

PUBLIC EXECUTION OF THE DRUSES NEAR DAMASCUS.

apparition of a huge serpent, which, approaching the coffin of the deceased, suddenly lifted up its head and died—a certain proof in their eyes of the sanctity of the deceased; and, seized with a powerful spirit of religious enthusiasm, the mob rushed on the body, and in a few minutes denuded it of its grave-clothing, rending the same into ribbons, so that each one might become the fortunate possessor of an atom of such a relic; the hair of the face and beard was cut or plucked off, and carefully preserved as charms. Such, and many more, ridiculous tales are circulated amongst this idolatrous people; and several of the okal tombs are frequented under the notion that the prophesying spirit of the interred will be imparted to the frequenter; and wax-candles, ornaments, and sums of money are deposited in the sepulchral vaults—doubtless to the benefit of the surviving brethren of the saint.

One more singular circumstance is connected with their superstitions, which reads strangely at the present moment. The Druses sent frequently to the Maronite convent of Koshiya (by this time, in all probability, it is burnt, and its inmates murdered, but had great renown amongst them, owing to the supposed miraculous cure of insanity by St. Anthony) to buy amulets and bits of paper written by the superior order of monks, which were worn about the person and suspended round the necks of children, to preserve them against that most awful calamity.

But here we are at our proposed bivouac, and both breakfast and repose will be acceptable. In this apparent desolation are abundance of oleanders and myrtle growing in great luxuriance, and recalling to mind the words of the prophet Isaiah (xli. 19): "I will plant in the wilderness the myrtle."

Lebanon, or *Libanus*—signifying white, from its snow (the Arabs call milk and curds, *lebon*)—is the most elevated mountain chain in Syria; celebrated in all ages for its cedars, which, as is well known, furnished wood for Solomon's Temple. Lebanon is the nucleus of all the mountain ridges which, from the north, south, and east, converge towards this

point; but it overtops them all. This configuration of the mountains, and the superiority of Lebanon, are particularly striking to the traveller approaching both from the Mediterranean on the west, and the Desert on the east. On either side he first discovers, at a great distance, a clouded ridge, stretching from north to south, as far as the eye can see; the central summits of which are capped with clouds, or tipped with snow. This is the Lebanon which is often referred to in Holy Writ for its streams, its timber, and its wines; "and," writes Richard Watson, in his "Biblical Dictionary," "at the present day it is the seat of the only portion of freedom of which Syria can boast." This was in 1833. Eighteen hundred and sixty tells a lamentably different story!

But how very *apropos* of these old, old themes which link us with Lebanon, is the apparition of a caravan of camels, all laden with timber from Lebanon, for the service of the Beyrout builders. These latter, though, cannot boast of having as many thousand hewers of timber in their service as had Solomon in his days; neither is there another Hiram to furnish them with cunning artificers and workmen. There is plenty of cunningness, but little of craft-skill, to be met with now-a-days; and Mr. Perkins, of British purple reputation, has nothing to dread on the score of rivals at Tyre at present. The cedar has failed nearly from the land, but the fir-tree is yet a refuge for the storks.

After an inspection of the firs, we cannot do better than to study a little more about the topography, and so forth, of Lebanon. The altitude, we are told (and I hope you have brought your great coat with you, or a serviceable oil-skin one, and a sou'-wester), is so great, that it appears, from the reports of travellers, to have snow on its highest eminences all the year round. Volney states that it thus remains towards the north-east, where it is sheltered from the sea winds and the rays of the sun. Maudrell found that part which he crossed, and which was by no means the highest, covered with snow in May; and Dr. E. D. Clarke, in the

