

China as seen by Sir John Bowring.

POPULATION OF THE EMPIRE—STRICT CENSUS REGISTRATION—MORTALITY STATISTICS—POOR LAW SYSTEM—FOOD SUPPLIES—EMIGRATION RETURNS—RIVER NAVIGATION AND INLAND TRADE—AGRICULTURE AND TILLAGE SYSTEM—WHAT THE PEOPLE EAT AND THEIR TASTES AT TABLE—EFFECTS OF THE CIVIL WARS—HOW THE PEOPLE DIE—MARRIAGE—THE ARMY AND NAVY.

The following letter, addressed to the Registrar General, London, by Sir John Bowring, has been published in the Journal of the Statistical Society:—

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, HONG KONG, }
July 13, 1855.

SIR—I wish it were possible to give a satisfactory reply to your inquiries as to the real population of China.

There has been no official census taken since the time of Kia King, forty three years ago. Much doubt has been thrown upon the accuracy of these returns, which gave 362,447,183 as the total number of the inhabitants of China. I think our greater knowledge of the country increases the evidence in favor of the approximate correctness of the official document, and that we may with tolerable safety estimate the present population of the Chinese empire as between 350,000,000 and 400,000,000 of human beings.

The penal laws of China make provision for a general system of registration; and corporeal punishments, generally amounting to one hundred blows of the bamboo, are to be inflicted on those who neglect to make the proper returns. The machinery is confided to the elders of the district, and the census is required to be annually taken; but I have no reason to believe that the law is obeyed or the neglect of it punished.

In the English translation of Father Alvarez Semedo's "History of China," published in London A. D. 1655, is the following passage:—

"This kingdom is so exceedingly populous that, having lived there twenty two years, I was in no less amazement at my coming away than in the beginning at the multitude of the people. Certainly the truth exceedeth all hyperboles—not only in the cities, towns and public places, but also in the highways, there is as great a concourse as is usual in Europe on some great festival."

And if we refer ourselves to the general register book, wherein only the common men are enrolled, leaving out women, children, eunuchs, professors of letters and arms, there are reckoned of them to be fifty-eight millions fifty-five thousand one hundred and four score. The minuteness of the enumeration would seem to show that the father quoted some official document.

I forward herewith two tabular statements which I have copied from Dr. Williams's "Middle Kingdom;" one of the best books on China. The first gives a list of the various estimates from A. D. 1393 to 1812, with the authorities quoted. The second is a re-arranged statement of censuses taken at different periods.

As there are few men in China more diligent or better instructed than Mr. Williams, I thought it desirable to communicate with him, in order to ascertain his present views as to the credit which may properly be attached to the official statistics of China. I send a copy of his letter:—

I do not know that there is any safer course than to reason from details to generals, from the known to the unknown; and I have taken every opportunity which my intercourse with the Chinese has afforded me to obtain, if not correct, at least approximate information as to the true statistics of the country. It may be affirmed without any hesitation that, as regards the five ports and the adjacent districts to which we have access, the population is so numerous as to furnish arguments that the number of inhabitants of the entire empire is very much greater than is represented by the official returns.

These localities cannot be taken as fair averages; for, naturally enough, increased commercial activity has brought with it a flow of new settlers, and there can be no doubt that some of the ancient seats of commerce have lost much of their population in losing their trade; but whether all the causes of decline in particular spots have much counteracted the fecundity of the Chinese races, considered as a whole, may be questioned.

Some years ago I had an opportunity of discussing the subject of Chinese population with the mandarin at Ningpo, who was charged with making the returns for that district. Ningpo can scarcely be called a progressive place—it is decidedly the least so of the five treaty ports; but I found, generally speaking, that the real returns were considerably in excess of the official estimates.

And I would remark that, in taking the area of the 18 provinces of China at 1,348,870 square miles, the census of 1812 would give 263 persons to a square mile, which is considerably less than the population of the densely peopled countries of Europe.

