

NOTICES.

The next French Mail of 25th Oct., is due in Hongkong on the 1st Dec., and here on the 7th Dec.—Replies to Shanghai letters forwarded by the mail which left here on the 6th Sept. may be expected by this steamer.

The London Mail of the 30th Oct., is due in Hongkong on the 6th Dec., and here on the 11th Dec.—Replies to Shanghai letters forwarded by the mail which left here on the 12th Sept. may be expected by this steamer.

Shanghai mail advices of 15th October were received in London on the 24th Nov.

The publication of the North-China Daily News commenced at 5h. 30m. A.M.

NOTICE.

N.B.—Only Articles or Letters intended for publication, or relating to the news columns of the paper, should be addressed to the Editor. Communications respecting general advertisements, subscriptions, express, and ordinary business matters, should not be addressed to the Editor, or to the North-China Herald Office. Special business matters should be addressed to the General Manager. By adherence to this rule much unnecessary delay and inconvenience will be avoided.

TO-DAY'S DOINGS.

AUCTION—Furniture, &c.; Mackenzie & Co. 10.30 a.m.
AUCTION—Household Furniture, at No. 3, Szechuen Road; L. Moore. 10.30 a.m.
THE MASQUE OPERA COMPANY at the Lyceum Theatre. 9.00 p.m.

Zi-ka-wei Observatory.

29th November, 1885.

WEATHER.	Previous day.	On date.
Barometer at 0° omg.	760.4	770.3
Variation for 24 hours.	+9.9	+9.9
Wind Direction.	S.W.	S.W.
Force.	12.9	12.9
Temperature (Fahr.)	55.2	55.2
Humidity.	77	77
Barometric (millim.)	0	0
Rainfall (millim.)	0	0

PREVIOUS DAY—28th November, 1885.

WEATHER.	Mean.	Variation for 24 hours.	Normal mean for 12 years.
Barometer at 0° omg.	770.3	+9.9	770.3
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smallpox, fever, or plague; and up till comparatively recent times, bleeding was supposed to be a specific for nearly every accident or illness to which men were liable. Medical science, we say, has progressed wonderfully since then. But are there fewer diseases than there used to be? We know better how to treat diseases than our forefathers did; but have diseases themselves diminished in number? We believe that they have not, and that if civilisation brings with it more experience and more aptitude in battling with disease, it develops disease itself. We believe that a very large proportion of the maladies to which men and women are liable are the direct product and result of civilisation. They form part of the price that must be paid for refinement, and luxury, and culture, and are, we believe, unknown among barbarous peoples. There is probably no healthier being in the world than a stalwart gipsy, or a naked savage. The man who, untrammelled by the clothes of civilised life, always lives in the fresh air, never worries his brain about the state of sharemarkets or the problems of theology, and depends for his dinner upon his strong right arm, knows nothing of those organic derangements which victimise the civilised portion of humanity. Children are born to him, strong and healthy, and with but little danger or inconvenience to the mother. Skin-diseases may, it is true, prevail among such folk, but only in the case of those who neglect personal ablutions—which is not common among the denizens of warm climates. Drinking comparatively little of any intoxicating liquors, he is not subject to those miseries which afflict the poorer classes of large towns, for the tissues of his body are not vitiated by alcohol. He can undergo with absolute impunity hardship and exposure which would simply kill the more sensitive townsman, and he devours his primitive food with a keenness of relish unknown to pampered palates. His limbs are strong and supple; he is the embodiment of perfect health. And he preserves his health simply and solely by taking no care of it, but just following his instincts and leading the life that Nature intends he should. It is well known that special care and training, brought to bear upon any particular organ, renders it unnaturally delicate. The throat of the singer, carefully educated, as it were, wrapped up in woolen comforters, and then coated with tannin, or lemon-juice, or whatever the favourite specific of the artist may be, is infinitely more liable to take cold and be thrown out of gear than the throat of a ploughboy or a dairymaid. Who ever heard of a savage of respectable and healthy habits suffering from bronchitis, or tooth-ache, or gout, or liver-complaint? Such derangements are the outgrowth of civilisation, the result of the body having been subjected to influences which make for its degeneracy. The more natural the life one leads, the less liable will one be to fall a prey to illness; a truism, no doubt, but one which is but seldom thought of, and still more rarely acted on. To live on sixpence a day and earn it, is one of the best prescriptions ever given by a doctor; and it was given by one of the most eminent physicians of this century. "Seldom," says a writer of much wisdom and common-sense, "shall we see in cities, courts, and rich families where men live plentifully and eat and drink freely, that perfect health, that athletic soundness and vigour of constitution, which is commonly seen in the country, in poor houses and cottages, where Nature is their cook and necessity their caterer, and where they have no other doctor but the sun and fresh air, and that such a one as never sends them to the apothecary." The two enemies to health about which we hear most in Shanghai are probably over-living and over-anxiety; and the moral of it all is that the more simply we eat and drink, and the more coolly we take all the ups and downs of life, the likelier we are to enjoy both bodily and mental vigour.

