

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH TRADE WITH CHINA.

The conquest of the country by the Tartars subjected it to the rules of princes who had lived in an inland and central portion of a mighty continent, the habits of the people of which were such as to be entirely independent of all commerce, foreign or domestic, and who, roaming from place to place with their tents, and living entirely upon their flocks and herds, had no need for intercourse with any other nation or tribe. At a very early period, its silks, raw and manufactured, found their way to Europe, and, notwithstanding the high price, produced by a long land carriage and the small stock of the article, it was much in request, and we are told, that the Roman matrons paid a sum equal to £4. 4s. per lb. for it, and used it to a considerable extent. The chief product of the country, tea, was not then known in Europe, nor, indeed, until a long time after. The Arabs were the first traders, and carried on a regular trade, at more than on a point, for a considerable period. The first Europeans who visited China, by sea, were the Portuguese, who appeared off the coast, in 1516, soon after rounding the Cape of Good Hope. They resorted to the islands at the mouth of the Canton river, and obtained permission to trade. Their voyage being a successful one, they repeated it in the following year with eight vessels. They were upon their arrival, surrounded by war junks, and watched with considerable suspicion, and only two ships were allowed to proceed to Canton, which, after some delay, procured cargoes. The remainder of the fleet proceeded to Ningpo, and carried on a lucrative trade with other parts of China, and also with Japan. Having however, in the year 1545, incurred the ill-will of the local government by their bad conduct, they were driven out, and thus, for ever, lost the finest commercial site in the empire. In another quarter, Macao, they were more successful; and, having obtained permission to build sheds for the protection of their goods from the weather, they strengthened their grounds, erecting substantial ware-houses and dwelling-houses, paying a regular ground-rent to the Government for the space so occupied. It was not until the year 1596, that any attempts were made by the British towards opening a commercial intercourse with China. Three ships were fitted out from the port of London, under the command of Benjamin Wood, and conveying letters from Queen Elizabeth to the Emperor, but they were unfortunately lost upon the voyage out, and the attempt was not for a long time afterwards renewed. In 1637, five vessels, under the command of Captain Waddell, were dispatched, and reached Macao on the 28th May. Here they were thwarted in their endeavours to open up a trade by the misrepresentations of the Portuguese, and, after fruitless efforts to negotiate, they determined to proceed up the Canton river. Having reached the Bogue, or Bocca Syris, they sent messages to the mandarins stating their wishes, which the former promised to further as much as possible. While waiting for an answer, a period of six days, the Portuguese again poisoned the minds of the Government, who, without waiting, treacherously fired upon the ships from the forts. They returned the fire very spiritedly, and, a party having landed, took the fort. At the same time, a boat was sent to the chief mandarin, demanding an explanation of the outrage, which was finally laid to the account of the slanders of the Portuguese, and the ships received their cargoes. For many years no further intercourse took place. In 1670 a trade was established at the island of Formosa, from which the Dutch had recently been expelled: but the regulations were so vexatious that it was given up in 1684, and strong efforts were made, which were partially successful, to open a communication with Canton, Ningpo, and the other ports on the east coast, were also visited, but in vain, for the country was now under the dominion of the Tartars, whose aversion to foreign commerce was so great as to confine the commerce to Canton and Macao. Very soon after the Canton trade was opened, troubles seem to have commenced. In 1689, the Hoppo, or chief commissioner of customs, made an extravagant charge for the measurement of the ship *Defence*; but, upon finding he could not obtain this, he took the correct amount. During the delay consequent upon the attempted exaction, an affray took place between the crew and the Chinese, when he refused to let the vessel sail until a sum, greater than even his first demand, was paid. This affair was ended by the ship sailing, without leave, and passing the batteries uninjured. In the mean time, though the trade laboured under heavy exactions and grievances, it still continued. The exactions had become so great, in 1734, that but one ship, the *Harrison*, visited Canton. Little change took place in this respect for the next twenty years, when the complaints of the merchants having in 1754, reached the ears of the viceroy, he ordered the ships to be detained outside until he investigated them. The trade was stopped, too, for a short time in the same year, in consequence of the affray between the English French sailors, which ended fatally, and the Chinese insisted upon the offender being delivered up to them. After some delay a sailor confessed himself guilty, under the assurance of the mandarins that he should not be hurt, and was liberated after a short confinement. In 1765, another stoppage took place, in consequence of his Majesty's ship *Argo* refusing the right of search; and, in 1772, the Lord Camden was detained for several weeks, through an affray between the Chinese and Europeans, in which both parties were badly hurt, but in which all eventually recover-

