

CHAPTER XVII.

CHINA. NEW GUINEA.

Hong Kong. Pigeon English. Chinese Method of writing compared with European Methods. Development of Chinese and Japanese Books from Rolls. Plants colonizing a Pagoda. Sights of Canton. Chinese and English Examinations, and their Subjects compared. The Honam Monastery. Chinese Floral Decorations. A Chinese Dinner. Dragons' Bones and Teeth. Origin of Mythical Animals. Chinese Account of the Dragon. The last Dragon seen in England. Use of Unicorn's Horn as Medicine in Europe. Chinese and English Medicine compared. Chinese Accounts of the Pigmies and of Monkeys. English Mythical Animals. The Sea Serpent. Owls living with Ground Squirrel in China. Off the Talaor Islands. Driftwood off the Ambernoh River, New Guinea. Animals Inhabiting it. Humboldt Bay. Signal Fires of the Natives. Bartering at Night. Numbers of Canoes. Relative Prices of Native Property. Attempts at Thieving. Modes of Expression. Mode of Threatening Death by Signs. Armed Boat Robbed. Villages of Pile-Dwellings.

Hong Kong, November 17th, 1874, to January 6th, 1875.—

The ship was no sooner anchored at Hong Kong, than miserable-looking Chinese came off in small boats, and began dredging round it for refuse of all kinds, carefully washing an old cabbage stalk or beef bone, and preserving it for food. Such boats, usually worked by a single old man, were at work about the ship during nearly the entire time of our stay in the port, a constant evidence of the desperate nature of the struggle for existence amongst the inhabitants of the country.

We soon began to learn "Pigeon English." It is not by any means an easy language to learn; that is, to really learn it. A new comer often mauls his speech in a childish fashion, putting "ey" at the end of every word, and believes he is a master of the language. But such is not the case; Pigeon English is a very definite language, as more than one book written on the language has shown, and unless one knows the accepted terms for things in it, one may be entirely at a loss to make oneself understood by the Chinese.

For example, I wanted to visit a Chinese theatre in Hong