It appears that Tang Chiung, ex-Governor of Yunnan, now lying at the Board of Punishments under sentence of decapitation after the Autumn Assizes, is not likely to suffer death during the present year. It is during this year that the Empress-Regent has attained her fiftieth birthday, which alone renders the time "auspicious"; besides, this is the eleventh year of the reign of Kuang Hui, and we are informed that, for some inscrutable reason, the eleventh and twentieth years of a sovereign's reign are also "auspicious." For this reason there will be no executions at the Capital, and consequently Tang Chiung cannot possibly be beheaded until next year. We hope, therefore, that by that time the rancour of the Empress will have become somewhat assuaged, and that she will be induced to spare the life of a man who is certainly entitled to rank among the most able and devoted adherents to the Throne.

The British North Borneo Herald says:—The Court of Directors have given instructions to make a collection of the natural products of British North Borneo for exhibition at the forthcoming Indian and Colonial Exhibition to be held next spring in London under the presidency of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, and have granted a sum of money for that purpose. It is proposed to send home specimens of the various kinds of timber, of which there are some seventeen to be had in large quantities, many well adapted for railway sleepers, piles, cabinet work, etc., also samples of edible birds' nests, tobacco, gold, and other products. With this view a committee has been formed of several Government officials, and advantage has been taken of the presence in Sandakan of some other gentlemen well acquainted with the country to obtain the benefit of their experience and advice. The committee, of which the Colonial Secretary is President, expects to conclude its labours in time to ship all the specimens selected by the beginning of December.

This is from the *China Mail*:—The military expedition which started from Hanoi some weeks ago to operate against Than-mai, a little above Hung-hua, would appear from the latest advices from Tonquin to have returned to Hanoi without having met with any serious resistance from the Black Flags and their allies. No fighting of any moment occurred. A few small bands of Annamite rebels were encountered, and about fifty of these were taken prisoners. Several of the chiefs of the rebels were captured, amongst whom was found a *bank hinh*, or general of division in the Annamite army. They were executed at Hanoi about the 12th inst. The recent efforts made by the French troops and gunboats to suppress the numerous bands of rebels and pirates which infest the country have been to a great extent successful. Travelling upon the rivers and creeks is now much safer than it was a few months since, and the health of the troops throughout the country has greatly improved. A gunner named Cros, belonging to the 11th Battery, 12th Artillery, was executed at Hanoi on the 7th inst., for pillaging the house of an Annamite and killing the owner.

A few days ago, says the *Daily Press*, a severe encounter took place at Man Shan, near Macao, between the Chinese revenue cruisers *Hui Cheung-ching*, *An-lan*, *Chen-to*, and *Peng Chao-hoi* and a fleet of smuggling boats, reported to number about sixty, carrying salt, opium, and kerosene oil. It appears that the smuggling fleet sailed from Yow-mah-te in company, but the cruisers obtained information of their intention to rendezvous at Man Shan, and went in pursuit. Arrived off Man Shan the cruisers hailed the smuggling craft and called upon them to surrender. The smugglers replied by opening fire upon the cruisers with rockets and guns. This fire was promptly returned by the cruisers, and a regular engagement took place, which lasted all night and was prolonged through most of the following morning. In the end, the smugglers were compelled to retire, after a most obstinate resistance, leaving several of their boats as prizes in the hands of the revenue men, as well as about ten prisoners. Several of the smuggling craft were sunk by the fire from the cruisers, and it is believed that upwards of twenty men were shot or drowned. The *Peng Chao-hoi's* wheelhouse was smashed by the shot from some of the smuggling junks, and the *An-lan's* sails were burnt by the rockets launched at them by the enemy. It is further reported that several persons belonging to the crew of the cruisers were killed or wounded during the action.

The *Guiding Star* left Amoy on the 26th November for Hongkong.

The *Adolph and Caroline*, from Newchwang, arrived at Amoy on the 26th November.

Mr. William Keswick has returned to Tientsin from the Kaiping mines, and is due here very shortly.

The *Cliveden* was one of the last vessels to arrive at Newchwang. She left that port again for Chefoo and Swatow on the 26th November.

The *Chiguen*, on the 26th November, while leaving Swatow, passed the following vessels bound in that port:—*Yehsin*, *Tamami*, and *Toona*.

The *Guiding Star*, *Daniel*, *Hermann*, *Hoang Ho*, *Mercer*, *Rachel*, *Theresa*, *John Potts*, *Galveston* and *Frisco* arrived at Amoy on the 25th November, from Newchwang.

