

ACROSS CHRYSE[^],
BEING THE NARRATIVE OF
A JOURNEY OF EXPLORATION
THROUGH THE
SOUTH CHINA BORDER LANDS
FROM CANTON TO MANDALAY.

BY

ARCHIBALD R. COLQUHOUN,
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, INDIAN PUBLIC WORKS, F.R.G.S., A.M. INST. C.E.

WITH 3 SPECIALLY PREPARED MAPS, 30 FACSIMILES OF NATIVE DRAWINGS, AND
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CHAPTER VI.

Cold calculated by the blankets required—A poisonous crab—Strange animals said to exist near the Mékong and Anam—*I-bang* or "Puerh" tea—Source of the Nam-hou river—Chinese name for Kiang-hung—Tea near Talan—Aborigines of South Yünnan the same as the Shans of Burmah, the Shan country and Siam—Position of Lao-chua and Pou-fang—Chinese names for Burmah—Kiang-hung independent—Disturbances caused by the French in Tonquin—A present for the Queen—A remedy for the plague besought—Chinese do not travel in Laos in the hot weather or rains—A present of aboriginal sketches—An iron suspension-bridge—All rivers in Yünnan unnavigable—Large caravans of salt, tea and cotton.

THE Sub-Prefect breakfasted with us, and we had many interesting conversations with him. He proved to be an intelligent, frank man, the pleasantest we had met in Yünnan; he came from the Kwei-chau province. Although well-educated, he shared the absurd superstitions and ignorance of his countrymen on many points. In talking of the high range of mountains near Tali, I asked him about the snowy regions of Yünnan, and was assured by him that they were fifty li high. Taking even five li to a mile, the height would be three times what it really is.

The climate of Talan is very variable, and considered unhealthy. We were told that the temperature there never exceeded "one blanket cold," that is,

only that amount of covering is required for protection; in the north it often required three.

He told us marvellous stories of a crab, or some such animal, that rendered the water in the vicinity of Talan poisonous, and of a "snow fowl," which was to be found in the snow regions of the north-western parts of Yünnan. The rhinoceros and wild ox (Beyamini), as well as the wild elephant, are found, according to him, on the sides of the Mékong close to the borders of Yünnan. The bear-horse, or "Ma-chiong," he assured us, is met with, as well as the dog-deer and other strange animals, on the frontiers of Anam or the Giaochi country.

Here we learnt that the best tea-districts were in the Shan country, some five to nine days to the south-east of Ssü-mao. The most highly esteemed tea-growing district is I-bang, whence the best so-called "Puerh" tea comes. This information we afterwards found to be quite correct.

Regarding the Nam-hou, neither he nor any one else could tell us anything. Numberless interviews with horsemen, traders, and others, had convinced me that the position of the head-waters of that river, which enters the Mékong at Luang-prabang, is wrongly shown on the maps as in longitude 103° and latitude 21° . It either lies more to the south-west, to the south of the Yünnan frontier, or else the Nam-hou is the lower course of the Papien river.

The itineraries to the south, which I had with endless trouble amassed from my horsemen and others, were