRADORE SYSTEM—PAPUAN SLAVE-TRADE—MARKET OF MACAO—
NUISANCES—SIR HENRY POTTINGER'S REGULATION DEFENDED—ILLIBERAL POLICY
OF THE PORTUGUESE, AND ITS RESULT—BOAT-GIRLS—BEGGARS—PICTURESQUE
SCENERY.

I have referred, in a former chapter, to the occasion of my first visit to the Celestial Empire. My last visit took place shortly after Sir Henry Pottinger had brought the Chinese to terms, off the city of Nankin, and before the treaty had been ratified by the Sovereigns of both countries. My stay there was protracted till the ratification took place, the supplementary treaty published, and Her Majesty's Consuls stationed at each of the five ports, with the exception of Foo Chow. I had thus an opportunity of witnessing the first start of the free trade; of which I shall have a few words to say hereafter. I shall now begin with Macao. This once celebrated Portuguese settlement is built on two small hills of a peninsula about thirty-five miles below the Bocca Tigris, or mouth of the Canton river: it is irregularly built, the streets being very narrow and crooked, and, until very recently, badly paved with rough granite stones of all shapes, the corners generally pointing upwards, as if to teach the inhabitants to walk with caution. It possesses a healthy climate, though the summer is very hot, the thermometer ranging in the shade from 85° to 90°. Many of the houses occupied by the wealthier portion of the inhabitants, are large, airy, and convenient residences. Since the war with China broke out, Macao, which had greatly declined from its ancient importance, has thriven, and many of its citizens have become wealthy in consequence of the British trade to China being thrown by circumstances into its harbour. The local Government have taken advantage of the times, to improve the town, to re-pave the streets, to build a new and handsome Custom-house, and to make other improvements at John Bull's expense. The Portuguese inhabitants of Macao amount to about five thousand, not two hundred of whom are of pure European blood. The general population are, with few exceptions, of a mongrel breed; a mixture of Chinese, Portuguese, and Negroes, which it is difficult to describe. Nine-tenths of them are very poor, but all of them are very proud, and fond of show and dress. [217]

It is quite amusing to see the pompous strut of the men on a Sunday, as they walk to mass in their ill-made silk coats, with gold-headed sticks in hand. Both men and women are the worst-favoured race I ever saw: their flat, unmeaning countenances, small, lacklustre eyes, strong, upright, black hair, resembling hogs' bristles more than aught else, and yellow skins, form a *tout ensemble* any thing but pleasing. The men adopt the European fashions. The ladies wear the mantilla; and the women of the poorer classes wear a petticoat and small jacket, generally of British chintz, with a mantilla of coarser material. The very poorest of them may be seen, on Sunday morning, going to mass in silk stockings. The wealthier Portuguese reside in large and comfortable houses, but the lower orders inhabit wretched hovels, and suffer very severely from sickness, particularly the small-pox; a scourge that carried off, during the winter and spring of 1842-3, one thousand people,—just a fifth of the whole Portuguese population. Their habits are idle and dirty. I am not aware, indeed, of ever having seen a more filthy town than Macao. No one seems to think that the streets were made for any other purpose than to serve as reservoirs for all the filth of the houses that line them. Heaps of abominable rubbish are seen here and there, which would be still more numerous, were it not for the occasional heavy rains, which wash down the steep streets, and carry off the accumulated masses to the sea. A few days before Christmas 1842, the town underwent a general sweeping; an event that did not take place again till that time twelvemonth. The other inhabitants of Macao are, Chinese, Negroes, and a few English and Americans. The Chinese here are nearly all of the lower orders, and, for the most part, are not over-scrupulous how they get their living: in proof of which I may mention, that four highway robberies, accompanied with violent assault, took place in the immediate neighbourhood, in open day, during the stay of six weeks which I made there in the autumn of 1842. The shopkeepers and boatmen are all Chinese; and among them may be found some as thorough-bred scoundrels as ever disgraced humanity. During the year 1843, the following crimes were perpetrated by Chinese in and about Macao: they were clearly brought home to them, and, in all probability, do not form a tenth of what might with justice be laid to their charge:— [218]

1. Mr. Sharpe's *lorcha* (trading-boat), on her voyage from Macao to Canton, was piratically attacked within ten miles of the former place, and plundered of her cargo of opium; Mr. Sharpe was murdered, and five of his crew; the rest, being Chinese, were taken off by the pirates, (they subsequently proved to be their associates,) and the *lorcha* was burned. [219]

2. A *lorcha* bound from Hong Kong to Macao, manned by Macao Chinese, and loaded with spice and other valuable property, was carried off by her crew, (who murdered an English doctor on board,) the cargo plundered, and the vessel burned. [220]

3. Another *lorcha*, bound from Macao to Hong Kong, with a general cargo and two passengers, was carried off in the same way, plundered, and then burned: the unfortunate passengers (two respectable young men; one an Irishman, named Clark, the other from Shetland, a Mr. Clunis) were in like manner murdered.

4. A boat was sent off from Macao with a box of treasure containing some 12,000 dollars, under the charge of a Parsee clerk of the firm to whom the money belonged. They left the shore at two P. M., and the ship they were bound to was at anchor only five miles off. The non-appearance of the treasure which was expected on board, caused the captain to go on shore to make inquiries about five in the afternoon: his questions alarmed the Parsee merchant, who had sent off the money and his clerk at two. Strict inquiry was instituted, and the result was, the certainty that the poor man had been murdered and thrown overboard by the boat's crew, who made off with the money.

5. A boat was sent from a ship in the harbour called the *Typa*, to one in the outer roads, to trans-ship fourteen chests of opium: the crew consisted of four Chinese and one Lascar, with the second mate in charge. The opium was taken in, and the boat started on her return to the *Typa* about two P. M. When about half way between the two harbours, the four Chinese suddenly dropped their oars, seized the mate and Lascar, stunned them with the boat's tiller, and threw them overboard: their bodies were picked up next day, and gave the first intimation of their fate. Two of the pirates were subsequently caught and executed; but the property, worth 10,000 dollars, was irretrievably lost. [221]

6. A British merchant in Macao sent an order off to his ship in the *Typa*, to bring on shore, in the course of the day, a box containing 6000 dollars: the money was put into a boat belonging to the vessel at ten in the forenoon, and started for the inner harbour, about an hour's pull. She was attacked by a fast-pulling Chinese boat, when about half way between the ship and the shore, and robbed of the dollars; but no violence was offered to the crew, who were China-men. When this money was being packed and put into the boat, some Chinese sailors on board the ship were observed making signs as if to some one at a distance: no notice was taken of this circumstance at the time, though it was remarked upon when too late.

I could enumerate other cases of a similar nature; but these six are sufficient for my present purpose.

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The Chinese servants in the employ of Europeans at Macao, Canton, and Hong Kong, are, without exception, the most consummate set of scamps it has ever been my fortune to encounter. Their whole study from morning to night and from night to morning, is, how to cheat their masters. There is not an article put upon the table, that is not charged at four times its value. If you keep a cow, or even a dozen cows, not one drop of milk can you obtain, more than barely enough for daily use; and should any attempts be made to punish either the cowkeeper or the head servant for their villany, ten to one that your cows are poisoned before another week passes over your head. This state of things might be, in a great measure, put a stop to, were masters to pay more attention to their domestic affairs; but most of the European merchants of China, being men of wealth, and engaged in mercantile transactions of great importance, deem such matters beneath their notice; and thus, the system goes on to the serious loss and inconvenience of less wealthy men. I knew one instance in which a housekeeper by perseverance reduced his market-bill from 150 dollars per month to 45 dollars; but the consequence was, that his servants to a man left him: he could obtain no good ones in their place, and was ultimately obliged to give in. As a set-off against this crying evil, I may mention the practice which prevails, of the *compradore* (or head servant) becoming security for those under him, and finding security on his own part to a certain amount, varying according to circumstances; so that, if any of the under-servants steal the plate or any other property of their master's, the *compradore*, as a matter of course, makes good its value. The Negroes here, as in most other parts of the world where they are met with, are slaves, poorly fed, hard worked, and occasionally very severely flogged. Every house in Macao occupied by a man of any substance, has its slaves; and the Government is a large slave-holder. All the porters at the Custom-house and other public offices are slaves. These unfortunate creatures are brought from Papua by Portuguese vessels, which pay an annual visit to the settlements of their countrymen on the Island of Timor. How they are obtained from Papua, I am not aware; but that some hundreds of them are carried to Macao every season, and sold there, is a fact beyond contradiction. This abominable traffic received a check last season (1843) from the Java Government. It appears that a Portuguese barque called the *Margaretta*, the owner of which was a wealthy inhabitant of Macao, sailed from Timor for Macao in the month of September, with some fifty slaves on board, *all children under ten years of age*. Some accident compelled her to call at Batavia for repairs, where her master reported the children as having been sent by the authorities at Timor to Macao, to be brought up in the Roman-Catholic faith. The suspicions of the Dutch Authorities were, however, awakened, and the proceedings of the Portuguese ship-master were narrowly watched. A few days only had elapsed, when he was detected in endeavouring to sell two of the unfortunate infants to a Chinese for 500 guilders (42*l.*) each. This led to the examination of his bills of lading and other papers, when it was found, that the children had been regularly shipped and *manifested* as slaves. The result was, the confiscation of ship and cargo, and the liberation of the young captives, who, I presume, (though I am not sure on the point,) were, as usual, apprenticed out as domestic servants to families in want of them. I gave the admiral on the China station full particulars of this event; and hope that he will cause a sharp look-out to be kept on the Portuguese vessels returning from Timor next autumn.

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The market of Macao is well supplied with game, butchers' meat, pork, poultry, fruit, and vegetables: all these might be had on very reasonable terms, if the Chinese seller were allowed his own way; but, before he reaches the market from his home, he is taxed and re-taxed by every petty rogue of a Mandarin whose station he may happen to pass on his way. On reaching the market, he is taxed again, and is compelled to sell to the general dealer, who squeezes him to the last *cash*, and re-sells at an exorbitant profit to the Englishman's *compradore*, who charges his master, on a moderate calculation, four times what he gave; so that, by the time the Englishman's dinner is on his table, it costs him no trifle. Game is plentiful only in winter, which sets in in November. Wild ducks, teal, pheasants, partridges, snipe, with an occasional deer, are to be had, all fat and in prime order, at this season. The Chinese bullock is a compact little animal, and, when fattened, yields remarkably good beef.

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Macao, like all Portuguese towns, is well stocked with priests; and were we to judge from the number of them who are seen parading the streets, as, also, from that of women constantly bending their steps churchward, the inhabitants must be a very devout race. From seven in the morning till dusk, the streets are rarely free from church-going ladies; many of them followed by Negro slaves carrying their kneeling-rugs and prayer-books. One of the greatest nuisances in Macao is the perpetual ringing or tolling of church-bells, day and night: as soon as one stops, another begins; and the sleep-killing ding-dong is kept up at a rate that, in the warm nights of summer, is enough to drive a stranger frantic.

Every house has a watchman, who goes his rounds from eight in the evening till daylight next morning, and, every half hour, beats a hollow bamboo with a heavy stick, making noise enough to disturb the soundest sleeper. This keeping a watchman is neither more nor less than paying black-mail. Any housekeeper who should seek to evade the imposition by doing without a guardian of the night, would infallibly be plundered in a week or two, the thieves being, most probably, conducted to his premises by some neighbour's watchman.

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The streets of Macao being narrow, rough, crooked, and, in general, very steep, wheel-carriages of any description are entirely unknown. Their place is supplied by sedan-chairs of Chinese make, carried by Chinese porters: these may be hired for a dollar per day, and are very convenient, either in wet or in extremely hot weather. The bearers, like those of their profession in England, are apt to impose upon strangers, who must be on their guard till they become acquainted with the ways of the place.

Macao is infested with loathsome beggars, who scruple not to expose their ulcerated legs, arms, &c. for the purpose of exciting the charitable feelings of the passer-by. They make a point of stopping at the door of any shop in which they see a European, whose ears they immediately assail with the most discordant noise, by beating a hollow bamboo with a stick; a mode of annoyance which the law of China allows, and which is carried on in Macao; but, in the neighbouring British settlement, an entire stop has been put to it. This, they well know, will soon cause the shopkeeper to give them a *cash*^[221] or two, or his customer to leave the premises. In China, no native can turn a beggar from his door, till he has given him something in the shape of

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charity: the merest trifle, however, is sufficient to authorize the forcible expulsion of the applicant. I have seen as little as a tea-spoonful of rice given on such occasions, when the sulky and grumbling mendicant took his reluctant departure towards the next door, where he would, perhaps, meet similar treatment with a repetition of "curses not loud, but deep."

