

CHAPTER XVIII.

INSOLENCE OF THE MOB—A FORCIBLE ENTRY INTO TIENTSIN—MAKING REPRISALS—HOSTILE CROWDS—PEACEFUL PROCLAMATIONS—PLAN OF THE CITY OF TIENTSIN—ASPECT OF THE CITY—THE TRAFFIC IN THE STREETS—DECLINING TRADE OF TIENTSIN—NOTICE CONCERNING THE GRAIN SUPPLY—PRESENT STATE OF THE GRAND CANAL—OFFICIAL EXPENDITURE OF GRAIN—COLLECTION OF THE GRAIN-TRIBUTE—STATE OF THE YELLOW RIVER—OBSTRUCTIONS IN ITS NAVIGATION—GRAIN TRANSPORT BY SEA—REPORT ON THE GRAND CANAL—PRICE OF RICE AT TIENTSIN—TABLE SHOWING PROCEEDS OF GRAIN-TAX—TRADE OF TIENTSIN—SQUALOR OF THE INHABITANTS—BURIAL-PLACES—TOTAL ALLIED FORCE AT TIENTSIN—EXPLORATION OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY—THE HARVEST AT TIENTSIN—KITCHEN-GARDENS—SALT-PANS—VETCH-FIELDS—LOCUST-HUNTING.

(OUR suspicions of the hostile character of Keying's interference, alluded to in the last chapter, had received a somewhat singular confirmation in the altered demeanour manifested by the inhabitants within two or three days after his arrival.) Up to that time nothing could exceed the respectful bearing of all classes with whom we had come in contact, in the course of our rides and walks through the city and suburbs. Upon the very day, however, of the

visit of Messrs Wade and Lay to the Commissioners' yamun, just described, the Admiral, accompanied by two or three naval officers, was pelted and hooted at by the populace while walking in one of the suburbs. This was a course of proceeding on their part altogether unexpected ; and our astonishment was increased on the following afternoon by the sudden appearance in our yamun of Captains Dew and Saumarez in a state of some excitement, the former hatless, and grasping a large stick, the battered condition of which gave evidence of some recent violent rencontre. It appeared that, while walking quietly inside the city, near one of the gates, they were pelted and hooted, and ultimately attacked by the mob, who, however, entertained too great a respect for barbarian prowess to press them very close, and they escaped with only the loss of a favourite dog of Captain Dew's, and the hat of that gallant officer. Immediately on the receipt of this news, a message was sent to Major Boyle commanding the marines, who were barracked only a hundred yards distant. As it was already late in the day, and no time was to be lost, that officer at once put himself at the head of a strong party of marines, and, accompanied by half-a-dozen blue-jackets of the Furious, and some of us as amateurs, proceeded, under the guidance of Captain Dew, towards that part of the city where the outrage was said to have occurred.

As, however, we had upwards of half a mile of suburb to traverse before reaching the nearest city-

gate, timely notice of our approach was received by the gate-keepers, from scouts who ran on to warn them; and in spite of our utmost endeavours to reach the gate before it was shut, we found, upon our arrival before it, that it was firmly barricaded against us, and on looking through the chinks in the massive panelling, could discern a large crowd collected in the deep archway which passed under the wall at this point, some fifteen or twenty yards in breadth. We insisted upon a Chinaman ordering them to open the gate, who obeyed our commands in this wise:—"Look out!" he cried; "here are a whole lot of barbarians wanting to get in! They have pressed me; I have nothing to do with it. Open the gate! open the gate! open the gate!" The first part of the sentence, intended only for his Chinese audience, was overheard by Mr Lay; the latter part, intended for us, was shouted with the utmost vehemence.

Seeing that the people were determined not to admit us, and that it was hopeless to attempt to force the gate, I accompanied Captains Osborn and Dew in search of an available part of the wall for scaling. Some low houses were built against a crumbling angle at a likely place, and scrambling on to the overhanging eaves, we were soon digging our fingers and toes into the crevices formed by the disintegration of the unburnt brick of which the wall was composed. In a moment more we were joined by three or four blue-jackets with muskets,

and, running along the wall, jumped down into the street, and astonished the unsuspecting crowd in the archway, as we took them in rear with a loud yell. They doubtless supposed that the whole British army was at our backs, for they tumbled about in all directions in their haste to escape, assisted by the application of a little judicious pressure upon sundry parts of their persons, as they scampered away. Dew, seizing a hatchet from one of them, instantly cut through the bar of the gate, and in another moment the whole of the marines walked quietly in,—the city having thus been stormed and taken in five minutes, without any more serious wound having been given or received than that which may be inflicted with the toe of a boot.