ed. Several stoppages of the trade have resulted from the Chinese rulers, in case of the death of any of the natives, though it should be only an accident, demanding the delivery of the offender, who, without trial, was generally executed. Nor is this according to their national law which, in this respect resembles our own, when applied to the natives of the country. The embassy of Lord Macartney, in 1793, was decidedly productive of benefit, the trade having been upon a better footing than for a long time previously for several years afterwards. However, in 1800, another dispute took place respecting the death of a native while trying to cut the cable of her Majesty's schooner *Providence*; but in which case the demand for the delivery of the man who killed him was resolutely and successfully refused. Another case of homicide, in 1807, between some drunken sailors and a party of Chinese, was adjusted by the mandarins, finding they could not get the culprits into their power, inventing a story of the man having been killed by the accidental fall of a piece of wood from a window. A serious stoppage of the trade took place in 1808, in consequence of the English, in anticipation of an attack on Macao by the French landing troops there for the defence of the Portuguese, their allies. The viceroy refused to open it until every soldier had been embarked, which took place soon after. Some troubles, in the year 1814, having taken place between the English and Americans, in consequence of the capture of one of the ships of the latter, and her subsequent recapture, the chief commissioner commenced a series of insults and indignities against the vessels and factories which became unendurable. The committee of English residents upon this occasion, determined to stop the trade themselves, and thus turn against their opposers a weapon they had so often used against others. Accordingly, the ships dropped down the river with the superintendent and most of the English gentlemen; and the Hoppo, startled at this step, was completely subdued, and more important privileges were obtained than had ever yet been conceded. The events connected with the embassy of Lord Amherst, its unsuccessful results, and his refusal to perform the ceremony of prostration, are well known. After its departure, in the years 1816 to 1829, the trade was but once stopped. Another case of homicide occurred in 1820, but the Chinese, who had now felt the decisive character of the English, soon adjusted it. Another cessation of trade occurred in 1822. In consequence of a homicide, by the Parsees, of an Englishman named M'Kenzie, in the year 1834, the Chinese, pleading the conduct of the committee in 1780, demanded, that the prisoners should be given up for execution. They, however, had been sent to Bombay for trial; and the mandarins, finding they could not be had, issued an edict, demanding the removal of the President's lady, and threatening force if it were not complied with. Upon this a guard of one hundred men and two eighteen pounders were ordered up, and, upon seeing these preparations, the Chinese were intimidated. Upon an assurance being given that no violence was intended, the guns and men were sent back again. It was about this time, the period when the charter of the East India Company was about to expire, that a final experiment was made to open up a trade with the eastern coast of China. The vessel employed, the *Lord Amherst*, was away more than six months, and touched at most of the ports. The natives evinced the utmost desire to trade; but, such was the jealousy of the mandarins and local governors, that scarcely a single article of a well-assorted cargo was disposed of, and the bulk was brought back exactly as it went. The Canton trade was now put under different management than hitherto, the new bill providing three commissioners to superintend the affairs of the trade. They arrived out in April, 1834, with Lord Napier at their head, and the Chinese instantly commenced a series of insults and injuries which ended in the death of his Lordship and the exclusion of the others from the port. Upon that occasion, the utter weakness of the Government was developed in their being unable, with one hundred and thirteen guns, to hinder his Majesty's ships from entering the river, or to inflict upon them any great amount of injury. The trade was stopped for a considerable period, and when it was opened, no improvement whatever took place in the situation of the residents. To the present suspension of trade it is impossible to name a limit.—*Glasgow Courier*.

THE LADY OF THE HAY-STACK.

History affords many very striking instances of the effects of mental agitation in disturbing the powers of the understanding.

A German lady of great beauty and accomplishments having married a Hessian officer, who was ordered to America, not being able to acquire any tidings of him in her own country came over to England. Here she could only learn the destiny of her husband from those ships which had either transported troops to the continent, or were bringing back the wounded. Day after day she wandered on the beach of Portsmouth, and hour after hour she wearied her eyes bedewed with tears in the vain expectation of seeing him. She was observed at the same spot, ere it was light, and watching each motion of the waves until setting sun. Then her haunted imagination presented him mangled with wounds, and the smallest gust of wind seemed to threaten her with eternal separation. Did a ship enter into port, her eager steps led her to the spot, and many an enquiry was repaid with an insolent rebuff. Af-