The Portuguese of Macao made a great ado on Sir Henry Pottinger's declaring their settlement, in as far as British subjects were concerned, part of the dominions of the Emperor of China: this, at first sight, appeared strange to many people besides the Macao citizens, but, when the subject received due consideration, Sir Henry was found to be quite correct in the view he had taken of it. Macao is *not* a Portuguese settlement, in the proper sense of that word, but only a territory leased to that Power on certain terms, for which an annual tribute or rent is paid to this day. The Chinese laws are in force here; their Mandarins levy duties, and tax every article sold in its markets; its porters, boatmen, *compradores*, &c. require Chinese licenses, but not Portuguese: in short, the Chinese are lords of the manor, and the Portuguese are mere tenants, with leave to build forts, and to levy certain duties on the commerce of the place. Looking at the matter in this light, every unprejudiced person must admit, that Sir Henry Pottinger, in exercising the power vested in him by Her Majesty's Government, and in framing regulations for the wholesome restraint of Her Majesty's subjects visiting China, (some of whom, it may be remarked, are troublesome and very unruly characters,) was perfectly right in including the peninsula of Macao in the dominions of His Celestial Majesty. The Portuguese were very indignant; at least, they pretended to be so; but it never would have done, to allow British subjects, fleeing from their creditors or from justice, to have an asylum where they could safely evade the laws of their own country, at a foreign station scarcely forty miles from the new British settlement of Hong Kong.^[22]

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The trade of Macao was of very little importance, and its revenues never paid its expenses, till the late Chinese war broke out. Circumstances then drove the British merchants from Canton, and nearly the whole of them took up their abode in Macao, where they continued till the Portuguese Government was called upon by the Chinese to refuse them further protection. They were then compelled to seek shelter on board the shipping of their country, where many of them remained for nearly twelvemonths, till the course of events allowed of their returning to Macao. Their presence soon attracted hundreds of wealthy and respectable Chinese dealers, and quadrupled the trade of the place, as well as its revenue; which enabled the Portuguese Governor to make a handsome remittance to Lisbon, in place of drawing upon that city for some 40,000 dollars annually, as he had hitherto been in the constant practice of doing, to rebuild many of the public edifices, and to improve the town generally, while it added much to the wealth and comfort of almost every woman and child in the place. This was a piece of good fortune the Portuguese of Macao most certainly did not deserve, their system, as regards foreign commerce, being as illiberal as can well be imagined. During the time they were reaping this rich harvest from British trade, British subjects were not permitted to land or ship a single package of goods nor to have their names entered in the Custom-house books. On the arrival of a ship with goods suited to the Macao market, the English consignee was obliged to employ a Portuguese citizen to enter and pass them through the Custom-house, before a package could be landed. The duties, also, were exorbitant; and, strange as it may appear, they even taxed money, which could not be imported without paying one per cent. duty. I have elsewhere seen an *export* duty put on treasure; but the Macao Government is the only one I ever knew to impose any restrictions on the importation of a commodity which most Governments, as well as individuals, are generally anxious to receive, in unlimited quantity, without taxing those who bring it to them. No English vessel was allowed to enter their inner harbour: this privilege was reserved for Spaniards and Portuguese. On one occasion, a small British schooner of war was proceeding into this haven, her commander never imagining that the restriction put on the merchant vessels of his country could possibly extend to Her Britannic Majesty's pennant: he was mistaken, however, and the first battery he came near, threatened to fire into him. The threat was of course disregarded, and the little schooner, in defiance of Portuguese batteries, quietly pursued her way.

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How this state of things could be so long put up with by the British Government, it is hard to understand. When one considers that Portugal owes its very existence as a nation to England; that Macao, on more than one occasion, was saved from the fury of a Chinese army and rabble, during the late war, by British ships and men; that nine-tenths of the money that passes through its coffers, is English money; that Portuguese citizens visiting the different ports of British India, are free to come and go, land and ship their goods in their own names, hold houses and other fixed property, and act in all respects as British subjects, and as seemeth most for their own interest; when, I say, these facts are considered, one is utterly at a loss to conceive why Great Britain should suffer her subjects to be cramped in their mercantile pursuits by so very insignificant a power as Portugal. Now that it is too late, the Authorities of Macao have discovered their error, and mended their manners, by opening the inner harbour to British shipping, by allowing British merchants to land and ship goods in their own names, and by lowering the duties on several articles of British manufacture. These changes, which would have been accepted as boons two years before, were adopted only when the Portuguese found nearly every British merchant building warehouses and private dwellings in Hong Kong. Had they been made prior to the commencement of those buildings, I have good reasons for supposing, that many of them never would have been begun, their proprietors having a great dislike to the new British settlement on account of its reputed unhealthiness,—a reputation, I am sorry to say, it has too well sustained. Dozens of houses in Macao are already vacant; dozens more will be so before another six months shall elapse; hundreds of families who have depended on their house-rent and on money earned in other ways from British subjects for their daily bread, will be reduced to want; many of them will and must emigrate to Hong Kong; and Macao, with its streets of new houses, built in anticipation of the continued residence of foreign merchants, will sink into utter insignificance, and become as a place that has been, but is no more. Its Governor will again have to draw, for the means of paying the expenses of the place, on his Royal Mistress at Lisbon, who will then reap the well-merited reward of an illiberal and short-sighted policy.

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If a passenger, on his arrival at Macao, lands in the inner harbour, he has to pass his baggage through the Portuguese Custom-house, where it will be not only thoroughly examined, but also, very probably, plundered. A trunk of my own, which *I saw* carried into this building along with several others, never came out again: its contents were valuable, and were much missed by my family. What became of them, I know not; but certain I am, that the Custom-house authorities of Macao made away with them. If the passenger chooses to land at the outer harbour, he encounters the *Chinese* Custom-house, where he is charged so much for each package, in the shape of duty, and is allowed to pass on without bare-faced robbery. Some sixteen years ago, this Chinese Custom-house was in the practice of levying a dollar per package on a passenger's luggage, a similar sum on his wife, and on every female child, while the boys passed free. This does not tell to the credit of Chinese gallantry. Things are altered now, however; and ladies with their daughters are permitted to land without let or hinderance.

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When a foreign vessel anchors in Macao Roads, (a very exposed anchorage by the way,) she is speedily visited by three or four *compradores*' boats, which come out in search of employment, and with offers to supply the ship with fresh provisions, &c., during her stay. The *compradore* is a very useful fellow, but, in nine cases out of ten, a great rogue, who scruples not to swell out his bill against the ship by various means the reverse of fair. They all speak broken English. In moderate weather, they go twenty or thirty miles out to sea in quest of inward-bound vessels. The first time I went to China, we were boarded by a *compradore's* boat previously to making the land. A fresh breeze was blowing at the time, before which the ship was going eight knots an hour: this, however, did not prevent the Chinese boatmen from dashing alongside in very smart style, hooking on by the fore-chains with their own rope, and disdaining the aid of a line thrown from the vessel to hang on by. Mr. *Compradore* appeared on the poop, "*chin-chinning*," while we strangers were looking with admiration at the activity of his men in the boat. The captain engaged him to attend the ship, on which he immediately started for Macao, and was alongside again by daylight next morning, with a most welcome supply of fresh beef, vegetables, &c. In the *compradore's* boat, passengers can generally get a passage on shore, or, rather, to within a few hundred yards of the beach. The boatmen are afraid to approach nearer, on account of the Mandarins, who are apt to *squeeze* them, if they are seen landing foreigners. The remaining distance is usually got over in small *tancea*, or ferry-boats, numbers of which ply about Macao in all directions, invariably guided by women, called, from their mode of life, "*Tancea-girls*." Poor things! They work hard for their daily bread, being constantly exposed to the sun in summer, and to cold in winter. They live in their boats, which, at night, are snugly covered up with a roof made of a bamboo frame, the interstices filled up with thick matting, and, in the whole course of their lives, never pass a night on shore. They are said to be of a peculiar race, and never intermarry with the real Chinese, who look down upon them with contempt.

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The scenery round Macao is striking, and some of the views are particularly so: that from the hill immediately behind the town, is perhaps the best. From this spot you have a bird's-eye view of the whole town, the beach, with its hundreds of large and small Chinese boats, on your left; further on, in the same direction, Macao Roads with the foreign shipping; while, beyond these, the islands of Lingting, Lantow, and numerous others of smaller size, are seen in the distance; to the right, you catch an occasional glimpse of the numerous rivers and arms of the sea, with numbers of picturesque Chinese boats gliding about, literally among the hills and dales; and, here and there, a Chinese village is seen, with its little patch of cultivation, its herds of buffaloes and pigs, and countless groupes of little Celestials. Casting your eye along this view from north to south, you come to the harbour called "*Typa*" in which there are generally some thirty or forty vessels at anchor, and which, though an arm of the sea, looks here like an inland lake. This view, on a clear day, would delight the painter, though it has one great deficiency, namely, the entire absence of trees. The hills in the neighbourhood, far and near, are completely bare. Such is Macao, a miserable, dirty, crowded town, rendered important for a while by its locality, but now fast sinking back into its native insignificance, owing to the gross stupidity of the Portuguese Authorities, more than to any other cause. Proceed we now to the new British settlement of Hong Kong.

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FOOTNOTES:

- [21] One thousand of these make a dollar, so that the value of one is less than a quarter of a farthing.
- [22] The present Governor of Hong Kong, Sir John Davis, has gone even further than Sir Henry Pottinger, and has given notice to the Authorities at Macao, that British subjects are no longer amenable to their laws. This is as it should be, and as it ought to have been a hundred years ago.

CHAPTER XVI.

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CHINA.

ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION OF HONG KONG—THE OPIUM TRADE—IMPORTANCE OF THE STATION IN THE EVENT OF A FRESH WAR—CHUSAN—HOW TO RAISE A REVENUE—CAUSES OF ALLEGED INSALUBRITY—RAPID PROGRESS OF THE SETTLEMENT—PORTUGUESE PENURY—MARKETS—SANATORY HINTS.

Having spent twelve months in Hong Kong, I will now endeavour to give an impartial sketch of its situation as to trade, its importance in the event of another Chinese war, and of its climate, general appearance, and commercial progress.

Situated as this island is at the mouth of the Canton river, and in the immediate neighbourhood of an immense trade, one can hardly question the prudence of the choice that fixed upon it for a British settlement. It has not yet (July 1844) been two years in our possession; and already its magnificent harbour is crowded with the ships of England, America, and other nations, while its warehouses on shore are filled with the manufactures of those countries, brought here direct from the places where they are produced, to be distributed to the different Chinese ports recently opened to the commerce of the world by the arms of Great Britain. Hundreds, nay, thousands of Chinese boatmen, fishermen, porters, bricklayers, carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, tailors, bakers, shopkeepers, &c., are already earning their bread here. Since the ratification of Sir Henry Pottinger's Treaty, and the confirmation of the cession of the Island as part and parcel of the dominions of Queen Victoria, many wealthy Chinese merchants have been making arrangements for the establishment of branch-houses here; and more than one of them had, previously to my departure last March, chartered British ships, and despatched them to the northern ports, loaded with British goods. As a *dépôt* for goods intended for the Chinese market, I conceive the situation of Hong Kong to be unrivalled, and, in this single point of view, of great importance. On the arrival of a ship from London, Liverpool, or Glasgow, with a general cargo of British goods, the consignees unload them, and send the ship

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home again with tea or such other produce as they may have ready for her, storing and holding the goods in readiness for any opening that may present itself: such portion of them as may be suited for markets in the immediate vicinity, are either sold on the spot, or sent to Canton, while the rest is shipped off in fast-sailing vessels, kept for the purpose of making sure of their voyage against the monsoon, to Amoy, Chusan, and other ports to the northward.

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Great complaints used to be made at Canton and Macao, because goods could not be landed, unless they were sold, or the consignees chose to advance the duty, and let the articles lie till an opportunity of disposing of them occurred: in other words, the want of a bonding system was universally felt and complained of. The establishment of Hong Kong completely obviates this inconvenience, and enables the ship from Great Britain or elsewhere to dispose of her cargo in a few days after her arrival, and proceed home again, thus saving time, expense, and trouble to an incalculable extent.

A decisive proof of the eligibility of Hong Kong as a place of trade, and of its importance in the eyes of the Chinese themselves, is afforded by the immense sums paid by some of them for ground on which to build *Hongs*, where they can deposit their goods with safety, beyond the reach of their grasping Mandarins. This advantage to a China-man is something so new, and so far beyond any thing he ever dreamed of enjoying, that I conceive the benefits likely to accrue from it to Hong Kong to be incalculable.

Goods stored in Canton or Macao, the property of a China-man, were never safe in the event of their owner getting into trouble with the Chinese Authorities; and, if the property of foreigners, they could not be insured against fire, the risk arising from the universal carelessness of the Chinese, and the consequent very frequent occurrence of extensive conflagrations, being considered too great by the under-writers. Both these difficulties are completely obviated in Hong Kong; and every substantially built house and warehouse, together with the property in them, were insured against fire, previously to my quitting the Island. One China-man had, in March last, completed buildings for the storage of property collected from the different ports on the coast, on which upwards of 40,000 dollars had been laid out; and what is more, they were already well filled.