We marched tranquilly up the main street, then down to the South Gate, which Dew at first supposed to be the one at which he had been insulted. Finding out our mistake, however, we marched along the whole length of one face of the city, a distance of about a mile, upon the top of the wall, to the West Gate—a most striking procession to the admiring crowds, who were collected in astonishment to watch us make such free use of their mural defences, considered the most sacred part of a Chinese city. Immediately on arriving at the West Gate, Captain Dew's hat was presented to him; and we informed the mob that, in consequence of the impropriety of their behaviour in that particular locality, it would be necessary to make prisoners of six respectable

householders, as it was impossible to recognise the individual offenders. Thus the better class would come to see the necessity of treating foreigners civilly. So we laid hands on the captain of the Tartar Guard at the gate, and a few apparently well-to-do shopkeepers, and marched them solemnly off between two files of marines ; Mr Lay pointing the moral of the proceeding by making the Chinese as we passed say, "It is very wrong to insult an Englishman ; I will never insult an Englishman." Any man who showed any reluctance to repeat this formula was at once brought forward, and compelled, in a distinct and grave voice, to give utterance to a variety of sentiments expressive of his regard and consideration for the English. The prisoners were only kept in confinement one night, and on the following morning were released, well satisfied with the treatment they had received, and full of promises to use their utmost influence to prevent a recurrence of a similar incident. Captain Dew's dog, a handsome retriever, swam off to the Cormorant, on board which ship his master was staying, during the night.

(We were assured, in different quarters, that the behaviour of the people was due to the instructions they had received from their mandarins, and that these instructions had only been issued subsequently to Keying's arrival.) We had the greater reason to believe this assertion, as, in consequence of the representations made to the Commissioners, no further annoyance of the sort was experienced, except upon

the day following, and probably before any instructions upon the matter had been widely circulated, when Cameron and I were walking alone in a distant suburb, and were pelted by some of the younger part of the population, and surrounded by a hostile-looking crowd, who commenced hooting. Upon our turning round and facing them, with an appealing look to the most respectable individuals in the crowd, these latter restrained the more ardent spirits ; and as we walked away, we could hear the voices of the advocates for and against insult in high altercation. After this, we could walk and ride to considerable distances with perfect impunity, though ever since our first arrival we had deemed it unwise to go about unarmed.

The appearance, a few days after this, of 120 marines and two guns from the fleet, who were marched with all possible military display to their quarters, did much to give effect to our remonstrances, and increased the civility of the people. Our force, until the arrival of this body and the engineers, had been very small, in consequence of most of the blue-jackets having been sent back to the fleet immediately upon our becoming installed in our quarters at Tientsin. Now, however, proclamations were posted up all over the city and suburbs, stating that foreigners were always to be attended by (Chinese) soldiers to preserve them from insult, and that persons insulting them would be severely punished. A news-room was discovered in the city, where placards

containing the latest barbarian intelligence were posted up. Among other pieces of news, the public were informed that we had been induced to parade the town a few days previously in consequence of the auspiciousness of the day. We had certainly proved, upon that occasion, that, with even the comparatively small force now at our disposal, we might consider any day auspicious to take and occupy a city, the defences of which were so feeble and the garrison so weak and timorous.

The authorities were, moreover, extremely desirous of showing their sincerity, by inflicting summary punishment upon any Chinaman against whom complaints were made. One cheerful-looking man used to appear daily at the gate of the *yamun*, and seat himself there with a *cangue*, or piece of board about three feet square, locked round his neck. The Chinese put their criminals' heads, instead of their legs, into the stocks, and the culprit is compelled to wear this cumbersome necklace for a given number of weeks, or sometimes months. Upon one occasion a man was brought into the *yamun* for smuggling *samshu* to the marines, and the petty official charged with ministering to our comforts, to show his zeal, instantly commenced slapping him violently with the open hand upon the back, as though impelled by an amiable desire to assist him in coughing up a fish-bone.

The city of Tientsin occupies the angle formed by the junction of the Grand Canal and river *Peiho*. It is built as nearly as possible in the form of a

square, each face being, according to a rough estimate, a mile in length. Four massive gateways give entrance to the four roads, which approach from the cardinal points of the compass. These roads, on entering the town, become the principal streets, and intersect it at right angles. At the point of intersection, in the centre of the town, is a pagoda-shaped building, supported upon four archways, which span the streets. From this point all four gates are visible. These streets differ entirely from those of a southern town. In the latter, two sedan-chairs meeting scarcely find room to scrape past each other; while at Tientsin wheeled vehicles traverse the streets, which are in places paved with large flagstones, the foot-passengers being provided with a *trottoir*.

Nor was Tientsin superior to southern towns in the breadth of its streets alone. The visitor could pursue his exploratory investigations without having his nostrils assailed at every turn by the indescribably foul odours of the south; for although the city and suburbs were by no means free from stench, they existed but in a modified form. There was nothing, however, to tempt one to frequent its uninviting purlieus. The few shops that interested foreigners were in the suburbs; the shops and houses in the city containing the commonest articles of Chinese necessity, and the exterior was as mean as their interior was ill supplied. They were generally built of unburnt brick, sometimes of mud, often consisting of two very low stories, the ground floor open to the street.