According to ancient usage the population in China is grouped under four heads:—1, Scholars; 2, husbandmen; 3, mechanics; 4, merchants.—There is a numerous class who are considered almost as social outcasts, such as stage-players, professional gamblers, beggars, convicts, outlaws, and others; and these probably form no part of the population returns. In the more remote rural districts, on the other hand, the returning officer most probably contents himself with giving the average of more accessible and better peopled localities.

I have no means of obtaining any satisfactory tables to show the proportions which different ages bear to one another in China, or the average mortality at different periods of human life; yet to every decade of life the Chinese apply some special designation—the age of 10 is called "The Opening Degree;" 20, "Youth Expired;" 30, "Strength and Marriage;" 40, "Officially Adult;" 50, "Error-knowing;" 60, "Cycle closing;" 70,

"Rare Bird of Age;" 80, "Rusty visaged;" 90, "Delayed;" 100, "Age's Extremity." Among the Chinese the amount of reverence grows with the number of years.

I made, some years ago, the acquaintance of a Buddhist priest living in the convent of Tien Tung, near Ningpo, who was more than a century old, and whom people of rank were in the habit of visiting, in order to show their respect and to obtain his autograph. He had the civility to give me a fair specimen of his handwriting. There are not only many establishments for the reception of the aged, but the penal code provides severe punishments for those who refuse to relieve the poor in their declining years.

Age may also be pleaded in extenuation of crime and in mitigation of punishment. Imperial decrees sometimes order presents to be given to all indigent old people in the empire. I am not aware of any detailed statistics giving the number of such recipients since a return published in the time of Kanghi (1657). Kienlung (1785) directed that all those claimants whose age exceeded 60 should receive 5 bushels of rice and a piece of linen; those above 80, 10 bushels of rice and two pieces of linen; those above 90, 30 bushels of rice and two pieces of common silk; and those above 100, 50 bushels of rice and two pieces, one of fine and one of common silk.

He ordered all the elders to be enumerated who were at the head of five generations, of whom there were 192, and, "in gratitude to heaven," summoned 3,000 of the oldest men of the empire to receive Imperial presents, which consisted principally of embroidered purses, and badges bearing the character shau, meaning "longevity."

The Kanghi tables show the numbers of those who enjoyed the benefit of the edict; but as the returns bear no proportion to the general population of the country or to the relative extent of the various provinces, many fortuitous and local circumstances must have caused the obvious incongruities. For example, in the adjacent provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangse, in which the whole mass of population is in the proportion of two to one, the recipients are as 46 to 1; and as regards age, while the proportion of those above 80 is represented at 10 to 1, those above 90 are only a little more than 5 to 1.

In all these matters the greater or less cooperation of the local authorities is one of the most important elements in producing a result.—Kwangse is extremely mountainous, and bordered on the northwest by the country of the Measoutez, or aborigines, the districts adjoining which are but in a half-reclaimed state, and governed by officers of a character and denomination distinct from those of the provinces. But it is inexplicable that the province of Pechile in which Peking is situated, should exhibit but a small proportional return, especially as compared with the adjacent province of Shantung. Hookwang, with a population of 26,250,000, has 87,354 indigent persons above 70, while Szechuen, the population of which is 21,500,000, presents only 176 persons in that category.

I think there is abundant evidence of redundant population pressing more and more heavily upon, and suffering more and more severely from, an inadequate supply of food. Though there are periods when extraordinary harvests enable the Chinese to transport rice, the principal food of the people, from one province to another, and sometimes even to foreign countries, yet of late the importations from foreign countries have been enormous, and China has drawn largely on the Straits, the Philippines, Siam, and other places, to fill up a vast deficiency in supply.

Famine has, notwithstanding, committed dreadful ravages, and the provisions of the imperial granaries have been wholly inadequate to provide for the public wants. It is true that cultivation has been greatly interfered with by intestinal disorders, and that there has been much destruction by inundations, incendiarism, and other accidental or transitory causes; but without reference to these, I am disposed to believe that there is a greater increase in the numbers of the population than in the home production of food for their use.