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As a convenient and safe *dépôt* for opium, (a trade, in my opinion, quite as legitimate and honourable as that in brandy, gin, and other spirits,) Hong Kong is admirably situated: the purchaser from the western ports, as well as from the northeastern, finds the distance he has to travel moderate, and, on his arrival, has no one to dread, no Mandarin daring to shew his face on shore. The ships that bring the drug from India, here find a safe and commodious harbour, where they can unload their cargoes in open day, without hindrance or molestation, and where they are not driven to the necessity of carrying on their operations in the dark. Were the opium-trade actually one of mere smuggling, I would be as ready as any one to condemn it, and to raise my voice against those concerned in it; but when one considers that not a hundredth part of the quantity sold annually is really smuggled,—that ninety-nine chests out of every hundred pay a heavy duty, (mis-called a bribe,)—that the Chinese Government derives from it indirectly, but not the less certainly, a very considerable revenue,—and finally, that large quantities of it are known to be consumed within the walls of the imperial palace at Pekin,—I confess I see no reason for the clamorous indignation with which this traffic has of late been assailed by European moralists. I have said, that the Chinese Government derives a considerable revenue from the opium trade; and I will prove it. A Mandarin who pays for his situation, and is left to make the most of it by squeezing the inhabitants of his district, will give a great deal more for an appointment where an extensive opium-trade is carried on, than he would for any other. Knowing the handsome sums paid by the dealers in the drug, to "make Mandarin shut eye," he hesitates not for a moment about paying his Imperial Master in proportion for the situation which puts him in the way of reaping so rich a harvest. What is more; his said Imperial Master knows perfectly well what makes the situations in certain districts so much coveted, and enables the parties to pay so high for them. Away, then, with all the mawkish cant about corrupting the morals and ruining the health of the Chinese by selling them poison! The Chinese are just as capable of taking care of themselves as their would-be guardians are; and as for their morals, many of them lead lives that might be copied with advantage to themselves and families, by thousands of gin-drinking Englishmen. China is decidedly an over-populated country. Opium-smoking checks the increase, and thereby does good; a view of the question not altogether unworthy of attention. Checking the increase of population in this way is, at all events, better than adopting the plan of drowning female infants; not an uncommon one in China.

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The importance of Hong Kong in the event of another Chinese war, (an event, in the opinion of many, not very improbable,) cannot, I conceive, for a moment be doubted. Should our merchants again be expelled from the ports of China, they will here find a safe asylum for their persons and property, while their ships may ride in the harbour under the protection of two or three of Her Majesty's ships in perfect security, in defiance of all the marine of China. Here also Her Majesty's Government may have *dépôts* of military stores, provisions, coals, &c., all stored in perfect safety, in place of being kept, as they were during the late war, in transports hired at an enormous expense for the purpose. Now that passages along the coast of China are made, even by sailing vessels, at all seasons of the year, in defiance of monsoons, a steamer sent from the seat of war (wherever it might be) to Hong Kong, would be sufficient, at any time, to procure ample supplies of money, ammunition, and other stores for the army, from India, if need be, in a few weeks. Every one at all acquainted with the inconvenience and expense suffered by the late Expedition for want of proper and regular supplies, will appreciate the value of the Island in this point of view. What was it that carried off so many of the Cameronians and Royal Irish stationed in Chusan during the first expedition to the North? Not the climate of that beautiful island, certainly; for the troops that have since occupied it, have been remarkably healthy; and I saw four hundred of them land at Hong Kong, *en route* to England, much against their will, looking as rosy and stout as if they had just come from home! What occasioned the mortality among the troops, was, the want of a *dépôt* from which they could obtain supplies to replace the putrid, ill-cured Calcutta beef and other unwholesome stores that were served out to convalescents, who died by hundreds for want of nourishing food to restore their exhausted frames.

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The diseases from which those unfortunate soldiers suffered, were originally contracted from improper food and bad accommodation; and all this took place on a Chinese island overrun with cattle, pigs, and poultry, and with the town of Ting Hae, deserted by nine-tenths of its inhabitants, under their feet. The Commander-in-Chief's over-scrupulous conscience would neither allow the cattle to be purchased, nor the empty houses in the town to be occupied by the sick and dying. No better stores were to be had nearer than Calcutta,—a six months' trip to and fro! So bad were the beef and pork, that I afterwards saw hundreds of casks of both sold by public auction at Singapore, for three quarters of a dollar (3s. 4½d.) per cask. The meat was used for manure, and the barrels were used for firewood. The possession of Hong Kong will prevent the possible recurrence of any thing of this kind.

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I am not prepared to say that Chusan would not have been a better situation for a military *dépôt* than Hong Kong. Her Majesty's Government, however, thought proper to prohibit the permanent occupation of the former, while that of the latter was sanctioned, so that we have now no choice. For mercantile purposes, the absolute and permanent possession of both these islands would have been highly advantageous. Chusan, I have never had the good fortune to visit, but have invariably heard it spoken of as a delightful place, in a high state of cultivation, possessing an extensive commerce, with fine harbours, and, lastly, with a numerous population already made acquainted with the difference between living under a free and enlightened Government and under that of a despot. These people (if one can credit even half of what one hears from them) are, one and all, anxious that Great Britain should retain their island, and seem to dread the day, now fast approaching, when, according to the Treaty, it must be evacuated by the British, consigning them again to the tender mercies of the Celestial Mandarins. Several English merchants have erected warehouses on Chusan, in the hope that it will ultimately be retained by Great Britain, or that the Chinese Authorities will not object to their remaining on the Island subsequently to its restoration to their Imperial Master. I hope that their expectations may not prove fallacious.

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Hong Kong is a free port, and, in my opinion, ought never to be otherwise than free. Let its harbour be a refuge for the shipping of all nations, and its stores will then be filled with their goods. I would not encumber the commerce of this Island with one single dollar of charges: no port-charges ought for a moment to be thought of; and, as for import and export duties, the most moderate charges of this kind would ruin the place. What brought Singapore forward so rapidly, was, the entire freedom of its trade. If Hong Kong is but treated in the same way, its progress will be, if possible, still more rapid than that of its sister settlement.

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A revenue more than sufficient to remunerate Government for the annual expenses of Hong Kong, may be raised on the spot, without hampering its commerce, by taxing the retail opium-trade, the retail spirit-trade, carriages and horses, licensed gambling-houses, rents from public markets, ground-rent on building and other lots, and an assessment on rents, say of five per cent. The revenue derived from such sources in Singapore, is cheerfully paid, and it more than pays the expenses of the place. That all the houses in which opium is smoked, spirits are drunk, and gambling is carried on, should be under a strict surveillance, is absolutely necessary. To check either the one or the other, is impossible; and, as they are legitimate objects for taxation, I see no reason why Government should not derive benefit from them. The opium-smoker and the rum-drinker pay as much for the indulgence of their appetites, under existing circumstances, as they would do, were the privilege of supplying them farmed out to individuals, who would be responsible to the Authorities for the good conduct of their establishments.

I should advocate the suppression of gambling-houses *in toto*, did I not know the utter impossibility of effecting this among either a Chinese or a Malay population. As their existence, then, must be tolerated, and as they are, to my certain knowledge, the scene of robbery and murder, much more frequently than persons unacquainted with the criminal calendars in our Asiatic courts of justice suppose, I say, let them be registered, taxed, and made subject to the visits of the police at any hour of the night or day. By the means I have pointed out, a revenue amply sufficient for the purposes of the Hong Kong Government might be raised; and I should have no hesitation in undertaking to defray every fraction of its expenditure, had I the privilege of farming the opium-tax and the spirit-tax.

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Of the climate of Hong Kong, I have little that is favourable to report. Hitherto, it has been decidedly inimical to the European constitution; and hundreds of our countrymen are already buried there. Last summer (1843), from the first of August till the end of October, a very malignant fever raged among all ranks, and carried off soldiers, sailors, Government servants, mercantile men, and tradesmen. There were some peculiarities attendant upon this fever, however, which I shall mention, in the hope that my observations may lead future residents to be a little more careful of their health, than most of the present inhabitants have shewn themselves to be. In the first place, then, the fever, with few exceptions, was limited to particular localities. Secondly, not one European female died of it, and only two suffered from it severely. Thirdly, those who occupied spacious *upper-roomed*, well-aired houses, almost to a man escaped. Fourthly, those who exposed themselves to the sun, suffered most. And, lastly, the new comer from Europe was more subject to take this terrible fever, which the medical men characterize as a mixture of the yellow fever of the West and the bilious fever of the East Indies.

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A stranger landing in Hong Kong, particularly if coming from many parts of India, and acquainted generally with tropical countries and climates, would naturally, on hearing of its insalubrious climate, express surprise, since he could see no exciting cause. I have stated, that the fever attached itself to particular localities. These were, the eastern and western extremes of the town of Victoria. At the eastern end, to the eye the most delightful spot in or near the town, there are several patches of paddy-fields, situated in deep valleys between the hills, of limited extent, but which, under this climate, seem to generate malaria in quantities quite disproportionate to their size. In the morning, these valleys may be seen, from the middle of the town, completely filled with a dense fog, which rolls down from the neighbouring heights immediately after sun-set, settles upon them all night, and does not clear off till nine or ten o'clock in the morning. I know of no other reason why this neighbourhood should be unhealthy: that it proved so last summer, the number of its victims sufficiently testify. Of six gentlemen who took up their quarters here, five died; and the other had a very severe attack of fever, from which he ultimately recovered.^[23]

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The land at the western extremity of the town is swampy, the grass, even on the declivities, being of a rank, spongy nature, and quite unfit for any thing. Here the Government built barracks, in which a detachment of Her Majesty's 55th regiment was for some time quartered: its ranks were decimated by fever, which latterly became so virulent, that the Authorities chartered shipping in the harbour, to receive the men still alive. Unfortunately, the poor fellows, being weakened from the effects of the summer, and having in all probability the seeds of disease in them before they embarked, died afloat in great numbers. It has been thought, that many lives might have been saved at West Point Barracks, had that building been raised off the ground so as to admit a free circulation of air *under* the rooms. This, however, is but problematical, as the deaths at the other end of the town took place in two-storied houses.

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From what I observed at West Point, there appears to be a constant drain of water down the hills, about six inches under the surface of the soil. This water settles under improperly ventilated houses, rots the beams, and *throws up a crop of mildew in every room*, as I can testify from actual observation.

That no European female has fallen a victim to this fever, is certainly a remarkable feature in its history; but it must be borne in mind, that there were no ladies residing in the immediate neighbourhood of the two localities just mentioned. Perhaps, the Morrison Education Hill may be an exception, where two families

passed last summer. None of the females suffered a day's illness, though a young man living in the house, who was occasionally exposed to the sun, caught the fever and died.

I have no doubt, (and I have heard others express a similar opinion,) that regular habits and non-exposure to the sun, are the principal causes to which those Europeans who have escaped illness when their friends and neighbours have sickened round them, owe their preservation. The occupants of spacious, two-storied, well-aired houses escaped, with only a single exception, in the case of a young man who probably brought on his illness by imprudent exposure to the sun for hours together, although he was repeatedly warned of the consequences. I know several instances of families passing last summer in houses of this description without any interruption of health. My own household was composed of two ladies, three children, myself, and a European female attendant: not one of us had an hour's illness during all the hot weather; yet we took no further care of ourselves than is customary with people who have resided for several years within the tropics.

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That exposure to the sun in that zone is uniformly prejudicial to the health of Europeans, does not admit of a question; but, in China, the sun's rays seem to exert a more injurious effect than in most other places I have visited. The residents in Hong Kong, it is true, were somewhat careless in the matter. Few, if any of them were provided with carriages or other conveyance to protect them from it when business called them abroad during the day; and it was quite common to see them moving about, on foot and on horseback, with no other precaution than an umbrella carried over the head, in spite of the daily examples of parties suffering from such imprudence.

The number of European inhabitants in Hong Kong will this summer (1844) be trebled by the removal of most of the merchants from Macao; and the general health of the place will be anxiously watched. Should it prove as bad as last summer, (which God forbid,) it will drive many people away, and injure the settlement irreparably. The prejudicial effects of going into the sun might be avoided, almost entirely, even by men of business, were they to adopt the Calcutta system of note-writing. There, a merchant seldom or never moves from his office; and when he does, it is in a covered vehicle. Let the Hong Kong residents follow their example, and their numbers will not be thinned as they have hitherto been.

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That the European fresh from home, full-blooded, and in robust health, should be more liable to fever than his acclimated countrymen, is not to be wondered at; but many of the new comers might escape disease by common prudence. Confident in their strength of constitution, and wearied with a long confinement on ship-board, they sally forth, day by day, to take a walk, just as they would in England, heedless of the fierce luminary that is pouring his rays on their exposed heads, and bent only on amusement or variety. A week of such folly (to call it by no stronger name) has sufficed to bring many a youth to a premature grave.

The weather begins to grow warm in China (I speak of Hong Kong, Macao, and Canton) about the middle of April; in June, it is oppressively hot; and during the following three months, which are the most unhealthy, the thermometer in the shade ranges from 85° to 90°. This is a degree of heat that ought not to be much felt by experienced Indians; and in Java, or in the Straits of Malacca, I should not complain of it; but there is a peculiarity, an oppressiveness, in the heat of China, that makes even respiration difficult, and excites such copious perspiration as to weaken the frame. In October, the weather becomes cooler, and, for the next five months, is sufficiently cold to render fires a comfort morning and evening; and occasionally during the whole day. Were it not for their winter, I know not what would become of the European residents in China: this season braces them up for the coming summer, and, in short, saves their lives.