Some fantastically-carved wooden arches, which spanned one of the streets, were the only ornaments of which the town could boast. The temples were poor in an architectural point of view, and the divinities they contained more than ordinarily shabby: the best was in the suburb. Two or three yamuns indicated the residences of the civic dignitaries. There was an absence of that life and bustle in the streets which usually characterise a Chinese town; this may have been partially owing to the panic created by our presence. Indeed, people were actually leaving the town, and many of the shops were shut from this cause; and in the suburbs this proof of their uncertainty with regard to our intentions was more general. They evidently did not wish to tempt our cupidity by the display of their wealth. Whether this wealth existed or not remained a matter of speculation. Most certainly the general impression created upon our minds was, that for a town which, with its suburbs, is said to contain half a million of inhabitants, Tientsin was the most squalid, impoverished-looking place we had ever been in.

The principal traffic in the streets seemed to be that of fuel and water. The fuel consisted of millet or wheat straw, carried on men's shoulders; the water was conveyed in the quaintly-constructed wheel-barrows already described: occasionally might be seen a man sitting upon one side of the wheel, to balance the two buckets of water poised upon the other. The water-way to the edge of the river was paved with

flagstones, cut down through the steep bank, the cutting being bridged over for the convenience of people passing along the river brink. As seen from the water, the groups of water-carriers, with their barrows and variously-shaped buckets, emerging from these subterranean avenues, or collected at their mouth, presented one of the few picturesque sights which greeted the eye of the traveller, if he had not become too much disgusted with the monotony around him to appreciate anything.

Such was the internal aspect of the city of Tientsin. Its defences consisted of the rickety walls above mentioned, which had crumbled away so much in places that it remained a mere shell. It was said, that upon this wall were mounted eighty guns, being twenty to each face ; but even if that number was not exaggerated, they existed more in name than in reality. Instead of being mounted on carriages, they were, for the most part, imbedded in baskets of sand, and so corroded and decayed that the gunners would be in infinitely greater danger than the enemy. The gates are all surmounted by buildings which serve as barracks, of two stories, with pagoda roofs.

Upon the first occasion of our visiting the city, two or three days after our arrival at Tientsin, some slight reluctance to admit us was exhibited by the gate-keepers ; but after our forcible entry, our visits were regarded as a matter of course.

I was informed by an old merchant of Tientsin, and his statement was corroborated by the present

aspect of the place, that it had been decaying both in opulence and population since the overflowing of the Yellow River had broken down the banks of the Grand Canal, and the exigencies of the rebellion had swallowed up the funds which would otherwise have been devoted to the repair of that great work. Produce of various descriptions, arriving from almost every province in China, formerly found its way by tributary canals into the main artery ; much of the wealth of the Empire thus flowed past Tientsin, which now reaches the capital by other channels of internal communication, or has ceased altogether. But the principal use of the Grand Canal was for the transport of the annual grain-supply. According to Sir George Staunton, a thousand grain-junks were passed by Lord Macartney's mission between Tientsin and Toongchow. It will be seen from the following interesting notice, compiled by Mr Wade from various authentic Chinese sources, what, according to the most recent accounts, is the present state of the Imperial Canal, and under what conditions the grain-transport has been carried on in consequence :—

“ It is now several months since rumours reached us of the terror produced in the districts adjoining the lower part of the Yellow River, by its disappearance from its ancient bed. * It seems beyond doubt established that, from a point which must be about as high up as Kai-fung Fu, this

* See *North-China Herald*, Nos. 336, 3d January 1857 ; 359, 13th June 1857 ; 407, 15th May 1858 ; 411, 12th June 1858.

violent stream has forced a new, or, according to Chinese historians, has resumed an old channel, in a north-easterly direction, and now makes its way into the Gulf of Pechelee by superadding its waters to those of the Ta-tsing and other rivers of Shan-tung. Much of the intermediate country is described by a recent traveller as more lake than land, and the great artery of Northern China, the Grand Canal, clogged in some places and expanded out of all symmetry in others, lies useless for any of the greater purposes of trade or supply for which it was originally intended. From the statement of the crew of a Yang-chau junk, which had forced her way up to Tientsin early in 1857, the bed of the Yellow River had been filled with water from the canal reservoir by Hwai-ngan Fu to the depth of three feet, to enable vessels to cross. The junk in question drew but two feet. She found in many places up the canal but four inches water, and the greatest depth at any point did not exceed four feet. We have since learned that the bed of the Yellow River, if temporarily filled, as stated, at the point in question, is now at all events perfectly dry.

