

closes the fact that Yuang Chuang, the pilgrim monk, who, in the seventh century A.D., returned after sixteen years' wanderings in India, brought cats with him to protect his collection of Sanskrit Buddhist books from rats. That account, however, is somewhat invalidated by an anecdote of Confucius, who is related to have one day seen a cat chasing a rat. These conflicting statements are from authoritative sources, and it is impossible to offer a satisfactory explanation. Possibly the cat of Confucian times was only a partially domesticated wild cat. There must have been some ground for the statement of the cat having been brought from India, as it is hardly likely that in all the long period of Chinese history it should be named but twice as a domestic animal. He quotes from Chinese folk-lore on the subject of cats. As cruelty to cats and other animals is followed by retribution, so services rendered to them meet with supernal recognition. As anciently the tiger was sacrificed to because it destroyed wild boars, so the wild cat was worshipped because it was the natural foe of rats; boars and rats being the natural enemies of husbandry. At the commencement of the Sui dynasty (A.D. 581), the cat spirit inspired greater terror than the fox did subsequently. The hallucinations of cat spirit mania prevailed, forming a remarkable episode in Chinese history, only to be likened to the fanatical delusion of witchcraft that frenzied Europe a thousand years later. It was believed that the spirit of a cat possessed the power of conjuring away property from one person to another, and inflicted through incantations bodily harm. The popular belief was intensified and spread like an epidemic, until every disastrous affair that took place was ascribed to cat spirit agency set in motion by some mischievous enemy. Accusations were lodged against suspected persons, and, the slightest evidence sufficing for conviction, the malicious were encouraged to trump up charges against the innocent, until the country became a pandemonium. No one was safe, from the Imperial family down to the humble clodhopper. Even a magnate of the reigning house, who enjoyed the titular distinction of Prince or King of Szechuan, was executed for nefariously employing the agency of cat spirits. In this manner several thousands were immolated before the delusion was dispelled. Happily the period appears to have been of brief duration: incentives such as kept up the witch mania for centuries were wanting in China. Coming down to our own times we find a cat-craft delusion prevailed over a great portion of Chékiang. "In the summer and autumn of 1847 frightful wraiths appeared throughout the departments of Hangchow, Shaohsing, Ningpo, and Taichow. They were demons and three-legged cats. On the approach of night a fœtid odour was perceptible in the air, when dwellings were entered by something by which people were bewitched, causing alarm everywhere. On detecting the effluvia in the air, householders commenced gong-beating, and the sprites, frightened by the sonorous noise, quickly retreated. This lasted for several months, when the weird phenomena ceased." Well did he remember, said Dr. Macgowan, the commotion that prevailed in Ningpo throughout those months of terror. Every gong that could be procured or manufactured for the occasion was subject to vigorous thumping through the live-long night, maintained with vociferations by relays of zealous beaters. This deafening din was but a recrudescence of what had occurred a few generations before—a panic which was only exceeded by that which subsequently prevailed over the entire empire.

With regard to sheep, Dr. Macgowan said the ancient mode of writing the character for *yang*, goat, was ideographic—four strokes on the top to represent horns, two horizontal strokes representing legs, and a perpendicular one to represent body and tail. The modern form gives an additional parallel stroke, like the word for horse; it is a simple not a compound character, and when sheep came to be known, instead of making a new character, the sheep was called the "Hun-goat," thus indicating its origin and affinity. *Yang*, goat, is often translated sheep, the earliest instances being found in one of the Odes, wherein the Court habiliments of Wen Wang are called "lamb-skins and sheep-skins." This was about 1160 B.C., but it is doubtful if these robes are really the skins of sheep. It is not certain that such was the case, for the skins of goats were used then, as now, for clothes. Hun-goats are not named before the period of the Tang dynasty, say the seventh century A.D. The goat was one of the sacrificial animals, as at present, and was at the first selected for sacrifice when sheep were unknown.

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In the discussion which followed, the conclusions of the paper were not accepted by all the speakers; and it was agreed that the subject was one worthy of scholarly investigation.

#### HAINAN.

THE great island of Hainan, off the south-eastern coast of China, is but little known to Europeans, although since 1877 there has been a treaty port there. Mr. Parker, the Consul at Kiungchow, the port in question, lately made a short journey in the interior of the island, of which he gives some account in a recent report. He travelled about sixty miles up the Poh-Chung River, to within a mile or two of Pah-hi, which is, at most seasons of the year, considered the limit of navigation for all but the smallest craft. He walked round the walls of Ting-an city, one of the disturbed districts during the recent rebellions, on New Year's Day (February 9); they are just one mile in circuit, and differ little from those of other Chinese cities. Wherever he had an opportunity of walking diametrically across lengthy curves of the river he found the inclosed area to be extremely well cultivated; though not so flat, its general appearance recalled many features of the Tonquin delta, especially in its great wealth of bamboos. The productions of the soil are much the same, the papaw, areca-palm, sweet potato, turnip, ground-nut, orange-tree, &c.; but a peculiar Hainan feature is the cocoa-nut palm. Another peculiarity of this region is the ubiquitousness of the dwarf *Pandanus*, probably the same as the *P. odoratissima* of Fiji, the fibre of which is used in the manufacture of grass-cloth, and is usually known to foreign trade here as hemp. Much of the land was under sweet potato cultivation, and every household seemed to possess a few pigs, of the very superior and stereotyped Hainan variety, black as to the upper and white as to the lower part of the body, with a dividing line of grey running along the side from the snout to the tail. These wholesome-looking pigs are fattened on the sweet potato, and do not rely for sustenance upon precarious scavenging, as is the case with the repulsive and uncleanly animals of North China. Land contiguous to the river is irrigated by enormous wheels, forty feet in diameter, of very ingenious construction, moved by the current, needing no attention, and discharging perhaps one hundred gallons of water in a minute into the trough above, day and night without intermission. He passed several large pottery establishments; but as at the New Year all business and cultivation are suspended for a few days, the opportunity was not a very good one for gathering precise information. The temperature during the week ranged between 50° and 60° F. Game seemed plentiful everywhere, and he mentions that a German resident has recently made a very fine collection of about 400 Hainan birds, embracing 154 species, which will shortly be on their way to a Berlin Museum. One of the commonest birds in the river is a spotted white and black kingfisher of large size. Amongst the trees which attracted his attention was one locally called the "great-leafed banyan," which looks remarkably like the gutta-percha tree; the natives seem to use its gum mixed with gambier, in order to make that dye "fast"; but there is some doubt whether it is not the sap of the real banyan-tree which is used for the purpose. A very strong silk is made from the grub called the "celestial silkworm," or, locally, "paddy-insect." This grub is found on a sort of maple. When full-grown it is thrown into boiling vinegar, on which the "head" of the gut, or "silk," appears; this is sharply torn out with both hands drawn apart, and is as long as the space between them, say five feet; it is so strong that one single thread of it is sufficient to make a line with which to catch the smaller kinds of fish.

#### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

OXFORD.—The Chancellor of the University, acting as Visitor of Pembroke College, has appointed the Rev. Bartholomew Price, M.A., F.R.S., Senior Fellow, and Vicegerent of the College, Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy, to be Master of the College in the place of the late Dr. Evans. Prof. Price, whose contributions to mathematics are well known, has long taken a leading part in University business, and his appointment to the Mastership of the College, of which he has been a Fellow since 1843, will be warmly approved.