It must be remembered, too, that while the race is thus augmenting, the cause which lead to the destruction of food,—such as the overflow of rivers, fires, ravages of locusts, bad seasons, and other calamities—are to a great extent beyond the control of human prudence or human exertion. It would be difficult to show what new element could be introduced which would raise up the native supply of food beyond its present productiveness, considering that hand husbandry has given to cultivation more of a horticultural than an agricultural character.

The constant flow of emigration from China, contrasted with the complete absence of emigration into China, is striking evidence of the population; for though that emigration is almost wholly confined to two provinces, namely, Kwantung and Fookien, representing together a population of probably from 34,000,000 to 35,000,000, I am disposed to think that a number nearer 3,000,000 than 2,000, from these provinces alone, are located in foreign countries. In the kingdom of Siam it is estimated that there are at least 1,500,000 Chinese, of which 200,000 are in the capital (Bangkok). They crowd all the islands of the Indian Archipelago. In Java, we know by a correct census there are 136,000.

Cochin China teems with Chinese. In this colony we are seldom without one, two or three vessels taking Chinese emigrants to California and other places. Multitudes go to Australia, to the Philippines, to the Sandwich Islands, to the western coast of Central and Southern America; some have made their way to British India. The emigration to the British West Indies has been considerable—to the Havana greater still. The annual arrivals in Singapore are estimated at an average of 10,000, and 2,000 is the number that are said annually to return to China.

There is not only this enormous maritime emigration, but a considerable inland influx of Chinese towards Manchouria and Thibet; and it may be added that the large and fertile islands of Formosa and Hainan have been to a great extent won from the aborigines by successive inroads of Chinese settlers.

Now, these are all males; there is not a woman to ten thousand men; hence, perhaps, the small social value of the female infant. Yet this perpetual outflowing of people seems in no respect to diminish the number of those who are left behind. Few Chinamen leave their country without a fixed purpose to return to worship in the ancestral hall—to bring sacrifices to the tombs of their fathers; but it may be doubted if one in ten revisits his native land. The loss of life from disease, from shipwreck and other casualties, amounts, to a frightful percentage on those who emigrate.

The multitudes of persons who live by the fisheries in China afford evidence not only that the land is cultivated to the greatest possible extent, but that it is insufficient to supply the necessities of the overflowing population, for agriculture is held in high honor in China, and the husbandman stands next in rank to the sage or literary man in the social hierarchy. It has been supposed that nearly a tenth of the population derive their means of support from fisheries.

[To be continued.]

NOTICE.

In Big Cottonwood, on Friday, August 14, Elder GEORGE SCHOLES, aged 45 years and 6 months.

NOTICE.

The members of the Priests' Quorum in G. S. L. City will meet in the 14th Ward School house the 1st Sunday in every month at 4 o'clock, by order of the President of said Quorum. LEWIS WRIGHT, President.

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

LOST,

BETWEEN the Temple Block and the Union Square, a sack containing Shoe Pegs and 2 pair Lasts. Whoever has found them will confer a favor by leaving them at Dr. Sprague's. JOSEPH ROBINSON.

TAKE HER AWAY.

BROKE into the enclosure of the subscriber on the night of the 7th inst., a red and white spotted cow, branded on the left horn. The owner is requested to take her away after paying damages and the cost of this advertisement. THOMAS COLBOURN, 2nd Ward.

LOST, STRAYED, &c.

STOLEN OR STRAYED.

ON or about the 10th of July, from Lehi, a grey American HORSE, branded on left shoulder with a heart and Y C N on left thigh; was owned by Indian Ammon. A liberal reward will be paid for the recovery of said horse by (23-4) J. O. NAILE, Lehi.

SHEEP, CATTLE & HORSES

WILL be taken by us on Bingham Creek south to herd or raise on shares, at the usual rates, length of time immaterial with us. We shall prepare to feed our stock when necessary during the winter. (71st) BLAIR & BROTHER.