“ It is difficult to say from what depths of exigency the industry of China may not recover itself ; but it is almost beyond a doubt that, for the present, the operation of one of her greatest works is in abeyance, and the north of her empire is consequently beholden for its commerce, and to a large extent for its subsistence, to the coast trade, which it has been the

policy of the Government, as regards the most important article of Chinese life, to restrict in favour of its inland traffic. The wants of Northern China naturally attract our attention at a moment when the ports of that region have been opened to a certain extent to our commerce, and the following particulars of what we are wont to describe as the Grain Tribute of China, and of the past and present methods of its transmission, may not be uninteresting.

“The code of the Board of Revenue of 1831, the latest edition, we believe, in print, showed that, exclusive of 13,340 tons for which a constant commutation tax, amounting to 246,570 taels, was levied at various rates in five of the contributing provinces, the whole Grain Tribute annually forwarded in kind used to be collected in the following proportions :—

Rice,	210,000 tons.
White rice for the Court's use, .	44,000 „
Wheat,	4,000 „
Pulse,	17,000 „

• “The wheat and pulse were grown in Chih-li itself, in Shan-tung and in Honan ; the black pulse in Manchuria. The wheat is stated to be the only sort destined for human consumption, but this is by no means certain.

“The subjoined table, drawn up from the same authority, declares the proportions in which, under ordinary circumstances, the producing districts would

contribute. The wretched state of the canal communications and the rebellion, which, besides interrupting both the collection and transmission of the grain-supply, has, for many years, absorbed the funds otherwise applicable to the repairs of the canal and river, are causes which materially affect the original conditions of this branch of revenue. We will speak of it first as it was.

“The official expenditure of grain, in 1811, was some 113,000 tons, without reckoning the Court’s own demand ; and, according to the Revenue Statistics of 1831, already quoted, there should always have been in store, at Peking, 354,000 tons of rice, and at Tung-chau, twelve miles off, 82,000 tons. None of this should be allowed to be unsold or unexpended longer than three years.

“The shipment of the grain was effected at forty-four major and nineteen minor stations in the eight provinces of—

Chih-li.	Kiang-si.
Shan-tung.	Cheh-kiang.
Kiang-su.	Hunan.
Ngan-hwui.	Hu-peh.

“These, with all details of the establishment charged with its carriage and escort, are under a superintendent, with the title of Governor-General, whose headquarters are at Hwai-ngan Fu. He has under him a force on a quasi-military footing, the total strength of which is about 64,000 men. The

grain-junks used to leave the points of collection in fleets, departing at different periods, so as to avoid confusion—each vessel bearing 300 piculs on Government account. The escort, known as *kiting*, carried a certain amount on private account, and were indeed rewarded for bringing in from 100 to 200 piculs in excess of the Government cargo. Each junk was allowed a sum for her expenses, ranging in amount from 160 to 200 taels.

“The collection of the Grain Tribute was supposed to commence on the 1st of the 10th moon, say in November, and all grain, no matter where collected, to be weighed and shipped for the Canal two months later. The junks from the districts north of the Yang-tsz' in the neighbourhood of the Canal, by law should cross the Yellow River at Hwai-ngan Fu in the 12th moon, January or February; those from other parts of Kiang-su and Ngan-hwui, a month later; and those from Kiang-si, Cheh-kiang, Hu-peh, and Hunan, a month later than the last. After they are across, the law still allows them three months to ascend the Canal to Tientsin, there to tranship their cargoes for Tung-chau, whence the chief part of them would be carried in carts to Peking.

“The line of canal-communication between the Yang-tsz' and the Yellow River has but two approaches officially recognised as available for the transmission of the Grain Tribute: one, the Kwa-chau mouth of the Canal, opposite Chin-kiang Fu; the other at I-ching, a few miles higher up the

stream. Punctuality has not been more remarkable in this than in any other branch of Chinese revenue, but the grand derangement of all calculations respecting the transmission of grain has ever been the capricious disposition of the Yellow River. The 20th term of the Chinese year, known as the "frost's descent," has always been watched with anxiety, and freedom from inundation during this period entitled the spirit of the stream to a special sacrifice in token of the Emperor's gratitude. A glance at the map will show, that from the points of its intersection by the Yellow River the Canal takes a north-westerly direction, running for a considerable distance nearly parallel to the course of its turbulent neighbour. As it quits the border of Kiang-su it becomes principally beholden for its supply to various sheets of water, part lake, part reservoir, which, unless we misunderstand the *Pekin Gazette*, are of a construction precariously primitive. Vast earth-works are thrown up, and into the space they enclose, water is worked from the adjacent streams, to the very great peril, as the *Gazette* admits, of the mud *enceinte*, which would be utterly destroyed were the body within it all water. To mitigate this danger, and at the same time to preserve the water-level necessary to the supply of the Canal, the vast tanks are three-fourths filled with mud.

