

THE AUTHOR'S FIRST RIDE IN PÉRAK. (See p. 208.)

Frontispiece.

THE GOLDEN CHERSONESE

AND THE WAY THITHER

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'A LADY'S LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS,' 'UNBEATEN TRACKS IN JAPAN,'
ETC.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

"Down to the Golden Chersonese."
MILTON, *Par. Lost*, Book xi.

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ancestors. One or two of the smaller temples were thronged by women of the poorest class, whose earnest faces were very touching. Idolatry is always pathetic. It is not, however, idol worship which sits like a nightmare on China, and crushes atheists, agnostics, and heathens alike, but ancestral worship, and the tyranny of the astrologers and geomancers.

I like the faces of the lower orders of Chinese women. They are both strong and kind, and it is pleasant to see women not deformed in any way, but clothed completely in a dress which allows perfect freedom of action. The small-footed women are rarely seen out of doors; but the sewing-woman at Mrs. Smith's has crippled feet, and I have got her shoes, which are too small for the English baby of four months old! The butler's little daughter, aged seven, is having her feet "bandaged" for the first time, and is in torture, but bears it bravely in the hope of "getting a rich husband." The sole of the shoe of a properly diminished foot is about two inches and a half long, but the mother of this suffering infant says, with a quiet air of truth and triumph, that Chinese women suffer less in the process of being crippled than foreign women do from wearing corsets! To these Eastern women the notion of deforming the figure for the sake of appearance only is unintelligible and repulsive. The crippling of the feet has another motive.

I. L. B.

LETTER IV.—(*Continued*).

YESTERDAY, after visiting the streets devoted to jade-stone workers, jewellers, saddlers, dealers in musical instruments, and furriers, we turned aside from the street called Sze-P'aa-Lau, into a small, dirty square, on one side of which is a brick wall, with a large composite quadruped upon it in black paint, and on the other the open entrance gate of the Yamun, or official residence of the mandarin whose jurisdiction extends over about half Canton, and who is called the Naam-Hoi magistrate. Both sides of the road passing through this square, and especially the open space in front of the gate which leads into the courtyard of the Yamun, were crowded with unshaven, ragged, forlorn, dirty wretches, heavily fettered round their ankles, and with long heavy chains padlocked round their necks, attached, some to large stones with holes in the centre, others to short thick bars of iron. Two or three, into whose legs the ankle fetters had cut deep raw grooves, were lying in a heap on a ragged mat in the corner; some were sitting on stones, but most were standing, or shifting their position uneasily, dragging their weighty fetters about, making a jarring and dismal clank with every movement. These unfortunates are daily exposed thus to the scorn and contempt of the passers-by as a punishment for small thefts. Of those who were seated on stones or who were kneeling attempting to support themselves on their hands, most wore square

wooden collars of considerable size, weighing thirty pounds each, round their necks. These *cangues* are so constructed that it is impossible for their wearers to raise their hands to their mouths for the purpose of feeding themselves, and it seemed to be a choice pastime for small boys to tantalise these criminals by placing food tied to the ends of sticks just within reach of their mouths, and then suddenly withdrawing them. Apart from the weight of their fetters, and of the *cangue* in which they are thus pilloried, these men suffer much from hunger and thirst. They are thus punished for petty larcenies. Surely "the way of transgressors is hard."

The bearers set me down at the gate of the Yamun among the festering wretches dragging the heavy weights, the filthy and noisy beggars, the gamblers, the fortune-tellers, the messengers of justice, and the countless hangers-on of the prison and judgment-seat of the Naam-Hoi magistrate, and passing through a part of the courtyard, and down a short, narrow passage, enclosed by a door of rough wooden uprights, above which is a tiger's head, with staring eyes and extended jaws, we reached the inner entrance, close to which is a much blackened altar of incense, foul with the ashes of innumerable joss-sticks, and above it an equally blackened and much worn figure of a tiger in granite. To this beast, which is regarded by the Chinese as possessing virtue, and is the tutelary guardian of Chinese prisons, the gaolers offer incense and worship night and day, with the object of securing its aid and vigilance on their behalf.