STOLEN OR STRAYED,

JUNE 1st, from the 16th and 19th Ward Pasture, G. S. L. City, three Indian PONIES; one bay stud, one bay mare, and one roan mare, belonging to Antero V. Yeasho Yampah, Ute Chief. Any information will be thankfully received; please call on D. B. Huntington. 161st

ESTRAY.

TAKEN UP—One dark red COW, brockle face, one slit in right ear, two in left; no brands visible; cow supposed to be 7 or 8 years old. The owner is requested to prove property, pay charges and take her away. PETER MANZER, Willow Creek, Juab County. 22-3

STRAYED OR STOLEN,

ON or about June 1, from Kay's Creek, a small bay Indian PONY, 5 years old, white strip in face, marked on the back and sides with the saddle and girth. When last seen had a trace chain on his left fore foot; lightly branded on left hip with T J. Any person who restores or gives information that will lead to the recovery of the same shall receive \$10 reward. THOMAS B. JONES, Kaysville, Davis County. 22-3

WAGONS EXCHANGED.

HEAVY AND LIGHT WAGONS exchanged for Stock on early application to GILBERT & GERRISH. 51st

J. L. HEYWOOD,

HAT, Cap and Muff Manufacturer, 17th Ward. WANTED in exchange—all kinds of Furs, Sheep and Lamb's wool; also all kinds of produce, County and Territorial orders. 21-11

WANTED,

IN exchange for Home Made Hats, Lamb and Sheep WOOL, for which a good price will be paid. Also Fox, Wolf, Beaver, Otter, Rabbit and other furs. JAMES SHELMEIDINE, Hatter, Emigration st., one block east of the State road, 8th ward. 18-2m

FOR SALE.

IN Pleasant Grove, a HOUSE and LOT, situated opposite the Tabernacle, in a pleasant location. TERMS—Cattle, Wagons, Horses, Mules, or any other available means. For particulars enquire of the owner. WM. M. FRAMPTON, Pleasant Grove. 23-1

Lumber, Lumber, Lumber!

10,000 FEET of Lumber, Lath and Shingles, at the Subscribers' Lumber Yard, the sign of the PARASOL, opposite S. Mulhues; on Sale for Territory and County Scrip, Stock and Store Pay.

TIN STORE and MUSEUM, where you will meet with 10,000 other usefuls. Call and see. 22-4 A. TAYLOR & SONS.

W. BALLAN,

WATCH-MAKER, respectfully informs the inhabitants of Great Salt Lake City and vicinity, that he intends carrying on his business in the house formerly occupied by A. L. Hale, North Temple st., 17th ward, and will warrant all work done by him to give satisfaction, as he understands his business in all its branches. Jewelry neatly repaired; charges very moderate. 48-11

S. M. BLAIR

IS MY authorized Agent for the control of my grant in the Bingham Canyon. 22-3 GEORGE A. SMITH.

TAILORING ESTABLISHMENT. ENTRANCE, Deseret Store.—GARMENTS Cut and Made to order by N. H. FELT. 51st

Brand Sheets! Brand Sheets! NOTICE is hereby given that the Brand Sheets, now neatly bound, can be had by calling at the President's Office, price \$1 cash or wheat at cash price taken in payment. Persons having cattle estrayed, or those purchasing, will find it to their advantage to have the Brand Sheets by them for reference. H. B. CLAWSON, Recorder of Brands. 49t

NOTICE.

THE Subscriber, having purchased the Woollen Factory at Jordan Mills, formerly owned by Mr. Gaunt, has repaired and fitted it up in good order and has it in successful operation. Carding, Spinning, Weaving, Pulling and Dyeing done to order at short notice, and on reasonable terms. With a new set of cards and good workmen, he flatters himself that he can do as good work as can be done in the Territory. Wool worked up on shares, if desired. 20-11 A. GARDNER.

THE DESERET NEWS.

PRINTED ON WEDNESDAY MORNING DELIVERED ON THURSDAY.

TERMS—\$6 PER ANNUM.

OFFICE—P. O. BUILDING.

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