"In 1851 a more than usually violent outbreak of the Yellow River swept away all the works of earth

and masonry in the section of river-works known as the Fung-peh, in the north corner of Kiang-su. In August 1852, the upward-bound grain-fleet was obliged to land its cargo in Shan-tung, some eighty miles below Tsi-ning, to a point, in which department all the grain had to be carried by land for reshipment to Peking. The Emperor was shortly moved by various memorialists to consider some new means of supplying the capital with grain, the Canal, it was urged, having become impracticable by mismanagement.

“Early in 1853 a censor recommends the transport of grain by sea. He puts the total consumption of the capital at four million piculs of superior, and two and a half million piculs of inferior descriptions of grain; say, 430,000 tons. The provinces heretofore relied upon were all disturbed by rebels; but in Fuh-kien and Cheh-kiang, which were quiet, a sale of rank might be opened, and grain bought by the local government with the proceeds. The Formosa market was also spoken of. By the end of the year 333 junks of grain from the south had reached the Gulf of Pechelee.

“In the spring of 1854 the capital was in sore distress. The rebels were on the borders of Tientsin, and Cheh-kiang was the only one of the supplying provinces not in disorder: even there floods had done damage. The Emperor was accordingly prayed to give a general invitation to merchants to import grain from all parts. The river

communication between Peking and Tientsin had also been injured by inundation. Still, by the close of the year the grain-receipts at Tung-chau amounted to 1,424,946 piculs, nearly 100,000 tons. This is described as grain of 1853. It is classed under eight different denominations, and its carriage up from Tientsin, it is observable, employed 3892 river-junks from the 7th June to the 3d August.

“A decree of January 1855 shows that the rendezvous of the junks bringing grain from Kiang-su or Cheh-kiang was the port of Liu-ho, a small customs station on the Yang-tsz', at no great distance from Shanghai. The Emperor is in great want of rice, and lays an embargo right and left on flat-bottomed vessels along the whole coast, from the Gulf of Liau-tung down to Ningpo. Cheh-kiang furnished no less than 60,000 tons this year; but this appears all that Peking received.

“In May 1856 the Governor of Cheh-kiang, in a somewhat self-complacent memorial, reports the shipment of about 60,000 tons in 721 junks, divided into six fleets. ‘It is now four years,’ he says, ‘since the sea-transport was commenced on the recommendation of his predecessor, and the subsidy is increasing annually.’ By the 5th of July, 1200 junks had discharged 100,000 tons at Tientsin and returned south. Some 6000 tons were still due. The insurrection being now to all appearance about to limit itself to the southern provinces, the Canal was

surveyed in the hope of again making it navigable for the grain-fleet. The report is long, and, from the use of certain technicalities, somewhat difficult of translation. The fact, however, is established that, owing to a series of inundations from 1851 to 1855, the artificial channels had sustained almost irreparable damage. The Weishan Hu, a principal reservoir, which should have in it fourteen feet of water, had but from two to eight feet; in many places mud banks stood out like islands, and along its whole western verge was a dry tract of varying width. A proposition to introduce more water and more deposit was rejected, as calculated to jeopardise the frail enclosure of the Hu. The year closes with disastrous notices. In Peking rice was from nine to ten dollars a picul; the crop short in Kiang-su and Cheh-kiang, which were also suffering from locusts. There were locusts in Chih-li as well.

“In 1857 the authorities of the Two Kwangs are called on to find rice for the Court. Some of the Kiang-su quota is detained for war supplies. That the abandonment of the Canal transport is in contemplation, may be inferred from a proposal made by the Board of Revenue, to dispose of the junks formerly employed upon the Canal, many of which we know to be rotting at Hang-chau and elsewhere. The Board also remarks, by the way, that an equivalent to their former tax in grain is now levied in coin on Hu-peh, Hunan, Kiang-si, and Ngan-hwui;

another indication of the Court's acceptance of the sea-transport as something more than a temporary measure. The authorities of Manchuria reported the shipment in June of some 3000 tons of grain, which they describe as rice. It was probably wheat.

“Supposing the censor's estimate, tendered in 1853, to be approximately correct, it follows that, in the last six years, the supply of the best grain has only twice equalled a third, and did not last year amount to a tenth, of the Peking demand. The supply of this year remains to be ascertained; but when the mission were at Tientsin, rice was selling at from five to six dollars a picul, and the resources of the province were threatened by locusts, which continued to arrive by myriads. These were sold dried as food, at forty cash a catty. They did not seem in such request, nevertheless, as to cause future speculators in ‘grain-stuffs’ any serious apprehension.”

TABLE SHOWING THE PROCEEDS OF THE GRAIN-TAX OF CHINA, AS RETURNED IN 1831.