Close to the altar were the gaolers' rooms, dark, dirty, and inconceivably forlorn. Two of the gaolers were lying on their beds smoking opium. There we met the head gaoler, of all Chinamen that I have seen the most repulsive in appearance, manner, and dress; for his long costume of frayed and patched brown silk looked as

if it had not been taken off for a year; the lean, brown hands which clutched the prison keys with an instinctive grip were dirty, and the nails long and hooked like claws, and the face, worse I thought than that of any of the criminal horde, and scored with lines of grip and greed, was saturated with opium smoke. This wretch pays for his place, and in a few years will retire with a fortune, gains arising from bribes wrung from prisoners and their friends by threats and torture, and by defrauding them daily of a part of their allowance of rice.

The prison, as far as I can learn, consists mainly of six wards, each with four large apartments, the walls of these wards abutting upon each other, and forming a parallelogram, outside of which is a narrow, paved pathway, on which the gates of the wards open, and which has on its outer side the high boundary wall of the prison. This gaoler, this fiend,—made such by the customs of his country, took us down a passage, and unlocking a wooden grating turned us into one of the aforesaid "wards," a roughly paved courtyard about fifty feet long by twenty-four broad, and remained standing in the doorway jangling his keys.

If crime, vice, despair, suffering, filth, and cruelty can make a hell on earth, this is one. Over its dismal gateway may well be written, "Whoso enters here leaves hope behind."

This ward is divided into four "apartments," each one having a high wall at the back. The sides next the court are formed of a double row of strong wooden bars, black from age and dirt, which reach from the floor to the roof, and let in light and air through the chinks between them. The interiors of these cribs or cattle-pens are roughly paved with slabs of granite, slimy with accumulations of dirt. In the middle and round the sides are stout platforms of laths, forming a coarse,

black gridiron, on which the prisoners sit and sleep. In each ward there is a shrine of a deity who is supposed to have the power of melting the wicked into contrition, and to this accursed mockery, on his birthday, the prisoners are compelled to give a feast, which is provided by the gaoler out of his peculations from their daily allowances. No water is allowed for washing, and the tubs containing the allowance of foul drinking water are placed close to those which are provided for the accumulation of night soil, etc., the contents of which are only removed once a fortnight. Two pounds of rice is the daily allowance of each prisoner, but this is reduced to about one by the greed of the gaoler.

As we entered the yard, fifty or sixty men swarmed out from the dark doorways which led into their dens, all heavily chained, with long, coarse, matted hair hanging in wisps, or standing on end round their death-like faces, in filthy rags, with emaciated forms caked with dirt, and bearing marks of the torture; and nearly all with sore eyes, swelled and bleeding lips, skin diseases, and putrefying sores. These surrounded us closely, and as, not without a shudder, I passed through them and entered one of their dens, they pressed upon us, blocking out the light, uttering discordant cries, and clamouring with one voice, *kum-sha*, i.e., backsheesh, looking more like demons than living men, as abject and depraved as crime, despair, and cruelty can make them.

Within, the blackness, the filth, the vermin, the stench, overpowering even in this cool weather, the rubbish of rags and potsherds, cannot be described. Here in semi-starvation and misery, with nameless cruelties practised upon them without restraint, festering in one depraved mass, are the tried and untried, the condemned, the guilty and innocent (?), the murderer and pirate, the debtor and petty thief, all huddled together,

without hope of exit except to the adjacent judgment-seat, with its horrors of "the question by torture," or to the "field of blood" not far away. On earth can there be seen a spectacle more hideous than that of these abject wretches, with their heavy fetters eating into the flesh of their necks and ankles (if on their wasted skeletons, covered with vermin and running sores, there is any flesh left), their thick, matted, bristly, black hair—contrasting with the shaven heads of the free—the long, broken claws on their fingers and toes, the hungry look in their emaciated faces, and their clamorous cry, *kum-sha! kum-sha!* They thronged round us clattering their chains, one man saying that they had so little rice that they had to "drink the foul water to fill themselves;" another shrieked, "Would I were in your prison in Hongkong," and this was chorused by many voices saying, "In your prison at Hongkong they have fish and vegetables, and more rice than they can eat, and baths, and beds to sleep on; good, good is the prison of your Queen!" but higher swelled the cry of *kum-sha*, and as we could not give alms among several hundred, we eluded them, though with difficulty, and, as we squeezed through the narrow door, execrations followed us, and high above the heavy clank of the fetters and the general din rose the cry, "Foreign Devils" (Fan-Kwai), as we passed out into sunshine and liberty, and the key was turned upon them and their misery.