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The progress made in Hong Kong since its occupation as a British Colony, is astonishing, and perhaps unsurpassed in the history of civilization. Owing to the peculiar features of the locality in which Victoria stands, that town has been extended along the beach, till it is now upward of four miles long, with three short streets extending a little way up the hills about its centre. The Queen's road extends along the beach the whole of this length, and has been cut with great labour and expense. The lots between this road and low-water mark are considered as the best for mercantile purposes, and are nearly all in the possession of mercantile men, who have built, in most cases, handsome warehouses with dwelling-houses above. There are, however, some exceptions, a portion of the ground being occupied by Chinese shopkeepers, who inhabit low ill-built houses, which, as ground with water-frontage becomes more valuable, will have to give way to better buildings, raised by a higher class, who will buy out the present occupants. The lots on the south side of Queen's Road are not so valuable as those opposite; nevertheless, they are nearly all in the possession of monied men, who will before long find it to their advantage to level the many wretched buildings that now disfigure the road, and to erect houses worthy of a town bearing the royal name.

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On my departure from the Island, building was going forward in all directions, notwithstanding the somewhat illiberal terms on which alone lots were obtainable; and I have no doubt that, by this time, many smiling cottages adorn the hills in and near the town, while more stately buildings rear their prouder elevation on the level below.

House-rent, as might be expected, is very high, and will probably continue so for ten years to come. It took that time to reduce the rents in Singapore; and as I expect that Hong Kong will become a place of still greater trade, and attract a larger European population than the Straits' settlement, I see no reason that the owner of property in houses there should not look for a handsome return for his outlay for ten years, and for a fair remunerating price at the expiration of that time. Something like a hundred per cent. per annum has been got for the small houses occupied by Chinese shopkeepers, while twenty-five, thirty, and even forty per cent. is a common return for substantially-built warehouses.

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Some idea of the rapid progress which this settlement has made, may be formed by the reader, when I state, that one firm had laid out upwards of 40,000*l.* sterling in building, and was still laying out more, when I quitted it. This is, certainly, by far the largest expenditure that has been made by any single establishment: but many others have spent from 6000*l.* to 10,000*l.* in a similar way; and the outlay by individuals on speculation, is by no means inconsiderable.

The Chinese population of Victoria and the neighbourhood amounted, last January, to ten thousand souls; certainly not the choicest collection that could be wished, as the number of robberies that take place in and about the town sufficiently testify. This evil the magistrates were, however, doing their best to remedy; and some scores of idle vagabonds had been sent across the Channel dividing the Island from the main land of China. Some of the chiefs of the robber-gangs had been apprehended and set to work on the roads, in irons; a proceeding that alarmed their confederates not a little.^[24]

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The general appearance of Hong Kong, from the sea, is picturesque and curious. That part of the Island on

which the town is situated, is hilly, and, with the exception of the few paddy-fields already mentioned, presents no level space on which to build. The hills stretch completely down to the sea; and Queen's Road has been formed by cutting away their projecting spurs, throwing the earth into the sea in front, filling up the gaps on each side the spur, and thus forming a long strip of level. Above the level of Queen's Road, many terraces have been cut in the hills, upon which private dwellings have been perched; and to a person sailing into the harbour, these look suspended on the hill side, and inaccessible. To speak the truth, the approaches to them are not the most practicable; particularly in rainy weather, when, from the clayey nature of the soil, they become extremely slippery. Several water-courses descend from these hills, forming miniature ravines and a few water-falls, which have a pretty effect after a day's rain. They occasionally wash away an ill-built house; but this is the fault of the clumsy and foolish builders. [257]

Many of these hills are covered with a hard, tough, useless sort of whinstone, which adds considerably to the expense of building on them. Others are well stocked with granite, which the Chinese masons split very neatly into any shape, by driving innumerable wedges into the blocks. The adroitness with which they do this, is quite surprising. The China pine (or fir) grows all over Hong Kong; but the young trees no sooner attain the height of two or three feet, than they are cut down by the natives, and carried off in bundles to clean the bottoms of the countless boats that ply about the harbour. Thus, with one or two exceptions, these hills are quite bare, and, in winter more particularly, exhibit any thing but a lively spectacle. In summer, their green covering of coarse grass improves their appearance. [258]

The only thing that reconciles one to the site chosen for building the town of Victoria, is its beautiful harbour: in every other respect, the choice was decidedly bad. A more awkward place on which to erect a town, could not have been fixed upon; and its northern aspect adds, I suspect, to the unhealthiness of the place, as it exposes the town to the cold winds of winter, and completely shuts out the southerly breezes of summer, which are so much wanted to refresh the worn-out colonist. There are situations in the Island much more eligible for a town, but their harbours are exposed, so that, when we consider how well the shipping are protected in Victoria bay, we feel disposed to allow that a better choice could not have been made under all the circumstances.

The market of Hong Kong is well supplied with fish, flesh, and fowl, vegetables, fruit, and game; and those who choose to take the trouble of seeing to it themselves, may obtain supplies on reasonable terms: those who leave these matters to their servants, are of course robbed, and are apt, without making any inquiry, to come to the conclusion, that every thing here is dear. The retail price of every sort of provisions is pasted up on the market-gate, once a week, by authority of the magistrates, in Chinese and English characters; so that the exorbitant rates charged by *compradores* may be easily detected and put a stop to. Chinese boats of all descriptions, sizes, and sorts may be hired at every wharf, at any hour from daylight till eight at night: their moving about after that hour, is prohibited by the Authorities, who had strong reason to suspect their being connected with the gangs of robbers that occasionally land from the opposite shore, commit some daring robbery, and disappear again before daylight. [259]

When the fleet of men of war and transports arrived here, from the North, in October 1842, the troops, amounting to upwards of fifteen thousand, were regularly supplied, during their stay in the harbour of Victoria, with fresh provisions, eggs, &c.; and no rise of prices took place. On the departure of the fleet, the daily supply was reduced by the Chinese to just sufficient for the consumption of the place. No portion of the supplies for the market is produced on the Island: the whole is brought from the innumerable creek and river-banks in the neighbourhood. It is to be hoped that this state of things will, before long, be altered, since, as matters now stand, the Cow Loon Authorities could, at any time, deprive the inhabitants of Hong Kong of their daily bread. [260]

American, French, and English Missionaries are already congregated in this infant settlement. The first have built a neat little chapel, where Divine service is performed every Sunday morning in the Presbyterian form, and, in the evening, in Chinese. The French Roman Catholics have built a stately and handsome chapel with a good dwelling-house attached to it: they have a large congregation among the Irish soldiery and the Portuguese from Macao. The English Missionaries had only just arrived with their establishment from Malacca, and, when I left the Island, had neither house nor chapel, but had commenced building. A chaplain of the Church of England had arrived, appointed by the Home Government: no English church, however, had even been commenced, and the congregation meet every Sunday in a neat house, where, if they escape fever during the summer, and colds and ague during the winter, they ought to deem themselves very fortunate.

Grog-shops and other resorts for the depraved and idle, are already plentiful in Victoria. They are, however, all closed on Sunday; and the sailor ashore, on liberty on that day, is fain to content himself with a walk along the road, during which he may be heard muttering deep curses on the heads of those who framed this (according to his notion) unjust and tyrannical regulation. [261]

Before concluding my remarks on Hong Kong, I will add a few words on what I consider as the best means to be adopted with a view to render the settlement more healthy. Much must be done by the Government; and the rest may be left to the inhabitants themselves.

In the first place, the paddy-fields at the east end of the town must be thoroughly drained, and the cultivation of paddy in the neighbourhood entirely stopped. Proclamations on this last subject had been published in March last. That the draining of these lands would decrease the quantity of malaria generated in the valleys, there can be no doubt; but, that it would entirely do away with it, I deem very problematical. At all events, it would not stop the volumes of fog that descend from the hill-tops at sun-set, and completely envelop the valleys and the houses. Draining, indeed, would do good, and ought to be tried at once. The owners of property in the neighbourhood were very sanguine as to the result of the experiment. More good, however, would be done in the way of purifying the air of these valleys, by entirely removing the small hill on which the Morrison Education buildings stand. The task, at first sight, may seem herculean; but is not so in reality. Thousands of men are to be hired in the villages on the opposite coast, who would gladly work for three dollars (13s. 6d.) per month. Were a couple of thousand of these put upon this job for a twelvemonth, there would not be much of the hill left. The pecuniary outlay would be considerable; but the returns would do much more than pay the interest on it. The base of the hill itself is of considerable extent; and the earth carried from its top, if thrown into the sea at its foot, would create a large level space for building, that would yield quit-rent enough to render the speculation (were the work undertaken by private individuals) a highly profitable one. This hill completely shuts up the largest of the paddy-growing valleys; and its removal would admit into it the easterly and northerly breezes, which might do more than any thing else towards preventing the descent of the fog. There are other hills, near the one alluded to, that might be levelled with great advantage to the neighbourhood, as well as to the parties who might undertake the task. In this case, [262]

there are individuals ready to execute the work on their own private account, who actually made offers to the Government on the subject; but their terms were rejected by the Authorities, and the hills remain in *statu quo*. The sea being very shallow at the base of these hills, the space filled up by cutting them down, would be very considerable, and the task by no means difficult. Sir Stamford Raffles removed one at Singapore, in size equal to the one known in Hong Kong as Leighton's Hill, without incurring a shilling of expense to his Government. To the parties who removed the soil, he gave the ground they had made, charging them the same quit-rent that others paid on the grants made to them.

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At West Point, draining seems to be the only plan that can be recommended to render the situation more salubrious. Neither there nor any where else in the Colony, is it safe to reside in houses having only a ground-floor. Of those who have done so, few have escaped the fever; and still fewer of those who caught it, recovered. Draining upon a large scale, is the part of the work I would leave to the Government: upon the inhabitants, I would impose the task of making proper sewers all over the town. The few that existed there last summer, were not simply a disgrace to every person connected with the place, but tended in no small degree to thin the population by the abominable effluvia they threw out. In the immediate vicinity of every house or shop belonging to the Chinese, might be seen a collection of impurities sufficient to create a pestilence anywhere, much more in a place with the thermometer frequently above 90° in the shade. The assessment of five per cent. on all rents, would create a fund sufficient to purify the town, to keep it clean, to provide a regular scavengers' establishment, and, moreover, to pay night watchmen to protect the property of its inhabitants from the gangs of robbers that infest the place. Were these suggestions carried out, if the citizens of Victoria were but careful to avoid the sun, and if not a few would but reduce by one-half their allowance of brandy-and-water and cigars, I will venture to predict, that the medical men of the place would have a comparative sinecure.

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Among other arrivals in Hong Kong during the year 1843, were some fifty or sixty emigrants from Sydney, (N. S. Wales,) consisting of mechanics of different descriptions. They alleged, that the bad times in Australia had driven them away. Poor fellows! I fear they have made a sad mistake in the change they have sought. Here, they will find times, for persons of their class, worse than those they have had to complain of, a climate to contend against, from which they have not the means of protecting themselves, and hundreds of Chinese artisans, who can afford to work for less than half what they can live upon. Most of them were badly housed; and it was to be feared, that the end of summer will see very many of their number in their graves.

The colonists of New South Wales appear to have formed the most extravagant ideas of the benefit they are to derive from the new settlement of Hong Kong. With the exception of salt provisions, I know of nothing they can send to the new settlement with even a chance of profit; and the prices of these must be lower than those ruling in Sydney by the last accounts, to yield a profit. Some small lots of timber have been found to answer; but the demand for this article will cease, when the buildings now in progress in Victoria shall have been completed. Cattle, horses, and sheep have been tried, and the experiment has proved an utter failure.

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FOOTNOTES:

[23] Since these remarks were penned, another summer has passed over Hong Kong. Sickness and death have again prevailed there to an unusual extent, and the neighbourhood just mentioned had its victims; amongst others, two English ladies whose husbands I had cautioned, in March 1844, respecting the spot they were taking their families to reside upon. The last mail from the East continues the outcry against the climate.

[24] An account of the capture of two of these scamps was given to me by the chief magistrate, the day before I left Victoria, and was to the following effect:—A China-man in the pay of the police, though never seen by any magistrate, came to the police comradore's house one evening, and said: "If you will send two European constables to a certain spot (which he named) at nine o'clock to night, I will shew them where they will find two robber-chiefs smoking opium and looking over their gains." This hint was immediately communicated to the chief magistrate, who at once resolved to act upon it, and sent the constables to the spot indicated. There, the spy met them, masked, and made signs for them to be silent and follow him. He guided them down past West Point upwards of a mile, when he turned up the hill by a footpath, which, in half an hour, brought the party to a small hut, through the crevices in the wall of which a light was visible. To the door of this hut, the guide significantly pointed, and instantly disappeared without uttering a word. The constables took the hint, and burst the door open, when they found what they had been led to expect; two men smoking opium, the room almost full of European clothing and other stolen property, quite sufficient to convict the smokers of unfair play towards the late owners of it. These men were of course secured; and the day I sailed from Hong Kong, I saw them at work on the roads in irons. Their apprehension caused a complete cessation of robberies for the time being, the sight of the noted chiefs on the roads having terrified their followers.

CHAPTER XVII.

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CHINA.

FIRST VIEW OF CANTON—DESCRIPTION OF THE EUROPEAN QUARTER—HOSTILE FEELINGS OF THE PEOPLE—COMMERCIAL PROSPECTS OF CANTON—AMOY—FOO CHOW—NINGPO— SHANG-HAE—MR. MEDHURST—RESULTS OF THE TREATY WITH CHINA.

