

P R E F A C E.

AFTER the numerous and elaborate works on Chinese Philology already before the Public, the presentation of a new one would seem almost to need an apology, were it not that the object of the present Dictionary is not so much to elucidate the Chinese language generally, as that of one of its dialects, in particular. Previous efforts have been confined to the Mandarin or Court dialect, with the exception of a Canton Vocabulary published in 1828, and (so far as the Author's information extends) nothing has yet been done to elucidate the Hok-kèèn or Emoey tongue.

The Mandarin tongue is partially understood throughout the whole Empire, by the better informed part of the inhabitants, and, in some central districts, it is said to be the current language of the people, but, in the southern provinces, the vulgar dialects differ more or less from the Court language, and in Hok-kèèn, where the difference is most marked, the cultivation of the Mandarin tongue is less general. The author, having never visited China, has had little opportunity of conversing with the higher ranks of the Chinese, but from a constant intercourse with the middling and lower classes who emigrate to the Eastern Islands, his uniform experience for the last fourteen years has been, that not one man in five hundred knows any thing of the Mandarin tongue, or can carry on a conversation of more than ten words in it. In Hok-kèèn, a doctor, a fortune-teller, a stage-player, or a police officer may sometimes be

met with, who having travelled into other provinces, or been employed about Government offices, will perhaps be able to converse a little in the Court dialect; but, in most cases, the people are totally unacquainted with it, and never think of studying it till, having succeeded at the literary examinations, and got a prospect of preferment or employment, they go to a regular school for the study of the Mandarin, and acquire it almost as they would a new language. Indeed, instances have been known of literary graduates of considerable standing giving up the prospect of Government situations, rather than take the trouble of studying the Court dialect.

Not only does the Mandarin tongue differ from the vulgar idioms, but these provincial dialects differ considerably from each other, so that an inhabitant of Hok-kèèn will not be able to understand a native of Canton,—and the author has frequently had occasion to interpret for two Chinese from adjoining provinces, who could not understand each other. Even in the same province, the difference of dialect is sometimes so great, that people divided by a mountain, a river, or twenty miles of country, are by no means intelligible to each other. In the ten counties of Hok-kèèn, there are certainly as many different dialects, and if the same obtains throughout every one of the eighteen provinces of China, the different dialects in that Empire will be nearly two hundred.

A person who contemplates learning the Chinese language, without much prospect of verbal intercourse with the people, or who will be generally conversant with the higher classes and Government officers, throughout all the Provinces, would certainly do well to study the Mandarin dialect;—but he whose intercourse will probably be confined to one district, and who will have to do with the great mass of the people residing in it, would do better to study the vulgar dialect of that particular place.

The author, on commencing the study of Chinese, attended solely to the Mandarin, but, finding that it was not understood by the mass of emigrants in the Malayan archipelago, he turned his attention, in the year 1818, to the Hok-kèèn dialect. In 1820, a small Vocabulary was drawn up, and a few sheets of it printed at Malacca; in 1823, this work was enlarged, and sent to Singapore, to be printed under the patronage of the Singapore Institution, the Committee of which offered to publish it at their own expence. The affairs of that Institution, however, not having prospered, the Manuscript lay untouched for several years, was since sent to Malacca and Penang, and, in the year 1829, came back untouched into the author's hands. Considerable advancement having in the mean time been made in the knowledge of the language, and the Select

Committee for managing the affairs of the Honorable East India Company, in China, having generously offered to bring the work through the press, the author undertook to re-compose it entirely, to enlarge it by the addition of several thousand characters, and to illustrate the meaning of each principal word by a quotation from some respectable Chinese author.

The present work is founded on a native Dictionary of the Hok-kèèn dialect, published in the year 1818, called the 十五音 *Sip gnoé yim*, or "fifteen sounds," which contains both the Reading and Colloquial idiom, with the sounds and tones very accurately defined. The inhabitants of Hok-kèèn have a method of expressing themselves in common conversation, very different from the style in which their books are written; and this variation appears, not only in the substitution of more easy and familiar words for the abstruse and difficult terms used in books, but also in the inflection and alteration of even common words, giving them sometimes a nasal or contracted termination, and sometimes completely changing their sound and tone. This has given rise to the distinction between the Reading and Colloquial forms of speech, which, in the native Dictionaries, are distinguished, by having the former printed in red, and the latter in black ink; while the same is attempted to be marked in the following work, by putting the Colloquial in italics, and printing the Reading idiom in roman letters.