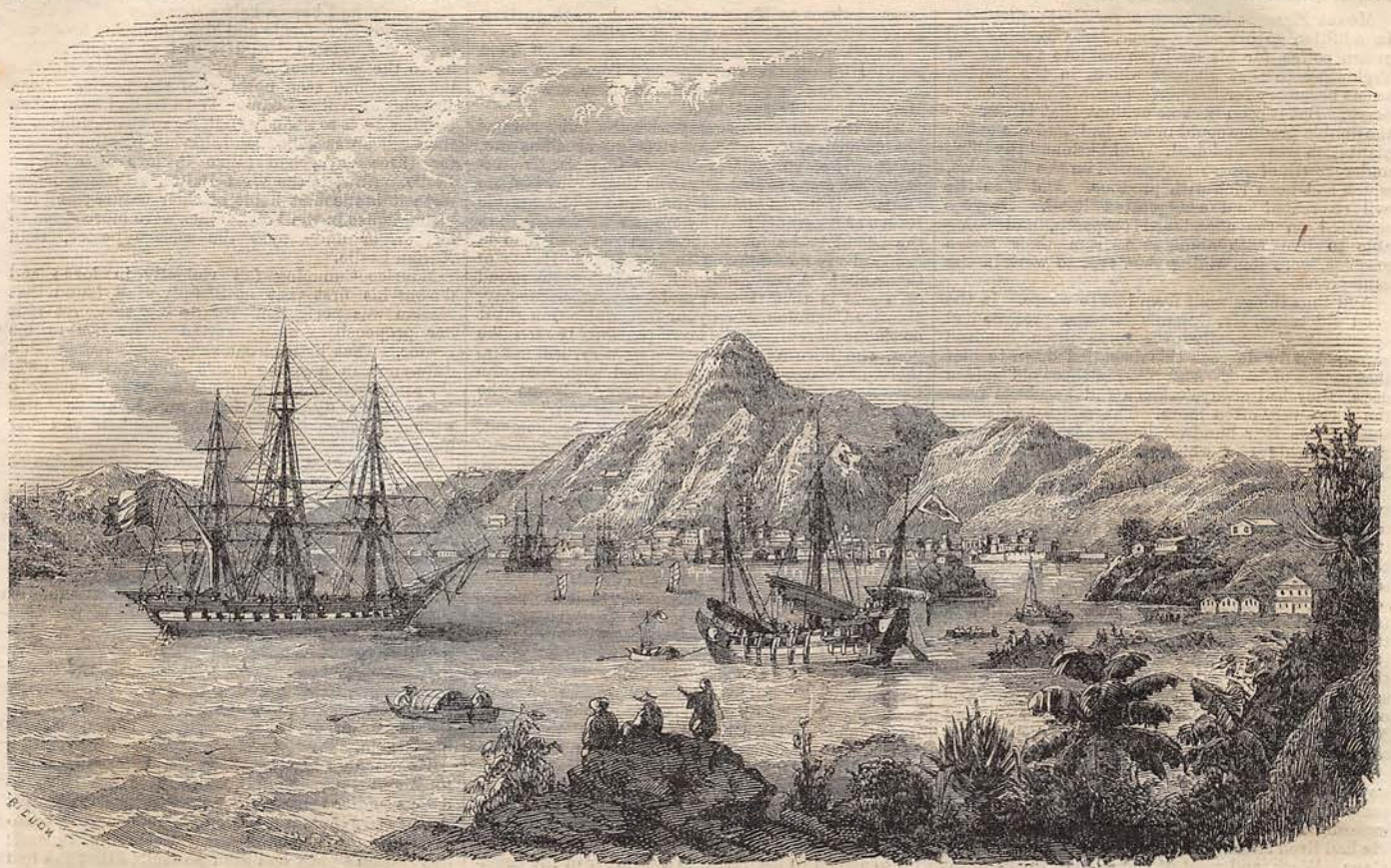
month of July, saw some of the eastern summits of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanus, near Damascus, covered with snow—not lying in patches, as is common in the summer season with mountains which border on the line of perpetual congelation, but do not quite reach it; but with that perfect white, smooth, and velvet-like appearance which snow only exhibits when it is very deep—a striking spectacle in such a climate, where the beholder, seeking protection from a burning sun, almost considers the firmament to be on fire. At the time this observation was made, the thermometer, in an elevated situation near the Sea of Tiberias, stood at $102\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ in the shade.

(To be continued.)

HONG-KONG.

The Chinese difficulty is apparently still very far from solution; and public attention, whenever it is for a moment diverted from the intensely absorbing interest of the Italian campaign, turns to the land of pagodas. China is the precocious child of the world, wonderfully clever when other nations were barbarous, but it has grown up into a state of self-conceited ignorance, as other precocious children have done before it. It knew all about the compass, and printing, and gunpowder and paper-making, when our island was the abode of wild beasts, and savages almost as wild. But it has never grown any wiser; has been beaten in all the civilised arts; and is tolerably certain to be beaten in barbarian warfare, if it does not change its policy, before long.

Hong-Kong, represented in our engraving, is situated near the mouth of the Canton river. It is about eight miles from east to west, but very irregular in its form, some parts being only three miles in breadth, and the land jutting out here and there forming a succession of headlands and bays. It is exceedingly mountainous, and slopes in a rugged



ISLAND AND HARBOUR OF HONG-KONG, CHINA.

manner to the water's edge, having deep ravines at almost equal distances along the coast, which extend from the tops of the mountains down to the sea, deepening and widening in their course. The water in these ravines is abundant and excellent, hence the name of the island, Hong-Kong, or land of beautiful streams.

The violent proceedings of the Chinese in 1839 first led to a British settlement at Hong-Kong. Most of the British ships removed from Macao to the harbour of this island, and the settlers for many months lived on board. A few slight buildings were run up, but it was not until two years later that the British settlement was finally established. In 1841 the island was ceded in perpetuity to the English Crown. The change which occurred in the aspect of the island was rapid and remarkable. Barracks, hospitals, stores, goodhouses, broad streets rose up as if by magic, and in reality, by the aid of those two powerful English magicians, Capital and Enterprise.