The sail from Hong Kong to Canton is very interesting, particularly to a stranger. The numerous islands he passes, and the entirely new scenes that everywhere attract his eye, cannot fail to delight and amuse him. Here, the unwieldy Chinese junk; there, the fast-sailing Chinese passage-boat; now and then, the long snake-

like opium-smuggler with his fifty oars; innumerable fishing-boats, all in pairs, with a drag-net extended from the one to the other; country boats of all descriptions passing to and fro, their crews all bent on money-getting, yet, never failing to cast a glance of mingled contempt and scorn at the "*Fan qu*"; the duck-boats on the river banks, their numerous tenants feeding in the adjacent rice-fields; a succession of little Chinese villages, with groupes of young Celestials staring at him with never-ending wonder; here and there, a tall pagoda rearing its lofty head high above the surrounding scenery, as if conscious of its great antiquity and of the sacred objects for which it was built; the Chinese husbandman with his one-handed plough, drawn by a single wild-looking buffalo; smiling cottages, surrounded with orange and other fruit-trees; the immense fleet of foreign ships anchored at Whampoa;—these and a thousand other objects, all equally strange and new, attract the attention of the stranger as he sails up the "Quang Tung" river. On nearing the city itself, he is still more astonished and pleased with the sights that literally confuse his ideas, making the whole scene to seem the creation of magic, rather than sober reality. Here, the river is absolutely crowded with junks and boats of all sorts and sizes, from the ferry-boat of six feet long, to the ferry-boat of a thousand tons burthen. Long rows of houses, inhabited principally by boat-builders and others connected with maritime affairs, and built on the river, line its right bank. Outside of these, are moored numerous flat-bottomed boats with high roofs: these come from the Interior with tea and other produce, and resemble what I fancy Noah's Ark must have been, more than any thing I have seen elsewhere. On the left bank, the shore is lined with boats unloading and loading cargoes, while the different landing-places are completely blocked up with ferry-boats seeking employment. The space in the centre of the river, is continually crowded with boats, junks, &c. proceeding up and down. The scene altogether is bewildering to the stranger. Busy as the scene is, which the Thames presents at London, its superior regularity and order, in my opinion, prevent its coming up to the scene I have just faintly traced, in the strange and excited feelings it calls up. Amidst all this, there is a constant clatter of tongues strongly recalling the confusion of Babel. A China-man never talks below his breath; and, if one may judge from the loud tones in which the whole community express their sentiments, whether in a house or shop or in the street, the only conclusion that can be come to is, that, in China, the word secret is not understood, or rather, that the idea corresponding to that word has no existence in their conceptions.

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Of the immense city itself, the home of a million of souls, what account can a traveller give, who has seen little more of it than the portion inhabited by foreigners? I must say a few words, however, about that part of it which I have seen.

I begin with the foreign factories. These buildings stretch along the left bank of the river about three quarters of a mile, (or, rather, they did so, for one half of them have recently been destroyed by fire,) and extend back about two hundred yards. They are large, substantially built, and comfortable houses; but those situated behind the front row, must be (indeed I know they are) oppressively hot residences in the summer season. The space between the factories and the river, is reserved for a promenade, where foreigners may take a little recreation after their day's work. Although but a limited space, it is invaluable. Here, in the evening, may be seen Englishmen, Americans, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Dutchmen, Portuguese, Parsees, Moslem, and Hindoos; all enjoying the evening breeze, and talking over the affairs of the day or the news brought by the last overland mail, while a crowd of Chinese coolies surround the square, gaping with noisy wonder at the strangers attired in all the costumes of Europe and Asia. The streets principally resorted to by foreigners are, China Street (old and new) and Carpenter's Square. In the former, a very choice collection of Chinese articles may be purchased, either in the way of curiosities or of valuable merchandize. In Carpenter's Square, the new-comer may fit himself out with everlasting trunks, dressing-cases, &c.; or, if in search of furniture, he may here, in half an hour, furnish his house with well-made, substantial articles. The houses in these streets are all of two stories, with very narrow frontage, ground being valuable. A large quantity of timber is used in their construction, which renders any chance fire in this city so very destructive. The streets in Canton are all very narrow, most of those I have seen not exceeding six or seven feet in width: the two China Streets are probably twelve feet wide. The city does not cover half the space which a European one with the same population would do. Its streets, from their want of breadth, always appear, and indeed always are crowded; and the unwary passenger is very liable to get knocked down by some heavily laden porter running against him, if he does not keep a sharp look-out. Like Macao, it is infested with loathsome beggars, who are, if possible, still more clamorous in their demands for charity than those of that place. Here, the stranger will be surprised to see dogs, cats, and rats hawked about, dead and alive. I do not say that these animals form the daily food of the people of Canton, but they are daily and hourly hawked about its streets, and purchased by the poorer classes. The Canton market is, nevertheless, remarkably well supplied with the good things of this life; and the European who cannot live and be contented with the provisions procurable in it, must be hard to please. By nine o'clock at night, this huge city is perfectly quiet, and nine-tenths of its inhabitants are wrapped in sleep. At either end of each street is a gate, which is shut at that hour, and ingress or egress put a stop to for the night. This regulation, as may be supposed, is an excellent check upon night robbers, whose peregrinations can extend no further than the end of the street they live in. Another equally salutary regulation is that which makes the inhabitants of a street responsible for each other's good conduct. Thus, if A's servant steals any thing from B, A must make good the loss. Prowling being put a stop to during the night, I have seen robberies attempted and detected during the day; and I certainly never saw a poor thief treated elsewhere with such unrelenting cruelty. A China-man seems to have no mercy for a thief; nor is this feeling to be wondered at in an over-peopled country, where all have to work for their bread, and where idlers are sure to starve. During the winter, in Canton, the lower classes suffer severely from cold: they are poorly fed and worse clothed: and hundreds of them may be seen about the streets, shivering and looking the very picture of absolute wretchedness. Amongst these, a few old women may be seen sitting by the side of the streets, earning a scanty subsistence by mending and patching the clothes of people as poor as themselves. These poor women, having all undergone the barbarous operation of cramping the feet during infancy, are consequently unable to undertake any thing but sedentary employment to gain their bread. The very small size to which the feet of some of the Chinese females have been distorted by cramping them with bandages during the first six years of their lives, is almost beyond belief. I have seen a full-grown woman wearing shoes, and walking in them too, not more than 3½ inches long. Their walk resembles that of a timid boy upon ice; it is necessarily slow; and, indeed, some of them require the aid of a staff in one hand, while they lean with the other on the shoulder of a female attendant. The smaller the eyes and feet of a Chinese beauty, the more she is admired. I once asked a respectable China-man, what he thought of this custom of cramping their daughters' feet: his reply was, "Very bad custom." On my inquiring further, whether he had any daughters, and whether their feet were treated in the same way, he answered in the affirmative, but asserted, that they had been subjected to the cruel ordeal by their mother, against his will. He added, that, in a China-man's house, where there were young girls, no peace could be had, night or day, for their cries, which lasted till they were six years old. He gave us a reason for the mother's insisting on

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her daughter's submitting to this long course of pain and suffering:—"Suppose *he* no small foot, no man wantjee make *he* number one wife." A respectable China-man, it appears, always chooses a small-footed woman for his principal wife, while, for Number two, three, and four, he contents himself with ladies whose feet are as nature made them, and who are consequently more able to make themselves useful in household matters.

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The inhabitants of Canton and its vicinity have displayed, since the war, more hostile feelings towards Englishmen, than those entertained by the natives of any of the northern ports. They still affect to believe, that Sir Hugh Gough durst not attack their city; and it is, perhaps, to be regretted, that he was hindered from shewing his strength on that occasion. Several riots and two extensive fires among the foreign factories, have taken place since that time; and it is the opinion of many persons, that, before long, Canton will require a lesson such as Amoy, Ning-po, and other places have received. That the first of the two fires alluded to was the work of incendiaries, there is no doubt; and so well satisfied were the native Authorities upon this point, that they made good the losses sustained by foreigners on the occasion.

The proposal to grant land to foreigners in the neighbourhood of Canton, for the site of country residences, met with so energetic opposition from the natives, that the Authorities did not venture to carry the plan into execution. Inflammatory placards were posted all over the city, calling upon the people to protect their ancient rights, and threatening extermination to foreigners, and to the local Authorities themselves, in the event of their complying with the petition. It is probable, that the wealthy men and others connected with the commerce of Canton, felt that the arrangements then pending between Her Majesty's Government and that of their Imperial Master regarding the commerce of the two countries, would, if completed, affect their old privileges and monopoly; and that they adopted the measures above-mentioned in order to shew their displeasure. That their commerce will suffer in consequence of the arrangements since brought to an amicable conclusion, there can be no doubt; but it is not less certain, that Canton will continue to be the centre of an extensive trade. Its merchants must be content with a share of the loaf, in place of monopolizing, as heretofore, the whole. The days of Hong merchants and monopoly are at an end; and the benefits derived from Free-trade will shortly convince all but those connected with the late Hong, that the changes recently effected in the relations of the Celestial Empire with other countries, are not deserving of the abuse that has been so abundantly lavished on them.

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The far-famed Bogue Forts, I observed, in passing up the river last March, to be rebuilt in the same clumsy style as that of the fortifications which Sir Gordon Bremmer knocked down. As a means of defending the river against any thing but Chinese junks, they are utterly useless; and one cannot help feeling surprised that so intelligent a people as the Chinese did not take a lesson from the perfect ease with which their forts were razed to the ground, and build their new ones on a better plan. The scenery at the Bogue is very pretty; and the forts, if of no other advantage, form a picturesque feature, viewed while sailing past them.

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Not having visited Amoy, Foo Chow, Ning-po, Chusan, or Shang-Hae, I am unable to give any description of those places. I can, however, state what I have heard about them, and give the mercantile reader some idea of their importance as places of trade.

Short as is the time that these ports have been open to the commerce of Britain and other foreign nations, many cargoes of Indian cotton, different sorts of produce from Singapore and the islands of the Malayan Archipelago, manufactured goods, consisting of woollens, gray and white shirtings, chintz, &c., from Manchester and Glasgow, have been advantageously disposed of at one or another of them. Amoy has taken off several cargoes of Bengal and Bombay cotton, at prices considerably higher than those ruling at Canton. This branch of trade is likely to increase, and is one that will interfere with Canton to a considerable extent. As a residence, however, this place has a bad character in point of healthiness: at least, the troops, both European and Indian, suffered severely there from fever. They were stationed on the island of Koo Loong Soo, which is said to be more healthy than Amoy itself.

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None of our merchants had visited Foo Chow, up to the time of my departure from China; nor had a Consul been sent there; but this has, I presume, since taken place. The city has been described to me as large and populous, and the seat of a very extensive trade. It escaped the ravages of the late war; and its inhabitants may probably entertain a similar idea to that which possesses the people of Canton; namely, that we were afraid to attack them. Whether this notion will lead them to give Europeans an indifferent reception, or not, remains to be seen. Let us hope that they will act wisely in the matter, and not bring down vengeance on their own heads. Sir William Parker, by visiting their harbour in Her Majesty's ship Cornwallis, proved to them that they are not beyond the reach of European shipping, as they at one time thought. Some difficulty is experienced, I believe, in approaching Foo Chow, owing to the strength of the currents in the neighbourhood; but, as a seventy-four-gun ship has got over that difficulty, it is proved to be not an insurmountable one.

Ning-po is also a large and wealthy city, admirably situated for trade, and surrounded with a beautiful country. It stands some forty miles from the sea, by the river, which is said to be navigable for ships of considerable burthen even beyond the town. The climate is salubrious, and the natives are quite awake to the benefits likely to arise from a free intercourse with Europeans. At this port, the first British vessel bound for the northern ports of China, from England direct, was loading, in March last, with tea and other Chinese produce. By how many hundreds she will ere long be followed, I leave the reader to imagine. It is said by those who have visited this port, that nothing can exceed the urbanity of the Chinese Authorities and merchants, or their anxiety to do all in their power to please and entertain European strangers. This, doubtless, in part arises from the severe lesson that was read them, on more than one occasion, by Sir Hugh Gough; a lesson which, it is hoped, they will long remember. An extensive and important trade is carried on between this place and Chusan, by which means our manufactures will find their way into that island, after its ports shall be closed against our shipping. Here, Russian manufacturers are met with; and a friend of mine informed me, that, in a Chinese shop at Ning-po, he purchased a few yards of superior Russian black broad cloth at the very cheap rate of two dollars and a-half (11s. 3d.) per yard. This price seems lower than that at which the British manufacturer could produce a similar article. Samples of the cloth have been sent to England, so that this question will soon be decided.

