

C H I N A

PICTORIAL, DESCRIPTIVE, AND HISTORICAL.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

AVA AND THE BURMESE,
SIAM, AND ANAM.

WITH

NEARLY ONE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS.

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MDCCCLIII.

teak. It is much used in house and ship-building. The gun-carriages of the royal arsenals are also made of it, and it appears to be as durable as it is strong. There are, no doubt, other trees, plants, and vegetables, which have not been described by Europeans.

The quadrupeds of the country are the rhinoceros, the buffalo, the ox, the horse, the elephant, the hog, the spotted leopard, the Bengal tiger, the cat, and several species of deer. The noisy jackal, the fox, the hare, the ass and the sheep, appear to be unknown. They have domesticated the elephant, the horse, the buffalo, the ox, the goat, the hog, the dog, the cat; and, among poultry, the goose, duck, and common fowl. As in China, the flesh of dogs is commonly eaten at table. Cochin-China is among the few places where elephants serve for food. They are considered as a perfect dainty there. When the king, or any of his viceroys in the provinces, has one of these animals slaughtered for his table, pieces of it are distributed about to persons of rank, as gratifying marks of favour. Buffalo is preferred to other beef. The horse is but a small, shabby-looking pony, and is used only for riding. The ground is chiefly tilled by the buffalo. The wild hog is found wherever there is any cover. The poultry is described as the finest to be seen in India, and it is abundant and very cheap. The natives prefer ducks for the table. The cocks are kept for fighting, and the hens appear to be very seldom eaten. This magnificent breed has been recently introduced into England, where, at exhibitions, it has won the prize over all other breeds. It appears, in fact (judging from these specimens), the largest, finest, and most beautiful breed of poultry in the world. As yet they are rarities. A cock was recently sold for the sum of 100*l.*; but they will soon become cheaper, and enable us generally to improve our own breeds. There wanted some such new stimulus, for, in most parts of England, the poultry-yard has, of late years, been much neglected. The Anamese are quite as much addicted to cock-fighting as are their neighbours in China and Siam. The wild or jungle-fowl is found wherever there is a little wood. The sportsman may be enticed by the accounts of the prodigious numbers of wild ducks, wild geese, and other birds which annually visit the country, in immense flocks, so soon as the cold season sets in. The curious wax-

which are found different kinds of fish and fine shells. He mentions a great insurrection in the year 1833, during which a great part of the fortifications in the lower province were ruined, trade being driven away, and almost all the population destroyed by the sword or by famine. He tells us (what had long been suspected) that the Siamese and Anamese are very bad neighbours. The frontiers which separate Anam from Siam, or from the wild tribes which are supposed to belong to the Siamese kingdom, are determined very exactly; but they are frequently crossed by parties of warriors or marauders, and occupied sometimes by the one and afterwards by the other, according to the chances of war, which has long been maintained by the two peoples on their own impulse and account. M. Hedde describes the country as very fertile, especially in Lower Cochin-China. He adds that there are mines, and more particularly two gold mines; the one at a place called by him Phu-yen, and the other at a place which he calls Shuon-Grek. But Government, afraid of the European thirst for gold, forbids the people to touch them, or even to speak of them, under penalty of death.

M. Hedde mentions a notable improvement in the native navy; but his account of the state of trade is very discouraging. It appears to be far worse than at the time of Mr. Crawford's visit. Instead of the three ports promised to that gentleman, only one—the port of Turon—was open to foreign trade in 1844.

“The king has taken to himself the entire monopoly of trade. He buys goods from his subjects at the price he himself appoints, and he sends his ships to sell the goods, on his own account, at foreign ports. He employs in trade five new square-rigged ships and one or two *steamers*, which have been constructed in the country under the direction of Europeans. [We believe that all the machinery for the steamers was sent out ready-made from England.] He sends them to Canton, to Singapore, to Batavia, and sometimes to Calcutta. His exports to Singapore consist of silks, coarse but cheap teas, nankeens, cinnamon, rhinoceros' horns, cardamoms, rice, sugar, salt, ivory, buffaloes' skins, precious woods, and some of the precious metals. He receives in return camlets, long-cloth, red, blue, and yellow, for the use of his soldiers, tin, fire-arms, some Indian goods, and a