The Chinese have a method of spelling their words, by dividing them into initials and finals, and taking the initial of one word and the final of another, they form a third by the conjunction. In the native Dictionary above alluded to, fifteen initials (hence the name) and fifty finals are employed, to express all the possible variations in sound, of which the Hok-kèèn dialect is capable. These initials and finals are hereafter described, and attempted to be expressed in European letters; the system of orthography which has been adopted to elucidate these sounds may not possibly be the best, and no doubt they would be differently expressed by others; but whatever may be the faults or deficiencies of his system, the author flatters himself that it is uniform, and that any given word will be found to bear the same orthography throughout the work. Walker's and Sheridan's pronouncing Dictionaries have been consulted, but it was found impossible to adopt their systems in every instance, as the Hok-kèèn dialect contains sounds, which neither of those orthoëpists had ever occasion to illustrate. The nasals, in particular, can be accurately expressed by no possible system of European orthography, and if twenty people had to define them, they would no doubt write them in as many different ways; the author has therefore adopted that mode of spelling which appeared

to him the best, following, in most instances, the orthography of Dr. Morrison, in his Dictionary of the Mandarin tongue, where the sounds at all resembled each other;— and having once adopted it, he has found it necessary to adhere to the same throughout the work, in order to prevent mistakes and confusion.

In addition to the sounds formed by the junction of the fifteen initials and fifty finals, the inhabitants of Hok-kèèn have a method of multiplying their few monosyllables, by the application of various tones, which, while the word retains the same form of spelling, produce an alteration of the intonation, by a variation of the accent. Respecting these tones of the Chinese language, some difference of opinion has obtained, and while some have considered them of the first importance, others have paid them little or no attention. The author inclines decidedly to the former opinion; having found, from uniform experience, that without strict attention to the tones, it is impossible for a person to make himself understood in Hok-kèèn. Chinese children, as soon as they begin to speak, learn the tones, as speedily as they do the sounds themselves, and the poorest people invariably observe the minutest regard to the tones; so that the author has never heard a real native of Hok-kèèn make the slightest mistake in the tones, even in the hurried conversation of common life. Indeed a Chinese is more likely to make a mistake in the orthography than in the accent of a word, and when charged with pronouncing *tëem* instead of *lëem*, will defend himself, by saying that, at any rate the words are in the same tone, and therefore there cannot be much difference between them. A horse in Hok-kèèn is *báy*, in the upper tone, with an acute accent, but the Chinese, in speaking of a horse, would as soon think of changing the orthography into *báng*, as of altering the accent into *báy*, which is in the lower even tone, with a circumflex over it. In the native Dictionary which is made the basis of the present work, the tones are most particularly defined, and the arrangement of each section is more according to the tone than the orthography; for instance, the first section contains all the words of the even tone, under a certain final, as connected with the different initials, and not a single upper tone is brought forward, till all the even tones of that final are given; the second section then contains all the words under the upper tone of the same final, and so on; so that *kwun* in the even tone will be found under one section, and *kwín*, in the upper tone under another. This arrangement, in which the accent is regarded more than the spelling, is peculiar to the Chinese, and shews what great stress they lay on a difference of tone, even more so than on a difference of orthography. In the following pages, this arrangement has been reversed, and the words are classed according to their alphabetical order, yet the author has endeavoured to mark, in every instance, the peculiar tone to be affixed to each word, and that not only in the words placed

for reference at the head of each line, but also in the examples adduced; so that, with the exception of typographical errors, each word will be found to have, not only the same mode of spelling, but also a uniform intonation, throughout the book.

It is possible that, in the meaning given to each particular word, some dissimilarity may be observed between the present work and the Dictionary published by Dr. Morrison; if such should be the case, the author would not be understood as intentionally differing from his indefatigable predecessor, whose elaborate work he has seldom or ever consulted for the meaning of words; but, having followed an entirely independent authority, and having adopted the meanings assigned in native Dictionaries, and illustrated in the quotations referred to, it is not unlikely but some trifling discrepancy may arise. Fewer meanings may also be found in this, than in the Doctor's work; but it must be remembered, that the present undertaking is on a much smaller scale than the preceding one, and to have given all the meanings of each word, and proofs of their being used in every several sense, from Chinese authors, would have swelled this Dictionary to too great a size, particularly as it is designed to illustrate, not so much the language, as a single dialect of it. However, the most common and approved sense of each word is generally given.