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Shang-Hae, the most northern of the five ports opened to foreign commerce, is, perhaps, the most important of the whole five. I have undoubted authority for asserting, that the number of Chinese junks, of more than a hundred tons burthen, that enter this port weekly, exceeds a thousand. The same authority speaks of the busy scene that this harbour daily presents, as quite beyond his powers of description. Many British, American, and other merchants have visited Shang-Hae since it became an open port; many cargoes of manufactures have been disposed of there; and already a considerable export trade on foreign account has

commenced. A bold attempt was made by some influential and wealthy merchants from Canton, to prevent the mercantile men of the place from purchasing cargoes from the foreigners: in this, they succeeded for a time; and the Canton men were in hopes they should secure the northern trade for their own capital, as of yore; but they calculated beyond their mark. The Shang-Hae men listened to the tales that were told them, and kept aloof for some time, till they saw that the Europeans were quite determined not to leave their harbour without effecting sales. Suddenly they changed their minds, and said to the Canton men: "If the '*Fan-quis*' are such a wicked race, how comes it that you are so anxious to have their trade to yourselves?" In a week afterwards, every foreign vessel in the river was cleared of her cargo at remunerating prices.

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Shang-Hae is the principal port in the Empire for the export of raw silk. This fact is sufficient of itself to proclaim the vast importance of the place. The winter here, is described as being very severe; and the cold is said to be so intense, that hundreds of the very poorest sort of natives perish in the streets from its effect on their half-clad persons. The heat of summer is also intense; which renders the city unhealthy, situated as it is in a low, swampy country. Yet, I heard of no sickness among the Europeans who passed last summer there.

The Missionaries have not been behind the merchants in occupying Shang-Hae; and Mr. Medhurst, so well known for his extensive knowledge of Chinese literature, had completed arrangements for removing his family thither in the early part of the present summer. He had previously visited the place, avowing the object of his visit, and had found no difficulty in procuring a commodious house, large enough for the comfortable accommodation of his family, as well as for a printing establishment, &c. Mr. Medhurst has been a personal friend of mine for these twenty years; and he will believe me when I say, that I heartily wish him all the success in his mission that he can wish for himself; but, of his success, I have my doubts.

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As to the benefits likely to accrue to the commerce of Great Britain from the Treaty lately concluded by Sir Henry Pottinger with the Chinese Government, I conceive there can be but one opinion, although the extent of those benefits is as yet uncertain. When I express an opinion, not penned in haste or without consideration, that the large quantities of grey shirtings, white ditto, chintz, cotton yarn, long ells, Spanish stripes, fine woollens, camlets, &c. now purchased of the British merchants by the Chinese, are likely, within the next three years, to be quadrupled, the manufacturers of my country will at once perceive what this celebrated Treaty is likely to accomplish for them.^[25] We must, moreover, take into consideration, the extra tonnage that will be required to carry on this extended commerce; the number of seamen it will employ; the consequent increased demand for every description of stores taken to sea for the use of ships and men; the innumerable families that will thus be provided for; and the not improbable increased demand, over and above quadruple the present, for the goods named, when the new trade shall have had time thoroughly to develop itself. Nor must we overlook the benefit likely to result to British India, the cotton of which has hitherto been supplied to the Chinese *viâ* Canton: it will now be carried to their doors in British vessels, and sold to them at far cheaper rates than could have been afforded when sent in the former round-about way. Taking this view of the case, it stands to reason, that the demand will increase; and though the merchant of Bombay, Madras, or Calcutta may not make larger profits than heretofore, he will do a much larger business, employ double the number of men and ships, and enjoy the prospect of returning to his native country some few years sooner than he dreamed of under the old regime.

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A trade suddenly thrown open with three hundred millions of human beings, is not likely to be completely developed in three, four, or five years; and I conceive that I am within the mark, when I hold out encouragement to my countrymen to quadruple their shipments to China. In April, May, and June, 1843, before the five ports of China were officially opened to foreign trade, and when visiting them was precarious, an unusually large quantity of British and American manufactures was poured into the China market. Ship after ship arrived from the manufacturing districts, with full cargoes; and the universal cry was, "What is to be done with all these goods?" I can tell the public what became of them. They were sold almost as fast as they arrived. Many of them were purchased, for the northern ports, by speculators, who, to a man, did well with them. Prices not only kept up, in spite of the heavy import duties, but actually continued to advance till the end of the year, when they were twenty per cent. higher than when all the cry was, "What is to become of these goods?" This spirited demand for goods at Canton and Hong Kong, continued up to March last, when I sailed from China. Whether the supply sent out this season, has exceeded the demand, or not, I have no means of ascertaining, while writing in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean; but I have no fear as to the result of any shipments that may have been made.

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That the thanks of the mercantile world in general, and of its members in Great Britain in particular, are due to Sir Henry Pottinger for the very satisfactory conclusion to which he has brought the recent disturbances with China, and to Sir Hugh Gough and Sir William Parker for the gallant manner in which the warlike portion of the work was conducted, every unprejudiced man must allow. Though Sir Henry had not left China when I sailed, I presume that he will be in England before me *viâ* Egypt; and nothing would give me greater pleasure on my arrival, than to find that he had been rewarded by his Sovereign by being made "Earl Nankin." His career has been a brilliant one; and that he may live many years to enjoy the fruits of his exertions, must be the wish of all that are likely to benefit by them.^[26]

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Whether or not we are shortly to have another Chinese war, is a problem I do not pretend to be able to solve: there are various opinions on the subject; but my own is, that every thing depends on the foreigners themselves. If the Consuls and others sent by Government to the five trading ports are firm and resolute men, who will never suffer the slightest infringement of the Treaty by the Chinese, without an energetic remonstrance,—if the captains of ships of war stationed at the five ports are strict in maintaining order among the masters and crews of the shipping of their nation,—if mercantile men take care, on the one hand, to give no cause of complaint by smuggling or otherwise, to the Chinese Authorities, and, on the other hand, to put up with nothing from them that is not borne out by the terms of the Treaty;—in short, if foreigners generally (under which term I include every person not a Chinese) unite together and stand up for the Treaty, the whole Treaty, and nothing but the Treaty,—I see no reason to suppose that it may not work well, and for many years to come. On the other hand, if Consuls vacillate in their intercourse with the Chinese authorities,—if captains of ships of war permit irregularities in the conduct of merchant seamen,—and if foreign merchants condescend to injure their fair fame by smuggling, in place of submitting to the very moderate duties imposed upon their trade by the new Chinese tariff,—all and each of them must take the consequences of their conduct; and they may rest assured, that the Chinese will always be ready to seize with avidity the slightest opportunity afforded them for charging foreigners with a breach of the Treaty. We must hope that foreigners resorting to China for the purposes of trade, or merely as travellers in search of health or of strange sights, will be sufficiently aware of the importance that is sure to be attached to their conduct, to avoid giving the Chinese just cause of complaint. Should they be careful on this point, and should

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the amicable relations now existing between the two countries remain uninterrupted, it will not take many years to convince the intelligent Chinese, that intercourse with what they are pleased to term the Barbarian nations of the earth, is not to be despised.

As for the result of another war, there cannot, I imagine, be two opinions. That Great Britain would be the victor, and the *gainer* too, after a struggle of half a summer, is pretty certain; and that she would make the Chinese pay dearer for their temerity than they were made to do before, seems probable, and would be but just. The possession of Chusan and other eligible mercantile positions on the coast, would open fresh fields for the enterprise of our merchants, and for the employment of hundreds of seamen and others; and the fleet and army, after satisfying the Chinese that they were as able and as willing to fight as ever, might, with great advantage to their country, take a trip to Japan, and try to prevail on the ruler of that *terra incognita* to open his ports to foreign commerce. I would tell the Emperor of Japan, You shall either be my friend or my foe. If the former, you must permit your subjects to trade with my people; and if the latter, you must try your strength with me. While there are tens of thousands of unemployed operatives in Great Britain, her rulers should omit no opportunity of extending her commerce; and their suffering the Japanese sullenly to exclude our shipping, while the Dutch enjoy the sole privilege of trading to their country, seems to me putting up with a state of things that ought not to exist.

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FOOTNOTES:

[25] It must be borne in mind, that this was written at sea, before I had any knowledge of the reception which Sir Henry Pottinger's Treaty had met in Manchester and other manufacturing towns. Their subsequent reception of Sir Henry himself, proves how well satisfied they are with what he has done for them; and the extent of last summer's exports to China, demonstrates, beyond a doubt, that I was not far wrong in my predictions.

[26] No such honour has been paid to Sir Henry, though his reception by his Sovereign, the Government, and the public, has been such as must amply have gratified him and all his friends.

CHAPTER XVIII.

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NECESSITY OF APPOINTING BRITISH CONSULS IN THE SPANISH AND DUTCH COLONIES
—NEW SETTLEMENT ON THE WESTERN COAST OF BORNEO—IMPORTANT DISCOVERY
OF COAL ON THE NORTH-WEST COAST—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It appears to me, that British commerce in the East, requires somewhat more care and attention from the Authorities in the mother country, than they have hitherto bestowed upon it. The trade carried on by British subjects with the Philippines, Siam, and the Dutch Colonies, is both extensive and important; but, not unfrequently, it suffers interruption from the Government of those countries, to the serious loss and inconvenience of the parties concerned. That a Consul or other properly authorised functionary is required to watch over the interests of British merchants trading to Manilla, Bang-kok, Batavia, Samarang, and Sourabaya in Java, and Padang on the west coast of Sumatra, is evident to every person at all acquainted with the trade of those places; and I will add a few facts by way of satisfying those who may be doubtful on the point.

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In the first place, then, British subjects residing in, or shipping resorting to Manilla, are subject to the most arbitrary proceedings on the part of the Spanish Government,^[27] who order merchants from the place, and ships from the harbour, at a day's notice, without ever condescending to state their reasons for such proceedings. It was only the other day that the British subjects residing in Manilla were, by an unlooked for and arbitrary order of the Governor, deprived of the professional aid of the medical practitioners of their own country then resident among them. These professional men were not, indeed, ordered to quit the place; but they were informed by an official proclamation, that no medical man would in future be permitted to practice in Manilla, unless in possession of a diploma from the college at Cadiz. This, of course, was equivalent to an order to quit, as no English physician could be expected to have such a document in his possession. A friend of mine, writing to me on this occasion, represents the act as tantamount to a sentence of death upon all foreigners resident in the Philippines. While Spanish surgeons are allowed to practice among their countrymen in British Colonies, such a state of things ought not for a moment to be suffered by the British Government.

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Next, as to Siam. It is well known to every person acquainted with the trade of that country, that its Sovereign, in defiance of all treaties, monopolizes, by unjust and tyrannical means, nine-tenths of the commerce of his dominions; that his agents watch for and seize every boat that approaches the capital with produce; that the produce so seized is carried to the King's warehouses; that he pays whatever price he pleases for the contents of the boat; that the produce so seized is very generally the property of other persons, (frequently British subjects,) who have advanced money to the planter on his growing crop; that British and other shipping resorting to Bang-kok for the purchase of produce, are compelled to buy from the King on his own terms, or to leave the port in ballast; and finally, that these proceedings are in direct opposition to the terms of an existing Treaty between Great Britain and Siam. A Consul at Bang-kok, and a visit twice a year from one of the ships of war cruising in the China Sea and the Straits of Malacca, would put an entire stop to His Siamese Majesty's unwarrantable proceedings, as far as British subjects are concerned. Let Americans and others look after themselves.

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In the Dutch Colonies, also, I can testify from personal observation, the British merchant is very frequently dealt with not less arbitrarily. The Dutch Authorities are not content with prohibiting the importation into their Colonies of warlike stores and opium, (which they have an undoubted right to do,) but their regulations render a ship seizable, that enters their ports with either of those forbidden articles on board. This seems unreasonably hard and it puts the British merchant to expense an trouble oftener than may be supposed. A

ship bound from London, Liverpool, or Glasgow, to Batavia and Singapore, (a very common destination,) dares not receive on board as freight, either a chest of Turkey opium, or a single Birmingham musket. If she does, she must give up all idea of calling at Batavia, where she would be immediately seized, for having such articles on board as cargo. Only four years ago, the British barque *Acdazeer*, bound from Bombay to China, with a cargo consisting of thirteen hundred chests of opium, was dismantled in a gale in the China Sea, and bore up for the port of Sourabaya, which she entered in distress, for the purpose of repairs, and for stores to enable her to prosecute her voyage. My memory does not serve me so as to enable me to state, whether the *Acdazeer's* visit to Java was before or after the promulgation of the law prohibiting ships with opium and warlike stores entering any of the ports of Netherlands India; but I think it was *before* that regulation was made public. Be that as it may, the ship was in distress; and, as a matter of course, her Commander thought he was entering a friendly port. His astonishment may be conceived, when he was ordered by the Authorities to land all his cargo in the bonded stores, before the slightest assistance could be rendered to his vessel. What was to be done? Resistance was useless; and to prosecute his voyage with a disabled ship, impracticable. The cargo was accordingly landed, and the vessel's repairs were proceeded with. When these were finished, the Commander reported his being ready to receive his cargo on board again, and to proceed on his voyage; when he was told, that, before doing so, he must pay an *entrepôt* duty of one per cent. on the whole value. This he was compelled to do; and it amounted to the very considerable sum of 1300*l*. All goods landed in bond (or *entrepôt*), in any of the ports of His Netherlands Majesty's East-Indian territories, are subject to a duty of one per cent. on being re-exported; but who ever heard of a ship that had put into harbour in distress, being *compelled* to land her cargo, under the pretence that it was to prevent the possibility of any portion of it being smuggled, and of its commander being afterwards told, that, as the goods had gone into *entrepôt*, the duty must be paid?