But though there is in Hong-Kong much to make an Englishman, who cares about home comforts, feel himself at home—and though a Yankee might find a bowling alley and a bar worthy of New York—there is no hotel, properly so called, in the island. There is a club to which poor Albert Smith was elected on his visit to China, two years ago, and of the arrangements of that club there seems no reason to complain; but everybody is not "clubbable," and some good hotels are wanted.

Notwithstanding the alterations made in the aspect of Hong-Kong by the British residents, much of it still remains thoroughly Chinese; there are lots of Chinese houses and shops, and pig-tailed people of all ages conservatively carrying on their business or pleasure in the old-established, celestial fashion.

On the north side of the island, and along the shores of the splendid bay, is the town of Victoria, behind which the mountain chain rises majestically and precipitously. A beautiful highway, called the Queen's-road, is formed along the shore for a considerable distance, and is lined with excellent houses.

There is very little flat ground in the island capable of cultivation. The most luxuriant is a tract called by the Chinese *Wang-nai-Ching*, and by the English "The Happy Valley;" but it is not above thirty acres in extent. Adjoining this

district, or contained within it, is the Hong-Kong racecourse, with its grand stand, and other familiar features, to those who know anything of Epsom or Ascot. In its immediate neighbourhood are the Protestant, Catholic, and Parsee burial-grounds. The ferns here grow plentifully, and the foliage is charming.

The objections urged against the climate of Hong-Kong, when it was originally proposed as a British settlement, have been, to a great extent, triumphantly answered by eighteen years' experience. The causes were most of them preventable, and such as are incident to all tropical climates.

MISS SARAH JACK, OF SPANISH TOWN, JAMAICA.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

THERE is nothing so melancholy as a country in its decadence, unless it be a people in their decadence. I am not aware that the latter misfortune can be attributed to the Anglo-Saxon race in any part of the world; but there is reason to fear that it has fallen on an English colony in the island of Jamaica.

Jamaica was one of those spots on which Fortune shone with the full warmth of all her noon-day splendour. That sun has set; whether for ever or no, none but a prophet can tell; but, as far as a plain man may see, there are at present but few signs of a coming morrow or of another summer.

It is not just or proper that one should grieve over the misfortunes of Jamaica with a stronger grief because her savannahs are so lovely, her forests so rich, her mountains so green, and her rivers so rapid; but yet it is so. It is so piteous that a land so beautiful should be one which Fate has marked for misfortune. Had Guiana, with its fat, level, unlovely soil, become poverty-stricken, one would hardly sorrow over it as one does sorrow for Jamaica.

As regards scenery, she is the gem of the western tropics. It is impossible to conceive spots on the earth's surface more gracious to the eye than those steep green valleys which stretch down to the south-west, from the blue mountain peak towards the sea; and but little behind them in beauty are the rich wooded hills, which in the western part of the island divide the counties of Hanover

and Westmoreland. The hero of the tale which I am going to tell was a sugar-grower in this latter district, and the heroine was a girl who lived under that mountain peak.

The very name of a sugar-grower, as connected with Jamaica, savours of fruitless struggle, failure, and desolation; and, from his earliest days, fruitless struggle, failure, and desolation had been the lot of Maurice Cumming. At eighteen years of age he had been left by his father sole possessor of the Mount Pleasant Estate, than which, in her palmy days, Jamaica had little to boast of that was more pleasant or more palmy; but those days had passed by before Roger Cumming, the father of our friend, had died.

Three misfortunes, coming one on the head of another at intervals of a few years, had first stunned and then killed him. His slaves rose against him, as they did against other proprietors around him, and burned down his house and mills, his homestead and offices. Those who know the amount of capital which a sugar-grower must invest in such buildings will understand the extent of this misfortune. Then the slaves were emancipated. It is not, perhaps, possible that we, now-a-days, should regard this as a calamity; but it was quite impossible that a Jamaica proprietor of those days should not have done so. Men will do much for philanthropy—they will work hard, they will give the coat from their back, nay, the very shirt from their body; but few men will endure to look on with satisfaction while their commerce is destroyed.

But even this Mr. Cumming did bear after awhile, and kept his shoulder to the wheel. He kept his shoulder to the wheel till that third misfortune came upon him—till the protective duty on Jamaica sugar was abolished. Then he turned his face to the wall and died.

His son, at this time, was not of age, and the large but lessening property which Mr. Cumming left behind him was for three years in the hands of trustees. But, nevertheless, Maurice, young as he was, managed the estate. It was he who grew the canes, and made the sugar, or else failed to make it. He was the "massa," to whom the free negroes looked as the source from whence their wants should be supplied; notwithstanding that, being free, they were ill inclined to work for him, let his want of work be ever so sore.