We went into three other large wards, foul with horror, and seething with misery, and into a smaller one, nearly as bad, where fifteen women were incarcerated, some of them with infants devoured by cutaneous diseases. Several of them said that they are there for kidnapping, but others are hostages for criminal relations who have not yet been captured. This imprisonment of hostages is in accordance with a law which authorises the

seizure and detention of persons or families belonging to criminals who have fled or are in concealment. Such are imprisoned till the guilty relative is brought to justice, for months, years, or even for a lifetime. Two of these women told us that they had been there for twenty years.

There are likewise some single cells—hovels clustering under a wall, in which criminals who can afford to pay the gaoler for them may enjoy the luxury of solitude. In each ward there is a single unfettered man,—always a felon,—who by reason either of bribery or good conduct, is appointed to the place of watchman or spy among his fellows in crime. There is a turnkey for each ward, and these men, with the unchained felons who act as watchmen, torture new arrivals in order to force money from them, and under this process some die.

In the outer wall of the prison there is a port-hole, just large enough to allow of a body being pushed through it, for no malefactor's corpse must be carried through the prison entrance, lest it should defile the "Gate of Righteousness." There is also a hovel called a deadhouse, into which these bodies are conveyed till a grave has been dug in some "accursed place," by members of an "accursed" class.

In addition to the large mortality arising from poor living and its concomitant diseases, and the exhaustion produced by repeated torture, epidemics frequently break out in the hot weather in those dark and fetid dens, and oftentimes nearly clear out the prison. On such occasions as many as four hundred have succumbed in a month. The number of criminals who are executed from this prison, either as sentenced to death, or as unable to bribe the officials any further, is supposed to be about five hundred annually, and it is further supposed that half this number die annually from starvation and torture. Sometimes one hundred criminals are beheaded in an hour, as it is feared may be the case on the Governor

going out of office, when it is not unusual to make a gaol delivery in this fashion.

In numerous cases, when there is a press of business before the judgment-seat and a dead lock occurs, accusers and witnesses are huddled indiscriminately into the Naam-Hoi prison sometimes for months; and as the Governor or magistrate takes no measures to provide for them during the interval, some of the poorer ones who have no friends to bribe the gaoler on their behalf perish speedily. At night, in the dens which I have described, the hands of the prisoners are chained to their necks, and even in the day-time only one hand is liberated. I thought that many of the faces looked quite imbecile. The gaoler, as we went out, kept holding out his long-clawed, lean, brown hand, muttering about his promised *kum-sha*, very fearful lest the other turnkeys, who were still lying on their beds smoking opium, should come in for any share of it.

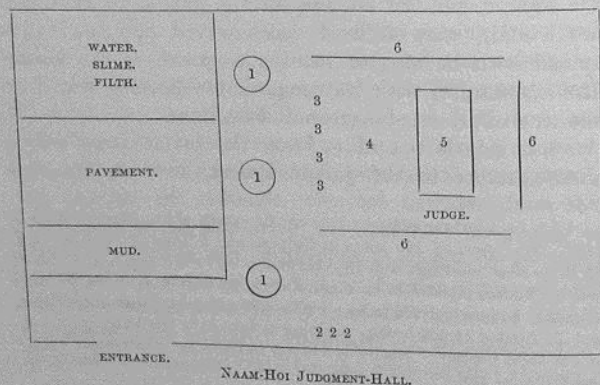
Mr. Henry,¹ my host and very able cicerone, is an American missionary, and as such carries with him the gospel of peace on earth and good will to men. Surely if the knowledge of Him who came "to preach liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," were diffused and received here, and were spread with no niggard hand, the prison of the Naam-Hoi magistrate, with its unspeakable horrors, would go the way of all our dungeons and bedlams.