	Chih-li.	Shang-tung.	Honan.	Ngan-hwui.	Kiang-su.	Cheh-kiang.	Kiang-si.	Hu-peh.	Hunan.	TOTALS.
	Piculs.	Piculs.	Piculs.	Piculs.	Piculs.	Piculs.	Piculs.	Piculs.	Piculs.	Piculs.
Rice, for Pekin,.....	57,000	83,295	8,969	283,239	1,038,111	621,466	351,394	94,622	95,529	...
" surplus,.....	...	19,159	2,047	63,400	228,332	136,708	77,236	20,812	21,010	...
" for Tung-chau,.....	...	42,914	9,192	102,075	94,852	29,353	151,614	...	...	...
" surplus,.....	...	7,310	1,564	14,280	13,270	4,981	25,772	...	...	...
" for the Court,.....	69,025	29,975	...	...	...	...
" surplus,.....	20,700	13,482	...	...	...	...
Total Rice,.....	57,000	152,678	21,772	467,994	1,464,340	835,965	606,066	115,434	116,539	3,837,788
Wheat, for Pekin,.....	...	9,915	24,652	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
" surplus,.....	...	2,280	6,660	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
" for Tung-chau,....	...	9,391	12,766	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
" surplus,.....	...	1,581	2,159	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total Wheat,...	...	23,167	46,237	...	...	...	...	...	...	69,404
Pulse, for Pekin,.....	...	82,114	67,189	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
" surplus,.....	...	18,880	15,430	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
" for Tung-chau,....	...	31,082	27,857	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
" surplus,.....	...	5,270	4,726	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total Pulse,.....	...	137,346	115,202	...	...	...	...	...	...	252,548
Total Grain,...	57,000	313,191	183,211	467,994	1,464,340	835,965	606,066	115,434	116,539	4,159,740
Commutation—										
In Silver Taels,.....	...	12,000	12,000	4,332	74,543	...	...	22,764	3,647	...
At different rates,...	...	40,000	40,000	17,829	...	...	...	...	...	...
"	21,635	...	...	...	...	...	...
"	52,000	52,000	43,796	74,543	...	...	22,764	3,647	...

TABLE SHOWING PROCEEDS OF GRAIN-TAX. 397

The high price of rice at Tientsin was doubtless due to our occupation of the river, and the presence of our ships in the Gulf. It had always been one of Lord Elgin's principal objects, in hurrying north at an early period of the year, to reach the mouth of the Peiho in time to intercept the fleet of grain-junks. That we should have been successful in carrying out this design, had not other circumstances intervened to prevent it, may be gathered from the fact that upwards of nine hundred grain-junks were calculated actually to have passed within sight of the Furious on their way into the river, not counting those which sought the northern entrance in order to avoid our fleet. Thus, though Tientsin had lost in some respects in commercial importance, it was still, in a political point of view, the most favourable position for exerting a tremendous moral pressure on the capital. Every day was affording additional evidence of this, and the result proved it conclusively.

To return, however, to the statistics of Tientsin, it was extremely difficult to obtain any information on the subject. The only respectable Chinese merchant whom I had an opportunity of cross-examining on the matter, was either very loth to impart his knowledge, or had no knowledge to impart. The theme upon which he dwelt most feelingly was the excessive poverty of the city of his abode. It exported absolutely nothing, he averred. Its only productions were salt, from the pans near it and the sea, and grain of various descriptions, but not more than suf-

ficed for home consumption. Among its imports from the south are dried fruits, sugar, glass ware, camlets, woollens, opium, &c., in small quantities. Numerous cargoes of beans and bean-cakes are brought over from Neu-chwang and the Manchurian coast. There can be little doubt that we shall find a considerable market in the north of China for our cotton and woollen manufactures. I observed in the bazaar some Manchester calicoes, also English or German glass ware, cutlery, lucifer matches, &c.

In contemplating the population of Tientsin with a practically commercial eye, the problem is not whether they want clothes, but whether they have money enough to buy them. Appearances certainly fully bore out the Chinese merchant's assertion as to the poverty of the town. In no part of the world have I ever witnessed a more squalid, diseased population than that which seemed rather to infest than inhabit the suburbs of the city. Filth, nakedness, and itch, were their prevailing characteristics. The banks of the river swarmed with men who lived entirely on the garbage and offal that were flung from the ships, or were swept up by the tide from the city. There was an eddy just in front of our yamun, in which dead cats, &c., used to gyrate, and into which stark naked figures were constantly plunging, in search of some delicate morsel. Their clothing generally consisted of a piece of mat or tattered sacking, which they wore, not round their waist, but thrown negligently over their shoulders,—it was difficult to

divine for what purpose, as decency was ignored, and in the month of June warmth was not a desideratum. Cutaneous diseases of the most loathsome character met the eye in the course of the shortest walk ; and objects so frightful that their vitality seemed a mockery of existence, shocked the coarsest sensibilities.