ter eight months spent in this anxious manner, a ship arrived bringing her melancholy pleasure "that some Hessian officers who were wounded, were on their passage." Her impatience increased daily. A vessel at length arrived reported to have Hessian troops on board. She kept at some distance for fear of giving too great a shock to her husband's feelings should he be among them. He was landed with others. She fainted, and he was conveyed she knew not where. Having recovered and going to the different inns, she found at last her husband. The master of the inn informed her "he was very bad," and she begged that her being in England might be gradually broken to him. When she entered the room he burst into a flood of tears. A lady was supporting him in her arms. What words or painting could represent the tragedy that followed! He had married in America, and this person was also his wife. He entreated pardon, but was past reproach, for in a few minutes after he sunk into the arms of death.

The lady, whose melancholy history we are recording, rushed from the room, and leaving her money and clothes at her lodging, she wandered she knew not whither, vowing that she would never enter house more or trust to man. She stopped at last near Bristol and begged the refreshment of a little milk. There was something so attractive in her whole appearance as soon produced her whatever she requested. She was young and extremely beautiful; her manners graceful and elegant, and her countenance interesting to the last degree. She was alone, a stranger, and in deep distress; she only asked for a little milk, but uttered no complaint, and used no art to excite compassion. Her dress and accents bore visible marks that she was a foreigner of superior birth. All the day she was seen wandering in search of a place to lay her wretched head; she scooped, towards night, a lodging for herself in an old hay stack. Multitudes soon flocked around her in this new habitation, attracted by the novelty of the circumstance, her singular beauty, but above all by the suddenness of her arrival. French and Italian were spoken to her, but she appeared not to understand those languages; however, when she was accosted in German, she evidently appeared confused—the emotion was too great to be suppressed—she uttered some faint exclamation in our tongue, and then, as if hurried into an imprudence, she pretended to be also without knowledge of this language. Various conjectures were instantly formed; but what seemed passing strange was her acceptance of no food except bread and milk. The neighbouring ladies remonstrated with her on the danger of so exposed a situation, but in vain, for neither prayers nor menaces could induce her to sleep in a house.

As she discovered evident marks of insanity, she was at length confined in a mad house, under the care of Dr. Renaudet, physician at the Hot Wells. On the first opportunity she escaped, and repaired to her beloved hay-stack. Her rapture was inexpressible on finding herself at liberty, and once more safe beneath this miserable refuge.

It was nearly four years that this forlorn creature devoted herself to this desolate life, since she knew the comfort of a bed or the protection of a roof. Hardship, sickness, intense cold, and extreme misery, had gradually impaired her beauty, but she still was a most interesting figure, and there remained uncommon sweetness and delicacy in her air and manner; her answers were always pertinent enough, except when she suspected the question was meant either to affront or ensnare her, when she seemed sullen and angry. Some Quaker ladies at this time interposed, and Louisa, as she was called, was conveyed to Guy's hospital, where she remained and still maintained her indignation against the men.

The person with whom she lodged, on her death bed divulged the secret of the flight of this stranger from Portsmouth, which corresponds nearly with her arrival near Bristol, and further inquiries have discovered that she was the natural daughter of Francis Emperor of Germany.—*Philosophy of Medicine*.

THE LITTLE BIRD-KEEPER.

Every morning during the passing spring—and dark, hazy, chilly mornings they were—possessing the one character of "uncomfortable" to its utmost extent of English signification; every morning, long, long before what servants who are obliged to be up early call day-break, did the shrill, thin chaunt of a child's voice rise from yonder field, upon the mist, the fog, or the breeze. Sometimes hard to distinguish, though I knew it was on the wind; at other moments painfully distinct. I have heard it when half awake, when the rain pattered against my window, and dropped audibly, from the naked stems of the rose boughs, on the flag beneath—then it sounded, as well it might, like a wail and a sorrow; at other times it has come sharply with the sharp sleet, and echoed, amid the rattling hail. Again, I have heard it, singing through the clear air of a frosty twilight, when all else without, and within, was so still that I could hear the cricket chirp, and the clock tick from the kitchen below. Sometimes the two old crows, who lived in yonder tall ash tree, have croaked their displeasure at the disturbance, though, goodness knows, they are early risers—as the grubs and caterpillars on our little lawn have known to their cost. The first fine, bright, warm morning, the voice sounded gleesomely—the chaunt was frequently repeated—the voice was prodigal of its simple music, c, a, c, a, g, the last being a semi-quaver. Those