But this is not all. From the prison it is only a short distance to the judgment-seat, and passing once

¹ I cannot forbear adding a note on the extent of Mr. Henry's work in 1881. He preached 190 times in Chinese, and 5 times in English; held 52 Bible class meetings, and 13 communion services; baptized 45 adults and 8 children; travelled on mission work by boat 2540 miles, by chair 80 miles, and on foot 670 miles; visited 280 different towns and villages, and distributed 14,000 books, receiving assistance in the latter work only on one short journey. His life is a happy combination of American energy and Christian zeal.

more through the "Gate of Righteousness," we crossed a large court, infested by gamblers and fortune-tellers, and presented ourselves at a porch with great figures painted on both its doors, and gay with the red insignia of mandarinism, which is the entrance to the stately residence of the Naam-Hoi magistrate, one of the great subordinate dignitaries of Canton. In the porch, as it might have been in that of Pilate or Herod, were a number of official palanquins, and many officials and servants of the mandarin with red-crowned hats turned up from their faces, and privates of the city guard, mean and shabby persons. One of these, for a *keum-sha* of course, took us, not through the closed and curtained doors, but along some passages, from which we passed through a circular brickwork tunnel to the front of the judgment-seat at which all the inmates of the Naam-Hoi prison may expect sooner or later to be tried. My nerves were rather shaken with what I had seen, and I trembled as a criminal might on entering this chamber of horror.

In brief, the judgment-seat is a square hall, open at one end, with a roof supported on three columns.



In the plan which I send, No. 1 is the three pillars; No. 2 the instruments of torture ranged against the wall; No. 3 four accused men wearing heavy chains, and kneeling with their foreheads one inch from the ground, but not allowed to touch it. These men are undergoing the mildest form of torture—protracted kneeling without support in one position, with coarse sand under the bare knees. No. 4 is a very old and feeble man, also kneeling, a claimant in an ancient civil suit. No. 6 indicates a motley group of notaries, servants, attendants, lictors, alas! The table (No. 5) is of dark wood, covered with a shabby red cloth. On it are keys, petitions, note-books, pens, and ink, an official seal, and some small cups containing tallies, which are thrown down to indicate the number of blows which a culprit is to receive. This was all.

In a high-backed, ebony arm-chair, such as might be seen in any English hall, sat the man who has the awful power of life and death in his hands. It is almost needless to say that the judge, who was on the left of the table, and who never once turned to the accused, or indeed to any one, was the only seated person. He was a young man, with fine features, a good complexion, and a high intellectual brow, and had I seen him under other circumstances, I should have thought him decidedly prepossessing looking. He wore a black satin hat, a rich, blue brocade robe, almost concealing his blue brocade trousers, and over this a sleeved cloak of dark blue satin, lined with ermine fur. A look of singular coldness and *hauteur* sat permanently on his face, over which a flush of indescribable impatience sometimes passed. He is not of the people, this lordly magistrate. He is one of the privileged *litterati*. His literary degrees are high and numerous. He has both place and power. Little risk does he run of a review of his decisions, or of an appeal to the Emperor at Peking. He spoke loud and with

much rapidity and emphasis, and often beat impatiently on the floor with his foot. He used the mandarin tongue, and whether cognisant of the dialect of the prisoners or not, he put all his questions through an interpreter, who stood at his left, a handsomely dressed old man, who wore a gold chain with a dependent ivory comb, with which while he spoke he frequently combed a small and scanty gray moustache.

Notaries, attendants with scarlet-crowned hats, and a rabble of men and boys, in front of whom we placed ourselves, stood down each side. The open hall, though lofty, is shabby and extremely dirty, with an unswept broken pavement, littered at one side with potsherds, and disfigured by a number of more or less broken black pots as well as other rubbish, making it look rather like a shed in an untidy nursery garden than an imperial judgment-hall. On the pillars there are certain classical inscriptions, one of which is said to be an exhortation to mercy. Pieces of bamboo of different sizes are ranged against the south wall. These are used for the bastinado, and there were various instruments ranged against the same wall, at which I could only look fitfully and with a shudder, for they are used in "The Question by Torture," which rapid method of gaining a desired end appears to be practised on witnesses as well as criminals.

The yard or uncovered part of this place has a pavement in the middle, and on one side of this the most loathsome trench I ever beheld, such a one as I think could not be found in the foulest slum of the dirtiest city in Europe, not only loathsome to the eye, but emitting a stench which even on that cool day might produce vertigo, and this under the very eye of the magistrate, and not more than thirty feet from the judgment-seat.

On the other side by which we entered, and which also has an entrance direct from the prison, is a slimy,

green ditch, at the back of which some guards were lounging, with a heap of felons in chains attached to heavy stones at their feet. Above, the sky was very blue, and the sun of our Father which is in heaven shone upon "the just and the unjust."