Upon several occasions I saw life ebbing from some wretched sufferer as he lay at his post of mendicancy. One old woman, in particular, attracted my attention. She used to lie motionless on a mat in the centre of the road, a diseased skeleton. She had just strength enough to clutch at cash that was flung to her. One day this strength seemed to have failed : I looked closer, and saw she was dead. A few hours after, I repassed ; but her place knew her no more : she had been carried away and cast upon a dung-heap. I was riding on the outskirts of the city one day, and saw a man carrying another on his back. At first I thought the burden was a corpse ; but as I approached nearer, a certain flexibility of the legs, as they trailed in the dust behind, undeceived me. This was one of the city scavengers who prowl the streets for dying beggars, and when they find one in whom life is almost extinct, they bear him off to some suburban Aceldama, and fling him from their shoulders, a premature feast for crows and vultures. Certainly if the imagination of the Chinaman who named this city Tientsin, "heavenly spot," could form no higher idea of an abode of bliss, it is difficult to conceive what must have been his notion of the opposite extreme.

As if in ironical allusion to the misery which the living seemed to endure, almost the only pretty spots near Tientsin were the burial-places. They were nearly the only localities honoured with trees, and consisted generally of a square with an area of about a quarter of an acre, enclosed by a mud bank and ditch, so as to present exactly the appearance of a small earthwork or *tabia*. Each member of a family who reposes within this enclosure is placed beneath a conical mound of earth, about the size and shape of a bell-tent. A thick grove of trees, generally willow and cypress, surrounds the cemetery, and gives a cool and refreshing aspect to the place. One of these burial-places was of so great an extent, and contained so many graves, that in our ignorance we avoided it for some days, feeling certain it was an intrenched camp, as we had heard of the existence of one in the neighbourhood. The absence of the usual trees confirmed the suspicion, until we mustered up courage to visit it one day, and found only a decrepit custodian, rapidly going to join those whose remains he was now guarding. The real camp we discovered a few days after, from the summit of a species of martello tower, to the top of which we climbed for purposes of inspection.

It is not to be supposed, however, that the entire population of Tientsin and its neighbourhood are invalids or beggars. There was a large class of respectable *bourgeoisie*; and the country people, though poor, looked cheerful and industrious, as they worked

in large gangs in the fields. The fair sex was almost invisible. It was by the rarest accident that a glimpse was caught of a woman, not belonging to the lowest class. Even these latter all cramped their feet—a practice not so general among the same class in the south. Some of the little girls we saw were pretty; and, with their heads decorated with bright flowers, and their gaudy skirts fluttering in the wind, they looked piquant and graceful. But, as a rule, the women generally seen were hideous.

Ere very long we had explored the environs of Tientsin in every direction. Our *yamun* was situated on a peninsula, formed by a deep bend of the river, which doubled back so as almost to convert it into an island. Upon one side of us, the mud houses of the suburb were built against the *yamun* wall, but to the left and rear were gardens, scattered houses, and waste land. The engineers occupied a temple within musket-shot, and next door to them, "Caserne Française," painted in large white letters, indicated the quarters of the "Marine Française." Just previous to our departure, there was an allied force of nearly six hundred men quartered in different buildings upon this little peninsula, which was capable of being rendered defensible, if necessary, by an earthwork thrown across the narrow isthmus, so that we were fortunate both in respect to the accommodation and *locale* of our position.

Passing the isthmus, and riding parallel to the Grand Canal, we soon reach a bridge of boats, by

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which the Peking road crosses to the city ; turning sharp to the right, we follow this road, so interesting to us while we thought it possible we might have to traverse it. It soon emerges from the suburb, and crossing two canals, tributary to the Peiho, by substantial bridges, one of which is ornamented with a handsome balustrade of carved marble, reaches the Wenho, or salt river, a little above its junction with the Peiho. It is conveyed across this important stream by a bridge of boats, and traversing the peninsula formed by the two, follows the right bank of the Peiho for as many miles as our explorations extended.

The farthest point I reached on horseback was the large village of Petsang, about seven miles from Tientsin by the road, and lately become interesting as the point at which Mr Ward and his suite struck the Peiho on their way to the capital, from which, according to report, it was not above forty-five miles distant in a straight line. The country through which we passed presented all the appearance of being subject to annual inundations ; deep ditches intersected it in various directions, for the purpose of carrying off the water ; and the Peking road was raised fifteen or twenty feet above its level, the small country roads which crossed it being all bridged over. The high-road was paved in places, and about twenty feet in breadth. The villages, which dotted the landscape in every direction, were also built upon raised mounds, which completed their resemblance to the mud towns of Egypt.

During the first portion of our stay at Tientsin, the flat country extending between the Grand Canal and the Peiho was one vast field of ripening wheat, far as eye could reach; and, uninterrupted by fence or enclosure, the yellow corn rose and fell to the breeze in gently rolling waves; while, dotted over its surface, the masts and sails of numerous junks were visible, looking as though they traversed a golden sea. These were navigating the minor canals. Only once, on an unusually clear day, could I distinguish in the dim distance the irregular outline of some far-off hills. Winding through this fertile plain, the courses of the Grand Canal and the Peiho were marked by the groves of trees which adorn their banks, and surround ancestral graves. Some of the villages also rejoiced in clumps of trees, but generally they looked like brown patches, stuck upon a green ground.