Mr. Tong King-sing leaves for Tientsin per *Hsiao* this morning. He has left the accounts of the China Merchants Co., up to the date of his relinquishing the management, in the hands of the printers, and they are supposed to be very satisfactory.

A Correspondent complains that his name did not appear in our passenger list. We cannot always give the names of the foreign passengers, because the officers on board who fill out our shipping reports either do not state further than that there were so many "foreign passengers," or the names are written so indistinctly that we are unable to make out what they are.

A gentleman informs that while he was riding in a jinricksha in the Nanking Road at about 10 o'clock on Sunday night, a trap drove past him, and as it did so, the

occupant slashed at the jinricksha with his whip, the lash of which, had it been a few inches longer, would have hit the gentleman in the jinricksha in the face. We are always hearing of cases of rowdiness in the Settlements, and it is a pity that some of those who thus misbehave themselves are not brought to book for their conduct.

Referring to the expedition to Burmah the *Civil & Military Gazette* says:—"Should war be declared, we do not anticipate a prolonged campaign. The passage from Thymtzy to Mandalay (360 miles), takes three and a half days. The 18 steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, each equal to carrying 800 men, with provisions for a month, are available for transport; besides a number of steam launches belonging to Government and private firms. With a moonlight night, and under favourable circumstances, Mandalay can be reached from Thymtzy in less than two days. The forts at Minihla and Ava offer the only obstacle. At Minihla, forty miles above the frontier, there is a polygonal fort capable of holding some 2,000 men. There are three lines of earthwork faced with masonry; each of which would have to be breached or escalated before the fort could be taken. There are no ditches, however, or flank defences. Opposite Ava, there is a fort from which fire could be opened on vessels going up the river, just as they rounded a dangerous reef. There are other defences in the neighbourhood; but they have been described as mere shell traps for the destruction of the garrisons. Unless King Theebaw and his foreign advisers have made considerable improvements, an invading army will have very little work to do till it nears Mandalay. Mandalay lies 24 miles from the river, from which it is separated by a marshy plain. It is surrounded by a wall and moat—neither of them formidable. The river side to the west is defended by a high embankment." One of the forts referred to—Minihla—has been already captured.

On the 13th of January of that year 1846, this comet, visible since the 25th of November, broke into two pieces, and two comets of the same appearance were seen deviating rapidly from each other. By the 10th of February the two bodies of the comets were already distant by 150,000 miles; however they seemed to take leave of one another reluctantly, and for many days a sort of bridge was seen between the two.

On the 26th September 1852 the twin meteors appeared, but divided by an interval of 1,620,000 miles. Since then, all researches have been useless to find them again; they ought to have come back and been seen from the earth in 1859, 1866, 1872, 1879, but the comet Biela did not certainly return. Was it lost for ever to us? Had it missed its way in the neighbourhood of the large planets? No, it was impossible, for on its way it could meet neither with Jupiter, nor with any other of the further planets.

Now, when it was no more thought of, on the evening of the 27th November, 1872, a true "shower of shooting stars" was seen falling from the sky: it was like actual fireworks, and lasted from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. of the following day. Father Secchi, at Rome, numbered 13,892 of these meteors; at Moncalieri 33,400; in England one observer alone saw 10,579 of them; on the whole their number was estimated 160,000, and they burst in all directions from the same spot of the sky, near the five star Gamma d'Andromeda. This is exactly the same point that we found at Zi-ka-wei for the shooting stars seen the night before last. Now, as the orbit of the famous comet Biela, broken in 1846, and lost since 1852, meets the orbit of the earth precisely on the 27th of November, since 1872 the same phenomenon has been renewed with the same interest on the 27th of November 1879 and 1885. The "perihelium" (or nearest approach to the sun) of the comet Biela might take place, according to the calculations, in April 1886. Every year the earth crosses the orbit of the comet, or more exactly the orbit of the "swarm" to which it has given birth, always at the same date, the 27th of November, and consequently every year shooting stars must make their appearance; but it is easy to understand that the "swarm" must have a far greater density in the very spot where before was the body of the parcelled comet: this spot at present is not far from the earth, for it ought to go round the sun after a few months only. Thence results a greater abundance of meteors during the night in which we have travelled through the orbit.

This transit, or this passage, is generally a very short one: all is over after a few hours. In 1872 the meteoric "shower" lasted six hours only. The apparition of the Leonids takes place only in the morning of the 14th November; that of the Perseids lasts a few days, with a maximum on the 10th August, and this duration evidently depends on the depth of the "swarm" we meet with. The depth of the Biela comet's "swarm" ought not to be considerable according to the short appearance of 1872; and this is again confirmed this year: for last evening (28th November) no meteor was to be seen where the night before last so many shooting stars took fire in the sky.

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