The civil case took a long time, and was adjourned, and the aged claimant was so exhausted with kneeling before the judge, that he was obliged to be assisted away by two men. Then another man knelt and presented a petition, which was taken to "*avizandum*." Then a guard led in by a chain a prisoner, heavily manacled, and with a heavy stone attached to his neck, who knelt with his forehead touching the ground. After some speaking, a boy who was standing dangling a number of keys came forward, and, after much ado, unlocked the rusty padlock which fastened the chain round the man's neck, and he was led away, dragging the stone after him with his hands. He had presented a formal petition for this favour, and I welcomed the granting of it as a solitary gleam of mercy, but I was informed that the mitigation of the sentence came about through bribery on the part of the man's relatives, who had to buy the goodwill of four officials before the petition could reach the magistrate's hands.

More than an hour and a half had passed since we entered, and for two hours before that the four chained prisoners had been undergoing the torture of kneeling on a coarsely sanded stone in an immovable and unsupported position. I was standing so close to them that the dress of one touched my feet. I could hear their breathing, which had been heavy at first, become a series of gasps, and cool as the afternoon was, the sweat of pain fell from their brows upon the dusty floor, and they were so emaciated that, even through their clothing, I could see the outlines of their bones. There were no counsel, and no witnesses, and the judge asked but one question as he

beat his foot impatiently on the floor, "Are you guilty?" They were accused of an aggravated robbery, and were told to confess, but they said that only two of them were guilty. They were then sent back to the tender mercies of the opium-smoking gaoler, probably to come back again and again to undergo the severer forms of torture, till no more money can be squeezed out of their friends, when they will probably be beheaded, death being the legal penalty for robbery with aggravations.

There is no regular legal process, no jury, no one admitted to plead for the accused, and owing to the way in which accusations are made and the intimate association of trial with bribery, it is as certain that many innocent persons suffer as it is that many guilty escape. From such a system one is compelled to fall back upon the righteousness of the Judge of all the earth; and as I stood in that hideous judgment-hall beside the tortured wretches, I could not shut out of my heart a trembling hope that for these and the legion of these, a worthier than an earthly intercessor pleads before a mightier than an earthly judge.

It is not clear whether torture is actually recognised by Chinese law, but it is practised in almost every known form by all Chinese magistrates, possibly as the most expeditious mode of legal procedure which is known. It is also undoubtedly the most potent agent in securing bribes. The legal instruments of summary punishment which hang on the wall of the Naam-Hoi judgment-hall consist of three boards with proper grooves for squeezing the fingers, and the bastinado, which is inflicted with bamboos of different weights. The illegal modes of "putting the question," *i.e.* of extorting a confession of guilt, as commonly practised are, prolonged kneeling on coarse sand, with the brow within an inch of the ground; twisting the ears with "roughened fingers," and keeping them twisted

while the prisoner kneels on chains; beating the lips to a jelly with a thick stick, the result of which was to be seen in several cases in the prison; suspending the body by the thumbs; tying the hands to a bar under the knees, so as to bend the body double during many hours; the thumb-screw; dislocating the arm or shoulder; kneeling upon pounded glass, salt, and sand mixed together, till the knees are excoriated, and several others, the product of fiendish ingenuity. Severe flogging with the bamboo, rattan, cudgel, and knotted whip successively, is one of the most usual means of extorting confession; and when death results from the process, the magistrate reports that the criminal has died of sickness, and in the few cases in which there may be reason to dread investigation, the administration of a bribe to the deceased man's friends ensures silence.

The *cangue*, if its wearers were properly fed and screened from the sun, is rather a disgrace than a cruel mode of punishment. Death is said to be inflicted for aggravated robbery, robbery with murder, highway robbery, arson, and piracy, even without the form of a trial when the culprits are caught *in flagrante delicto*; but though it is a frequent punishment, it is by no means absolutely certain for what crimes it is the legal penalty.

We left the judgment-seat as a fresh relay of criminals entered, two of them with faces atrocious enough for any crime, and passed out of the courtyard of the Yamun through the "Gate of Righteousness," where the prisoners, attached to heavy stones, were dragging and clanking their chains, or lying in the shade full of sores, and though the red sunset light was transfiguring all things, the glory had faded from Canton and the air seemed heavy with a curse.