

MISCELLANEOUS.

CHINA.

GEOGRAPHY.

Our English name China is derived from the ancient Chinese name Ching-kwo, or Middle Nation. This country was known to the Romans as Sinae, and traces of this name are still to be found amongst the Persians and other nations of Central Asia, who call this country Tehin and Chane Hai. A grandson of Zengis Khan conquered the north of China, and during his dominion, and that of his successor, it was called Cathay, by which name it was made known to Europe during the middle ages, by Marco Polo, Nicolo Conti, Rubriquis, and Sir John Mandeville, who visited China in the year 1310.

The Chinese Empire extends from the Russian dominions upon the mountains of Siberia to the territory of Cochinchina, and from the valleys of Thibet to the shores of the Pacific, embracing an extent of more than 4,000,000 square geographical miles; and in this vast region, from the policy of its Tartar conquerors, only four outlets of communication are allowed with the rest of the world—Meitnatchin on the north; Cha-po, a small town upon the coast, exclusively for the Japan commerce; Amoy, to which the Spaniards possess the exclusive right to trade; and Canton on the south.

China Proper, or the country of the Chinese race, includes about one-third of this extent. The remaining territory is inhabited by Moguls, Mantchoo Tartars, and Coreans. It is situated between the 20th and 41st degrees of north latitude, and 95th and 123d degrees of east longitude. On the east and south it is bounded by the Pacific Ocean, and by those great branches of it called the Yellow Sea and the Sea of China; on the west by the extensive tracts of country denominated Thibet, Sifan, and Kokonor; and on the north by Mongolia and Mantchoria. Its superficial extent is 1,300,000 square miles, or about twelve times the dimensions of England. Of this vast surface, the greater part is a large table land, inclining from the summit level of Thibet to the sea, with here and there terraces, which break the regular inclination. There is some very high ground in Kansuh Chan-si and Chan-tung; and on the south the mountains of Nau-ling and Mel-ling run through the provinces of Yun-nan, Kwang-se, Kwan-si, and Fuh-keen, and upon the hollows of the table lands large lakes are formed, and very slightly elevated Highlands divide the great streams that traverse the heart of the empire.

The great wall separates Mongolia from China. This wall is about 1,500 miles in length, 30 feet high in the valleys, and about twenty feet on the high lands and rocks. The great canal extends in a continuous line for 500 miles, from Nankin to the interior of the country. It is said to have been executed under the reign of the grandson of Genghis Khan. The climate of China varies much. In the southern provinces the temperature is higher than that of Bengal; while at Peking the cold is greater than under the same latitude in Europe. Here snow generally prevails for three months every winter. On the coast the trade winds prevail, but are intercepted and rendered irregular by the large islands and peninsulas that surround it.

TOWNS.

PEKIN, the capital, stands in a corner of this vast empire, about 40 miles only from the Great Wall. It consists of two distinct parts, the Chinese and Tartar cities—in the latter of which is the Imperial Palace. It is about twelve miles in circumference, and completely surrounded by lofty walls. According to the most credible accounts, the population is about 2,000,000. It is divided into regular streets, the principal of which crosses the whole city, and is about 120 feet wide, unpaved, but carefully watered, and nearly three miles long. The streets are much crowded, as the Chinese spend much time in the opening. Its position renders the climate comparatively cold, and frost and snow prevail generally for three or four months every year. The palace, also, is surrounded by a wall, with a few sentinels at the gates. It, in fact, forms a small town, inhabited by the great officers of state, and numerous mechanics in the service of the Emperor.

The Russians have a college here established in 1728. It consists of six priests and four lay students, who remain for ten years to acquire the language. The Chinese government have built a chapel for their use.

NANKIN, the ancient capital, is a very superior city, but has greatly declined since the seat of government and the Courts of Justice were transferred to Peking. It is the first town in the empire for manufactures and learning. Its silks, paper, and cotton goods, bearing its name, are preferred to those made elsewhere. It is called the seat of Chinese learning; its libraries are numerous, and here is the principal medical school of the empire. It is situated on the Yang-tse Kiang, near the mouth. Nankin is remarkable for its pagoda, or porcelain tower. It consists of nine stories, ascended by 881 steps. The galleries are filled with images, and set round with bells, which jingle when agitated by the wind. To the south of Nankin, along the Great Canal, stands the beautiful city of Sou-choo-tou, which the Chinese extol as their earthly paradise. Branches from the Great Canal traverse it throughout, and render it, like Venice, a city of waters. Here all the classes, whose functions are to minister to pleasure, are trained to their respective vocations—comedians, dancers, jugglers, and sales destined to fill the harems of the great. The females here are reckoned to be fairer and more gracefully attired than those of the northern cities. The adjoining province, Tche-kiang, is the finest in China. It produces vast quantities of mulberry-trees, and is distinguished by containing the great city of Hang-tchou-fou, situated at the point where the Great Canal joins the river Tcheentang, which here spreads out into an ample salt-water lake. This is the city described by Marco Polo, as the capital of southern China, and is the most splendid he ever saw. Even in its present decline, it still rivals Peking. The varied beauties of its lake, the numerous pleasure-parties which cover its surface, the gilded barges with floating streamers, and the aerial mansions with which the margin of the lake is studded, form a magic scene which fully bears out the glowing description of that celebrated traveller. In the adjoining province of Kiang-si is the Poyang Lake, surrounded with numerous and populous cities; one of the most remarkable is Kan-tchang-fou, said to contain 1,000,000 of inhabitants. It is in the centre of the porcelain manufactures, and like some of our best inland manufacturing towns, its site is marked by the clouds of flame and smoke which rise from it, and make it appear at night like a great city on fire. No foreigner has been admitted into its precincts, lest he should discover the secret of the processes carried on. The southern frontier of Kiang-si is bounded by a lofty and naked barrier of mountains, which interrupts the water communication between Peking and Canton.