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These facts may be sufficient to shew, that the appointment of Consuls at the different ports above named, is urgently needed as a protection to the British shipping visiting them. I have been told, that the Spanish and Dutch Governments have refused to receive or acknowledge Consuls in their Eastern possessions. If this is the case, the evil might be remedied by a note from Downing Street. The other ports of Netherlands India are, perhaps, not of sufficient importance, as regards English commerce, to authorise the expense of Consular appointments. If the opinion of so humble an individual as myself could be supposed to reach the ears of the British Premier, I would respectfully but earnestly call his attention to the foregoing remarks.

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Another subject to which I am anxious to call the attention of the British Government, is, the advantages presented by establishing settlements on the north-western and western coasts of the Island of Borneo. The proceedings of my friend Mr. Brook^[28] at Sarawak on the western coast, having been made public, it is only necessary for me here to remark, that Mr. Brook has already paved the way for the advantageous settlement of a British Colony in his neighbourhood, and to express a wish that Her Majesty's Government may take advantage of his spirited and praiseworthy exertions, and reward him for them. The influence which he has obtained over the wild and intractable natives (as they have been hitherto deemed) of that part of Borneo, the service which he has rendered to the mercantile interests of his country by his exertions in the suppression of piracy, the numbers of people whom he has induced literally to turn their swords into ploughshares, and the quiet, unostentatious way in which all this, and more than all this, has been effected, are not less surprising than creditable to his abilities, perseverance, and public spirit.

The recent discovery of extensive veins of coal on the banks of the river of Borneo Proper, is my chief reason for calling public attention to the north-western coast of that island. The destruction by fire of the British ship *Sultana*, on her voyage from Bombay to China, and the subsequent imprisonment of Capt. Page, his wife, officers, passengers, and crew, by the Rajah of Borneo Proper, led to the discovery in question. The Singapore Government, on hearing of Capt. Page's captivity, sent a steamer to procure his release; and it was the captain of this steamer who discovered the coal, several tons of which he collected and used on board his vessel. He described them to me as being of excellent quality for steamers, and to be had in unlimited quantities by simply digging away the upper crust of the earth to the depth of six inches, under which the coals lie in masses. He was moreover informed, by the natives in the neighbourhood, (who, by-the-by, never use the coals, though they knew that they would burn, and called them "*Batu Api*" or fire-stones,) of the existence of much more extensive coal-veins a few miles further up the river. He had not time to visit the spot, but the natives assured him, that ships might be loaded from the surface. Of the depth or extent of the veins, they knew nothing; it is, however, more than probable, that, on the application of proper means, an unlimited supply of coals might be obtained. The importance of such a supply, now that Steam communication between Calcutta and Singapore has been established, and that the line will in all probability be shortly extended to China, requires no demonstration. In the event of a regular monthly overland mail being despatched from Hong Kong, to join the Calcutta line at Point de Galle^[29] (Ceylon), it would not be out of the steamer's way, to touch and coal at Borneo: thence proceeding to Singapore, where she would not require coals, she would take in the mail, and proceed on her voyage. This plan would save the expense of forming a coal *dépôt* at Singapore. All Her Majesty's steamers on the coast of China might be supplied with fuel from the same quarter, particularly as several empty ships go to China every season in search of freights homeward, which would gladly call at Borneo *en route*, and take in a cargo of coals, to be delivered at Hong Kong, at a moderate rate per ton. To establish this coal trade on a permanent footing, a treaty would require to be entered into with the Sultan of Borneo. This, I have no hesitation in saying, might be effected, and the requisite arrangements made with the Borneo Authorities by Mr. Brook, whose influence in that quarter is deservedly all-powerful. An establishment placed there, the chief or superintendent of which might be invested with Consular powers, would manage the coal business, and protect any unfortunate shipwrecked British seamen from ill treatment similar to that sustained by the captain and crew of the *Sultana*. So many vessels have from time to time disappeared and never been heard of, between Singapore and China, as to render it far from improbable, that there are numbers of British subjects now in confinement on the northern coasts of Borneo and Palawan. This probable or, at least, supposable case furnishes an additional argument in favour of placing some party, armed with power to protect such unfortunate persons, in some convenient spot in the neighbourhood. When I say, armed with power, I do not mean that arms should be put into the hands of those stationed to manage the coal-mines at Borneo, but that their superintendent should be empowered to use energetic language, and threats if need be, in the name of the British Government. The magic of a name is nowhere felt or understood more than among these same savages; in proof of which I may mention, that the Rajah of Borneo Proper gave up Capt. Page and his crew immediately on their being demanded in the name of the Governor of Singapore, though he had refused to listen for a moment to the proposals and demands previously conveyed by a well-armed schooner sent by Mr. Brook from Sarawak to treat for the release of the *Sultana's* people, on hearing of their captivity. Even His Majesty of Siam stands in awe of the British name; and I could tell instances of his having paid deference to a few lines from the

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The ships of war in these seas are too much in harbour; they might be far better employed in occasional visits to the different ports of Borneo, Palawan, the eastern coast of the Malayan Peninsula, Siam, and Cochin China. Visits to those countries twice or thrice a year, would not interfere in the slightest degree with their regular duty; it ought, indeed, to form part of it; and would be of incalculable value to British merchants. The Authorities of those different States, knowing that the visits of British ships of war were to be regular and frequent in future, would be cautious how they meddled with British subjects. With all the gasconade common to Orientals generally, the chiefs of the countries I have mentioned, are cowards at heart, tyrants as they are when opportunity offers; and they dread the sight of a ship of war in their harbours. No better check could be kept upon their conduct; and the plan proposed would not cost Great Britain a shilling, inasmuch as the ships required to carry it into execution, are in commission, and, as I said before, spend far too much time in port. Such a catastrophe as the loss of the Golconda, with four hundred souls on board, ought to be sufficient to call forth the utmost exertions on the part of our naval officers in the China Sea. This ship, a vessel of 800 tons, sailed from Singapore in September 1840 (or 1841), bound to China, with the headquarters of the 37th Madras Native Infantry on board, and has never since been heard of. In my humble opinion, the China Sea and its coasts ought to have been thoroughly searched for any remains of this unfortunate ship, it being far from impossible, that some of her people may be in existence in Cochin China or on the neighbouring coasts or islands. When the unfortunate barque Fifeshire disappeared in the same mysterious way, on the same voyage, three of her men turned up from Cochin China, twelve months after she had been given up and paid for by the under-writers. No endeavour was made to trace the Golconda,—wherefore, let those explain, who had it in their power to cause due search to be made. Being unable to divine their reasons, I hope, for their own sakes, they were sufficient to quiet their own consciences. [298]

My wanderings are drawing near a close, and I have little more to say. On our passage down the China Sea, during the prevailing very light southerly winds of April, we exhausted a large portion of our fresh stock; and for replenishing it and our water we touched in Anjer Roads, of which, and the village of the same name, I shall now give a brief sketch. [299]

Nothing can be prettier than the sail into Anjer Roads from the northward, on a fine clear day. The scenery is equal to any thing I have ever seen. On your right, rises the high land of Sumatra, covered with wood to the very summit, and exhibiting all the different shades of green; on your left, are St. Nicholas Point and the high land of Java; while the two little isles called, "Cap and Button," add their minute features to the landscape. The land in this part of Java, though well wooded, is not covered with timber so thickly as the opposite coast of Sumatra; but, here and there, the scene is diversified by a clearing, where the Javanese may be seen at work in his rice-field, yam-patch, vegetable garden, or pinery. In front, the island of "Thwart-the-way" (well named, for it is right in mid-channel) relieves the eye from the glare of the sea; which, in these low latitudes, is a matter of some moment; while, further seaward, may be seen towering far above the surrounding objects, the islands of Pulo Bissie and Crokatooa, both visible from a great distance, and forming excellent land-marks for the mariner. On nearing the anchorage, the pretty little village of Anjer strikes the eye, its huts built in rows, and shaded by palms and other trees; the Dutch Resident's house, the fort, and the wharf, are all in view; and further back, about a mile from the sea, may be seen the tomb, erected by his shipmates, to the memory of Dr. —, Assistant Surgeon of H. M. S. Alceste. The inscription informs the stranger, that Dr. — died here on his return from China, after the wreck of the Alceste. This tomb was the first thing that attracted my attention when I landed at Anjer in 1823, and has ever since been an object of interest to me. Anjer is a very convenient place for ships bound from China or Singapore for Europe to touch at for supplies, although many ship-masters avoid it during the prevalence of the north-west monsoon, when it is a lee shore. I have anchored there at all seasons of the year, and never found any difficulty in getting out of the harbour; but others have been less fortunate, and have got among the rocks. Here, the natives come off to passing ships, and bring fowls at two rupees per dozen; (a rupee here is equal to 1s. 8d. sterling;) ducks at three rupees per dozen; good-sized turtle one dollar each; yams one dollar per *pecul* of 133 lbs.; eggs one dollar per hundred; and other articles in proportion. They are very fond of visiting an English ship, as they generally get paid by her Commander in Spanish or other dollars; a coin held in universal estimation in those parts. In my frequent visits to Anjer, I have invariably met with a polite and hospitable reception from the Dutch Resident, (the chief Civil authority,) who has always been willing and ready to render any aid in his power to strangers. [300] [301]

Anjer, with all its beauties of scenery, is said to be unhealthy in the rainy season, when the showers and thunder-storms are both frequent and heavy: its natives are a puny race, and its European inhabitants look pale and sickly; so that, I suppose, it deserves the doubtful reputation generally given to it. During my last ramble in the vicinity of Anjer, I observed some natives at work in a plantation of young plants which, at first sight, and from their being sheltered from the sun by tall, wild-cotton trees, I took for coffee. On inquiring of the overseer, and looking more closely at the plants, I found they were young cinnamon-trees. The attention of the Dutch Government has long been given to the cultivation of this spice; and, from the very healthy appearance of the plants just mentioned, I should think that the ultimate success of the undertaking was far from doubtful. It will not surprise me to see, before ten years have elapsed, Java rivalling Ceylon in cinnamon, as it is now competing with Bengal in indigo.

The Strait of Sunda, in which Anjer is situated, is certainly a beautiful channel for ships to sail through in fine weather, though, from the strength of its currents, an uglier place in a dark, squally night could scarcely be found. It used to be notorious for Malay pirates, but has been, of late years, clear of those pests. [302]

Talking of pirates, I may mention my own good fortune in never having fallen in with any of the fraternity in the many voyages I have made in the lake-like seas of the Malayan or Eastern Archipelago. This, however, does not tend to prove their non-existence in even recent days.

Having completed our stores at Anjer, we sailed with a fair wind about 3 P. M. on the 14th May, and, next morning, were rolling about in a heavy sea off Java Head, (a bold and grand promontory forming the south-west corner of the Island,) where I bade adieu to my favourite sunny climes of the Far East.

FOOTNOTES:

- [27] This remark has recently been confirmed beyond the possibility of denial, by the unjust and cruel sentence passed by the Court of Justice in Manilla, on my esteemed friend, Mr. Robert Diggles, who, after having been led into great expense, and kept under the surveillance of the police for

nearly two years, has been tried as a criminal, and sentenced to pay a fine of two thousand dollars, and banished the Philippines for six years. And for what, does the reader suppose? For kicking out of his house an impudent Spanish tailor who had presented himself there during a ball given by Mr. Diggles to Vice-Admiral Sir William Parker and Major-General Lord Saltoun, during their visit to Manilla in Her Majesty's ship Cornwallis.

From Lord Saltoun, on his return to Hong Kong, I received an account of this matter; and Mr. Diggles also sent me the particulars in writing. From the testimony thus tendered to me by an eyewitness whose word cannot for a moment be doubted, and by the party principally concerned, in whose word I also place implicit confidence, I have no hesitation in making this public declaration, that Mr. Diggles has been partially, cruelly, unjustly, disgracefully, and tyrannically dealt with by the Government of Manilla. A letter I received yesterday from Singapore, gives room to hope that Mr. Diggles's banishment has been remitted, which I should be glad to hear confirmed, though it would be no adequate reparation for the injury he has sustained.—Hull, 1st November 1845.

[28] See [Appendix II.](#)

[29] 1846; now in full operation. Vide [Appendix I. p. 303.](#)

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APPENDIX I.

(See [p. 295.](#))

PLAN FOR THE ACCELERATION OF THE CHINA MAILS (*i. e.* THEIR CONVEYANCE FROM SUEZ, viâ CEYLON TO HONG KONG DIRECT)

SUBMITTED BY MR. HENRY WISE TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT SEPT. 14, 1843, ADOPTED JUNE 20, 1845, AND NOW IN ACTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL OPERATION.