facility as her lord got gold and silver ; for she had only to put a few grains of rice in a cauldron and the fire lighted itself under the cauldron, and when the vessel boiled it was found to contain rice enough to feed five hundred hungry men, or more if necessary. The fifth gift was a dwarf or gnome, whose sight was so penetrating that from the surface of the soil he could see gold, silver, and precious stones in the very bowels and profoundest cavities of the earth. The sixth gift was a fighting grand mandarin, whose physical strength and indomitable courage exceeded all powers of description. The seventh and last gift was in the shape of one thousand children by his one matchless queen, the bright lady from the North.

Tevatat was another wondrous prince, to whom his genii and gods gave the dominion of the whole earth, together with the power of working as many miracles as might suit his convenience. He could fly through the air, he could change himself into any beast, bird, fish, or reptile. He was rather partial to masquerading in the shape of a bat. Sometimes he was a tiny, glossy snake. The next instant he would be a huge, rough rhinoceros. Other princes, however, could occasionally assume similar shapes. One of his rivals took the shape of a tall slim bird, with a very long beak or bill. At this moment Tevatat was some great ravenous quadruped, and was nearly choked by a bone sticking in his throat. Here we have, in Siam, the *Æsopian* fable of the wolf and the crane. But who can tell the real origin of those fables, of which so many others are current in the East, and which, no doubt, were widely diffused over the world, and known in Europe long before the days of *Æsop*? Tevatat begged his rival to remove the bone, promising him a great reward. The crane-disguised rival thrust both bill and head into his yawning mouth, withdrew the bone, and asked for something to eat, as his reward. "Ha! ha!" said the wolfish Tevatat, "have I not allowed you to take your head safe and sound out of my mouth, and is not that the greatest favour I could confer upon you?"

It is not difficult to discover (that which, however, there has been no attempt to conceal) that these mythical legends have been composed by the talapoins. Throughout the wild narrations a decided preference is given to a devout, solitary, and ascetic life, and the torments of regions truly infernal are

thrives uncommonly among the marshes and coarse pastures of the flat country. The full-sized horse is unknown in Ava, as in every country of tropical Asia south of Bengal. The Burman horses very rarely exceed thirteen hands. There is, however, a supply of good ponies, chiefly furnished by Pegu or brought down from the mountains of Lao. Neither horse nor pony is ever used except for the saddle.

Elephants seem to be kept merely for royal luxury and ostentation. The camel, though well suited as a beast of burden to a considerable portion of the country, is not known. The ass, and the sheep, and the goat are very little known, and are turned to no use. The hog is domesticated, but being used only as a scavenger, its habits are offensive and disgusting. The dog is seen too often, being uncared for, as in other parts of the East, and helping the hog in the scavenger work. These animals prowl about the villages unmolested, their numbers being kept down only by disease and starvation. Cats are very numerous, and generally of a similar breed with the Malay; that is, having only half a tail. Of domestic poultry the Burmans are exceedingly neglectful, rearing only a few common fowls and ducks, which they sell clandestinely to the Chinese and other strangers.

As so vast a portion of the country, uninhabited and uncultivated, is covered with forests, hills, and wide spaces, wild animals and game are exceedingly numerous. The elephant is found in all the deep forests, from one extremity of the empire to the other, but is peculiarly abundant in those of Pegu. There, too, the one-horned rhinoceros is almost as common as the elephant. Both these large animals are hunted by the Karyens, who not only eat their flesh, but consider it a delicacy. Wild buffaloes, wild oxen and hogs, bears, otters, tigers, leopards, wild cats, and civet cats, with deer of various species, make up the list. The deer are more frequent in the forests of Pegu than in any other part of India. The common mode of hunting them is this:—The natives assemble in a large party in the grassy plains, which are the favourite haunt of the deer, and forming a circle, gradually contract it, until the terrified animals are reduced within a very small compass. A fence of frail materials, but quite sufficient to confine them in their terror, is then con-