MACAO, (called by the Chinese U-Moon, the mouth of the river,) is a Portuguese settlement, situated on a peninsula in the district of Canton. The population is between 15,000 and 20,000, of whom not more than 5,000 are Portuguese; the rest consisting of Canton foreigners, who require to be nominally associated with the Portuguese to be allowed to trade from the port. Vessels destined for Canton are generally detained twenty-four hours in the Macao Roads till the Chinese government send down a pilot. The voyage from Macao to Calcutta generally lasts about a month. A ship arriving from Calcutta generally makes the land to the outward of Macao, near the Pedra Branca Rock. A pilot then comes on board, having a pass, a chop, or licence from the pilot Mandarin, to conduct the vessel to Macao. Since the decline of the Portuguese trade, Macao has become a place of comparatively little importance. It is distant from Canton about 96 miles, and Europeans leave their wives and families attached to their families, at Macao, as no European female is allowed to proceed to Canton. A large opium trade was formerly carried on, but the heavy port dues demanded by the Portuguese have drawn it to the Hong Kong and Canton stations. The country around Macao is very romantic and beautiful—large granite rocks, verdant vales, and the cool sea breezes. For this reason Macao is made the summer residence of nearly all the English, some of whom have very beautiful grounds. The Casa de Nosta, one of the most romantic spots in the world, overlooking the inner harbour, and containing a grotto, in which the

Portuguese poet, Camoens, wrote his Lusiad, formerly belonged to two Englishmen connected with the factory. On leaving Macao, and sailing up the Canton river, another pilot comes on board to conduct the vessel to Whampoa, and a license must be obtained before the vessel is allowed to proceed. The forms having been completed, two hopoo men, or custom-house officers, come on board, and fasten their junk to the stern of the ship. Passing up the river to the Bocca Tigris, four small forts are seen. The Chinese speak of these fortifications as very formidable, but Captain Maxwell drove the Chinese from the guns, and laid these forts in ruins. Tiger Island is a little further on, and upon arriving at Whampoa Roads, a ship generally anchors between Danes and French Islands. The country around is very beautiful. Hills rise on each side cultivated to the summit: waving fields of rice and extensive sugar fields, scattered over with villages and pagodas; an immense number of country boats, curiously rigged and manned; fleets of ships from all parts of the world, lying at anchor in the river, make up a picture such as is not seen in any other part of the globe. In arriving at Whampoa, a ship-master accepts the services of a comprador, whose business is to supply the ship's company with their provisions during their stay; the captain obtains a pass of the Hopoo, and proceeds to Canton.

CANTON, (Chinese Kwang-chou-fou and Chan-Chong,) stands on the eastern bank of the Pekiang river, which flows from the interior in a navigable stream for 300 miles to this town, where it is fully broader than the Thames at London-bridge; and after an additional course of 60 miles, falls into the southern sea of China. The town is surrounded by walls, with a broad and deep ditch about five miles in circumference. It stretches about five miles along the banks of the river, and three miles in a contrary direction. It is defended towards the river by two high walls, mounted with cannon, and two fortresses built on two islands; on the land side, it has a strong wall, and three forts. These forts and walls, however, would be totally unavailable in case of a regular attack, conducted according to European warfare. No correct estimate of the population has ever been obtained, but it is supposed to be fully as great as that of Calcutta, or nearly 1,000,000. The principal street appropriated to Europeans is denominated China-street. Here are to be found the productions of every quarter of the globe. The factories of the different European powers extend a considerable distance along the banks of the river, at about 100 yards from the water. They consist of large handsome houses, on which are hoisted the flags of the different nations trading in the country. The British factory far surpasses all others in elegance and extent. For the space of four or five miles opposite Canton, boats and vessels are ranged parallel to each other in close order, many of them occupied by numerous families who reside constantly on the water. In the middle of the river lie the Chinese junks, which trade with the Eastern Islands. Some of the junks are from 600 to 1,000 tons burden. They are extremely ill-built, almost unmanageable except before a wind, and require a crew of at least thirty men to every hundred tons. Canton is the only port in China open to vessels of every European nation.

ISLANDS.

HAENAN.—This island lies to the south of Kwang-tung; and is divided from the main land by a channel about thirty miles broad. Large sandbanks run along the northern and western coasts, and the channel is filled with shoals and sandbanks, so that it is navigable only by junks or vessels of small draft. Several large vessels, which have attempted this passage, have been lost. There are several good harbours on the southern coast, and the island is well supplied with water from streams that run in the mountains. Frequent rain covers the vallies with vegetation, and rice is produced in great abundance. The Lymon, or Tchichan Mountains run through the centre of the island—gold and lapis lazuli are found in these mountains; and extensive forests of valuable wood cover their sides. Small horses are bred in great numbers, and the Chinese carry on a pearl fishery on the shores, and great quantities of salt is made, which is carried to Canton. This island nominally belongs to the Chinese em-