Proposed Route from Hong Kong to London, and <i>vice versâ.</i>	Course.	Dist. Miles.	Av. Rate per Hour, Miles.	Interval und. weigh.		Interval at Anchor.		Total Interval.		Duties at Anchor.
				Days.	Hrs.	Days.	Hrs.	Days.	Hrs.	
HONG KONG TO PULO LABUAN	S. 2° .18' E.	1009	7	6	—	1	12	7	12	To receive Coal. ^[B]
PULO LABUAN TO SINGAPORE	S. 69° .23' W.	707	"	4	6	—	12	4	18	To receive Coal, land & receive Mails.
SINGAPORE TO MALACCA	[S. 64° .48' W. 19] [N. 51° .41' W. 103]	122	"	—	18	—	6	1	—	To land & receive Mails.
MALACCA TO PENANG	N. 30° .37' W.	222	"	1	8	—	16	2	—	To receive Coal, land & receive Mails.
PENANG TO CEYLON ^[A]	[N. 82° .24' W. 303] [S. 89° .45' W. 916]	1219	"	7	6	1	12	8	18	Ditto. Ditto.
CEYLON TO ADEN	As now performed by the Peninsula & Oriental Steam Navigation Company, detention of 2 days included.							11	—	
ADEN TO SUEZ	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	8	—	
SUEZ TO ALEX-ANDRIA	—	—	—	all stoppages		—	—	3	—	
ALEX-ANDRIA TO MALTA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	
MALTA TO MARSEILLES	—	—	—	H.M. Post-Office Packets		—	—	4	—	
MARSEILLES TO LONDON	—	—	—	Regular course of Post		—	—	5	—	
Total interval from HONG KONG to LONDON, and <i>vice versâ</i> , by the proposed Route								Days	59	—
Average interval of transmission of China Correspondence, viâ Calcutta and Bombay, during the last Twenty Overland Mails, viz. from the 10th October 1841, to 6th May 1843									89	—
Difference of Time in Favour of Proposed Route								Days	30	—

[A] Receiving at Ceylon, the Outward Overland Mail from England, and returning therewith to China.

[B] The Borneo Coal Mines would also serve to keep the Hong-Kong, Singapore, and Penang Stations supplied with Fuel for Steam Vessels carrying the Mails between Hong Kong and Suez direct.

MEM.—I have adopted an average rate of seven miles per hour as a fair estimate of the speed that well-appointed Steam Vessels, of moderate size and power, will be enabled to accomplish and maintain, throughout the proposed route, at all seasons of the year; for, during the whole distance from Penang to

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Aden, and *vice versâ*, neither monsoon, from the course steered, becomes at any period a directly adverse wind; an advantage which the route hitherto observed does not possess. Assuming that the Honourable East-India Company continue the management of the Bombay line, and that the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company are encouraged to render their operations more comprehensive, by the establishment of Branch Steamers between Ceylon and Singapore, to which latter Port Her Majesty's Steam Vessels on the China Station could convey the Mails from Hong Kong, this all-important object might, without difficulty, be attained. The advantages to the Straits' Settlements, consequent on the adoption of improved arrangements, require no comment; and the *practicability* of effecting a very considerable acceleration of the communication with China, is evident from the simple fact, that the average interval which has occurred in the transmission of letters from China, by the last twenty Overland Mails, (irrespective of the unfortunate July Mail from Bombay,) exceeds the period occasionally occupied by fast-sailing ships, in accomplishing the voyage *viâ* the Cape of Good Hope.

LONDON, Sept. 14, 1843.

HENRY WISE.

P.S.—Oct. 9, 1843.—The arrival at Suez, on the 16th ult., of the H. C. S. Akbar, in *forty-six* days from Hong Kong, after accomplishing the passage down the China Seas, against the S.-W. monsoon,—unassisted also by any previously arranged facilities for coaling, exchange of Steamers at Aden, and other manifest advantages requisite for the proper execution of this important service,—confirms the correctness of my estimate for performing the voyage from Hong Kong to Suez, or *vice versâ*, viz. *forty-three* days, including stoppages.—H. W.

APPENDIX II.

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MEMORANDUM ON BORNEO, AND MR. BROOK'S SETTLEMENT ON THAT ISLAND.

Mr. Brook has no warmer admirer than myself; and I trust the territory of Sarawak, which has been ceded to him by the Sultan of Borneo, will eventually become a flourishing British Colony.

The Government of this country cannot but be fully alive to the value of such a point on the north-west coast of Borneo with reference to the protection and security of the vast trade carried on by British subjects to and from China; not to mention the great intrinsic advantages of an establishment on one of the largest and most valuable islands in the world. Little or nothing is yet known of the interior of this vast country; but what we do know already with regard to several portions of its coast must lead us to the conclusion that it will one day become of infinite importance in a political as well as commercial point of view. There is reason to believe that it contains the most rich, varied, and extensive mineral deposits, and is capable of producing, in the greatest abundance, every variety of tropical production, including some that appear to be peculiar to its soil and climate. Protection from the complicated evils of piracy and oppression is alone wanting in order to stimulate the growth and industry of the population, and to give a new aspect to the face of this fertile region. The very fact of a British Settlement being established would exercise a most powerful influence in bringing together all the elements of a rapid civilization amongst a people at present the prey of ignorance, superstition, and oppression. Considering the smallness of the means at his disposal Mr. Brook has already done much: the seeds have been sown, and, up to a point, nourished by the force of his character; for their further development the influence of the British Government unreservedly exercised, but with due caution, is alone required.

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As one of the very best means of defence against riot or disturbance in a country like Sarawak, whether held by Queen Victoria or by my friend Brook, I would recommend the raising of a corps of Hill Rangers, to be composed of 400 or 500 natives of the country, in their native dress; distinguished from their countrymen simply by a belt thrown over the shoulder, with S. H. R.^[30] on a brass plate in the middle of it, and a small sword by their side; the whole under a European captain, four lieutenants, and a dozen native *jimedars*. Ten guilders per month, allowed as pay to each man, would secure the choice of the population; and no force would equal them for the maintenance of peace in such a country. Sir Stamford Raffles tried a similar plan at Bencoolen, and found it answer admirably. I need say no more in its favour. No better man exists for raising and organizing such a corps, than Mr. Brook himself: witness his performances of a similar nature during the Burmese war. These Hill Rangers must be divided into companies, and should be stationed at convenient places throughout the country, to keep their eyes on evil-doers, and to act as police-men more than as soldiers. Their captain must be *locomotive*, and superintend the whole corps.

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I will now proceed to state my ideas as to the way in which Mr. Brook can most profitably avail himself of the extensive territory of Sarawak. In the first place, he must have the whole District competently and correctly surveyed, and laid out in portions (not of square miles, New-South-Wales fashion, without any regard to natural boundaries, but) of different sizes according to the topographical features of the country. On the completion of this survey, the plan or map should be lithographed, to exhibit to parties intending to purchase or hold land. Mr. Brook should then publish in India his intentions, giving a sketch of the facilities he can offer, of the capabilities of the country, &c. &c. &c. Tenants will not suit him, in my opinion, so well as purchasers. The possession will be too unwieldy for him to hold, even as landlord: I speak from my experience in Java. The purchasers he wants, are men of capital, say from 5000*l.* to 10,000*l.* each, to whom he must give credit for the land, and leave them unhampered to carry on their operations. All lands fit for the growth of coffee or sugar must be worked by these capitalists on their own account: they must send to Java for experienced overseers, (Europeans,) to conduct the works; and to Bally, Lombok, or the Coromandel coast, for labourers. The natives of the former two are preferable, but, I fear, could not be obtained in sufficient numbers. Not a China-man should be employed on an estate of mine as a field-labourer, though the Chinese answer remarkably well, *under Europeans*, in sugar-mills. An experienced overseer from Java will

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point out to them the best lands for coffee and sugar, and the best modes of planting and rearing both. It is also a very good plan, to contract with a party to grow the cane, (the proprietor helping him with small advances,) which the landlord engages to take at so much per thousand when ripe, to be delivered at the mill door. The grower, in such cases, is generally a poor man, and require aid for the first year, to buy buffaloes, ploughs, and provisions. In Java, nine-tenths of the cane are produced in this way; and the landlord saves both risk and trouble by it. No cane, no pay, is the rule there; so that, although the mill-owner may lose his time in a bad season, he sacrifices no outlay. The Chinese cannot be trusted to *manufacture* the sugar: they are conceited bunglers at that work, as stubborn as mules, and use too much lime, in spite of all one can say or do to prevent it. Coffee may also be planted by contract; though, in Java, where men can be got for three guilders per month and their rice, worth two guilders more, the plan is not generally adopted.

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A party purchasing land, ought to have it selected so as to have portions of it fit for coffee, sugar, and rice, and to try all three. In rice-cultivation, a different plan, however, must be pursued. In Java, a proprietor of rice-land encourages as many people to sit down on his property as he can possibly obtain; charges them no rent in money, but helps them each to build a hut; lends them money to buy two buffaloes; and gives them rations of rice and salt for the first twelve months; taking care, in the meantime, that the man, his wife, and his children are as busy as bees, planting and looking after a few rice-fields,—the more the better; seeing also, that the family do a fair day's work, and as much as they are well able to perform. From these fields, when harvest arrives, the squatter will pay his rent. And then is the time that the European overseer and his deputies require to have their eyes open, in order to see that fair play is dealt to the proprietor, who is entitled to one-fourth of the crop, by way of rent, delivered in bundles of paddy, at his barn-door, by the grower. The reaping and binding must be watched, and the bundles be counted on the field; otherwise the grower will, probably, carry more than his share to his own barn, in place of his master's. Now is the time, also, if the season has been a favourable one, to make the squatter pay off the whole, or a portion of his debt, for the advance made to him early in the year. If he gets well through the first year, he will, in all probability, take a liking to the place, and fix himself there for good. One of the very best plans for attaching Javanese to their residence on an estate, is, to see that lots of cocoa-nut and betel-nut trees are planted in every desirable locality. With half a dozen cocoa-nut trees, even in a bad season, a native family will manage tolerably well; and in all my wanderings among the Malayan islands, I never came to a place where even a single cocoa-nut was not current, like money, for its full value in rice. Another great advantage arising to the proprietor from rice-grounds well-occupied, is, that he is entitled, by immemorial custom, to the labour of every male on the estate one day in seven, in virtue of a sort of feudal law. A friend of mine in Java, on whose estate were fifteen thousand adults, seven thousand of whom were males, had thus the command of the labour of one thousand men per day *free*. On a new estate, these are the men to clear jungle, to make roads, to trim coffee-trees, and to take a turn with a hoe among the sugar-canes, when the hired labourers are busy at crop time, or when, from any other cause, labour may be scarce.

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Mr. Brook must take things leisurely. Let one capitalist be established with a fair prospect, and he will soon be followed by dozens, who will gradually creep into the forests, and make the place a second Java. Before these capitalists make their appearance, however, he must, by every means in his power, encourage squatters, and get them to work on patches of rice-land, here and there. Let him but treat those men kindly, help them through the first year, and set them fairly on their legs; they will then never leave the place.

Touching the diamond and gold mines which Mr. Brook wants to work, I hardly know what to advise, but think that his best plan would be, to get my friend Tok Sing, or some other wealthy China-man in Singapore, to procure him "head men," whom he would *secure, i. e.* bind himself to make good any thing lost or stolen by them. This, of course, he would not do gratis; but his guarantee in such an undertaking would be invaluable: his wealth is very considerable, while his name and influence would be beyond calculation useful.

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Over every thing, Mr. Brook must himself keep a watchful eye; and, above all things, he must keep the peace. He must not attempt too much at first; but must raise his Rangers as they may be required; and, with his talent for such operations, a moderate share of patience and perseverance, and sufficient capital, all will go well, and he will meet with the complete success that he so richly merits.

FOOTNOTES:

[30] *i. e.* Sarawak Hill Rangers.

THE END.

WILLIAM WATTS, PRINTER, CROWN COURT, TEMPLE BAR.

Transcriber's Notes:

Inconsistencies in the hyphenation of words preserved. (daylight, day-light; namesake, name-sake; Ninpo, Ning-po; roundabout, round-about; Shang Hae, Shang-hae; Shipmaster/s, ship-master/s; underwriters, under-writers)

Table of Contents, Chapter V., "DUTCH SETTEMENTS" changed to "DUTCH SETTLEMENTS".

Table of Contents, Chapter XVI., summary paragraph after Chapter Heading. In the table of contents, the third last phrase in the summary paragraph is "PICTURESQUE SCENERY" whereas in page 237 this phrase is replaced by "PORTUGUESE PENURY". The original text is retained in both cases.

Table of Contents, Appendix I., page number changed from "299" to "303" to match page number at actual location.

Table of Contents, Appendix II., page number changed from "391" to "305" to match page number at actual location.

Pg. 64, "havet heir" changed to "have their". (have their own Rajahs)

Footnote 8, "trad" changed to "trade". (The opium trade again, has diminished)

Pg. 74, "testi-timony" changed to "testimony" (testimony to its Commander's)

Pg. 88, inserted missing period. (balance due upon their services.)

Pg. 96, "occa-onally" changed to "occasionally" (occasionally visited by a very severe fever)

Pg. 134, inserted missing period. (called a grain-exporting one.)

Pg. 186, unit of currency "d." not italicised in the original, possibly a typographical error. Marked up in italics in order to conform to dominant style in the rest of the text. (about 3½*d.* per pound.)

Pg. 196, "hundreths" changed to "hundredths". (ninety-nine hundredths)

Pg. 206, unit of currency "s." not italicised in the original, possibly a typographical error. Marked up in italics in order to conform to dominant style in the rest of the text. (12*s.* per ton)

Pg. 219, added missing period. (the *lorcha* was burned.)

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