Ere we left Tientsin, the aspect of the country was entirely changed, for the harvest was over. Most of the corn was cut with the sickle, but I observed that grain of certain descriptions was plucked out by the roots; then it was collected into thrashing-grounds, to be tramped out by oxen, and winnowed upon breezy days, when carts, concealed by mountains of straw, and drawn by mixed teams of horses, mules, and oxen, creaked heavily over the soft land, and gleaners scattered themselves far and wide through the fields, and the whole population was out in the bright sunshine, looking cheerful and happy, as they gathered in the blessed fruits of their labour and toil. In the

mellow hour of evening, when the whole western sky was a blaze of red, and the scene was bathed in the glowing reflection of its fiery tints, it was pleasant to ride among the reapers of Tientsin, and forget, in the picture of content and plenty before us, the objects we had just witnessed of misery and starvation.

Although the country round Tientsin was a dead level, it was not destitute of variety. If the Peking road led through nothing but a cornfield, that which followed the banks of the Grand Canal in a southerly direction conducted you for miles between kitchen-gardens, so exquisitely tended that, in this respect at all events, the environs of Tientsin are a pattern to those of London. Fences of the neatest and most tasteful construction enclosed little areas of ground, irrigated by a network of minute canals, divided into beds, devoid of weed or pebble. Greens of every description, gourds, egg-plants, leeks and onions, sweet potatoes, beans and peas, were planted out and manured, or trained, as the case might be, with the utmost care. Interspersed with the kitchen-gardens were vineyards, orchards, and fruit-gardens, containing apricots, apples, and pears, of a coarse description, and vines, trained on trellises, as in the north of Italy. This was one of the pleasantest rides, as it was for the most part shaded by trees, and the windings of the canal, with the river-life upon it, added to its picturesque interest. It was an immense relief, in all our rural rambles, not to be stifled at

every turn with the filthy contrivances of the south. In this respect the horticulture and agriculture of the north are carried on under much pleasanter conditions. Our explorations in a westerly direction were uninteresting; the country was an immense graveyard—not a collection of private cemeteries, such as I have described upon the banks of the Peiho and Grand Canal, but a plain crowded with conical tumuli, destitute of grass or trees, and extensive enough to have contained the whole defunct population of Tientsin, since the original founding of that “heavenly spot.”

There is only one more direction in which I will ask the reader to accompany me, if he be not already as tired of the environs of Tientsin as we were. A very considerable suburb, connected with the city by a bridge of boats, was situated upon the opposite side of the Peiho. Passing through it, we debouch upon a singular piece of landscape.

Here were salt-pans, with the salt stacked in large tumuli like gigantic graves. Interspersed with them were small tumuli, which really were graves: and there were deep pits, and ponds of water with narrow ridges between them, and more salt stacked in bags, and roofed in with millet straw; and huge stacks of wheat straw collected for purposes of fuel; and mud huts, like Irish cabins of the meanest description, enclosed by fences of millet straw, which is thick and strong enough for the purpose: and there were brick-kilns which looked like circular forts, and a

circular fort which looked like a brick-kiln. Altogether, it was the oddest collection of big mounds and little mounds, and heaps and stacks, and pits, and stagnant ponds, and hovels, and forts and brick-kilns, and fences, and waste land, I ever saw. A high-road led through it, and into a close, populous village beyond, and out of that into the illimitable steppe. There was no waving corn here: a weakly vetch and unhealthy-looking young plants of Indian corn were struggling to maintain a miserable existence, in a soil so thin and friable that the united efforts of two men and a donkey, or two donkeys, were sufficient to drag a plough through it. It seemed to be of quite another character from that on the right bank of the river. Beyond the vetch-fields the steppe produced nothing but a short dry grass, across which we could scamper in every direction, with the chance of putting up a hare and riding after him across the country. It reminded me of some parts of the steppes of Southern Russia. Sometimes the monotony of this scene was unbroken by a living object; sometimes a cloud of dust would betoken the approach of country carts, and a succession of huge creaking vehicles would roll past, loaded with fuel, and drawn by a mixed team. I have counted a horse, a pony, a mule, a donkey, and two oxen, in one cart. An ox and the horse served as wheelers; in front of them were the other ox, the mule, and the pony, while the donkey led the way in solitary dignity.

Towards the end of the month of June, fortunately just after the crops were taken in, a swarm of locusts invaded the country. You could gallop through miles of them in this plain, as they whizzed and fluttered among the horses' legs; you could steam through acres of them as you traversed the river, and eat bushels of them fried, if so it pleased you, as they were hawked about in baskets by urchins in the streets. Locust-hunting was a favourite and profitable occupation among the juvenile part of the community. I had the curiosity to eat one, and thought it not unlike a periwinkle.