The quotations adduced are most of them from Chinese authors of the best reputation, viz. from the Five Classics, the Four Books, authentic Histories, and approved Odes, being generally the same which are quoted in the Imperial Dictionary, under the characters referred to. A few vulgar phrases may be found here and there, and some quotations from novels and unauthorized productions; but good authors, however ancient, have generally been preferred, both as being held in greater respect among the Chinese themselves, and as giving the most approved sense of the characters in question. It may be that the author has mistaken the meaning of some passages, and has awkwardly expressed the sense of others, while published translations of the works quoted from may be brought, in triumphant proof of alledged ignorance or carelessness;—but it must be remembered, that a person giving the sense of an isolated passage is very likely to express himself differently from one who translates the book in detail; and that some variation or amplification is indeed necessary in a quotation, in order to give the reader a correct idea of the sentence, which would be less requisite where the passage stood in its proper connection. If it be asked,—why not give sentences from modern authors, or examples of every-day conversation, in illustration of each character? the answer may be, that there are no modern authors, of any reputation, but what are built upon, and imitators of ancient writings; and to manufacture sentences for the occasion would be

liable to this very serious objection, that such sentences, may or may not be good Chinese, according to the proficiency or unskilfulness of the Compiler; and to adduce ungrammatical or un-idiomatical sentences in elucidation, would be to lead the mind astray, and to retard instead of promote the progress of the student. Should the author be spared to compose the Second Part of this Dictionary, viz. the English and Chinese, it is his intention to adduce, under each important word, a phrase from some English author, and to give the sense of it in Chinese, by which means the student will be enabled to judge of the familiar way of writing and speaking Chinese, and of the method of rendering English composition into it.

For the short historical and statistical account of Hok-kèèn, the author is indebted to Chinese histories and geographical works, to Malte Brun's Universal Geography, and to an account of the Dutch embassy to Hok-kèèn in the seventeenth century. These productions are most of them old, yet, as China remains long stationary, the present state of the province differs perhaps little from what it was formerly. In estimating the population of Hok-kèèn, a different opinion is hazarded from what Dr. Morrison has given, in his View of China for Philological Purposes: it is however proposed with diffidence, and not without being substantiated by two independant authorities. Hok-kèèn contains ten counties, of which only one, viz. 漳州 Chèang chew, near the port of Emöey, is the identical spot where the dialect illustrated in this Dictionary is spoken in its purity; in the adjoining county to the east, viz. 泉州 Chwân chew, the dialect differs very little; and in the neighbouring county on the opposite side, viz. 潮州 Tèâou chew, in the province of Canton, the dialect differs a little more, but still the inhabitants of each district are mutually intelligible to each other. Of the dialects of the northern counties, of 汀州 T'heng chew, and 延平 Yèên pêng, as well as of the north-eastern counties of 興化 Hin hwà, and 福州 Hok chew, the author is unable to speak with any degree of decision.

For any typographical errors, which may creep in during the execution of the work, the author hopes for the indulgence of the public, as, the work being printed at the distance of nearly two thousand miles from his place of abode, it is impossible for him to correct the sheets as they are put to press, or to mark out any errors which might have inadvertently dropped from his pen in the composition. To the Rev. Dr. Morrison and his son, who have kindly undertaken the revision of the proofs, the author would express his unfeigned obligations, and his earnest hopes that they may succeed, in the difficult task of reading and comparing the very minute distinctions, of accent as well as sound,

which the author has found it necessary to employ in the work, and that they may send it forth to the public, as correct as his best wishes could desire.

To the Directors of the Honorable East India Company, and to the Gentlemen of the Select Committee for the management of their affairs in China, the author acknowledges himself as under great and manifold obligations, for their kind notice and patronage of the work, and for their munificent liberality, in printing it, free of expence, at their own press in China.

May the present feeble undertaking be rendered eminently serviceable in the promotion of Chinese literature, and may students of the language, whether for civil or religious purposes, derive essential benefit therefrom! and to that God who has granted health for the undertaking, and ability to bring it to a conclusion, shall be all the glory.

W. H. M.

Batavia, July 29th. 1831.

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Batavia, July 20th, 1831.