

Canton Feb. 26 1808. TM/111/45

Although you are in my debt a
letter, I will not be rigorous at this unsoociable
distance; the more so, as I really believe
you had not received mine when the last
ships of last season left England. It is now
nearly two years since I left England — one of
them, & scarcely more than one, I have spent in
China; for our tedious voyage occupied the
greater part of the other. I am, as I told you,
situated here in the most advantageous man-
ner; & on the best terms with all the European
merchants. We are insulated here, as it were,
from the Chinese, & I have the greatest trouble
in effecting points of communication so that you
must not expect any thing interesting from
me as yet. I make some progress in the lan-
guage, & I have been so happy as to investi-
gate & analyse many things concerning it
that are very obscurely, or rather not at all
known, in Europe, even by those who are consi-
dered as Chinese scholars. We spend the sum-
mer at Macao, a romantic, tho' barren, spot
of ground near 100 miles south of Canton. I find
nobody that takes any delight in it but myself.
I hear it visited twenty times in a day — it is a
dull place — I grant that — but the sea-breeze
the reposing bay screened by lofty hills & mountain
tops, the ocean opening at a distance; the con-
trast between real repose, & ideal tumult & traf-

fic upon the sight of passing ships, the luxurious head (that's a luxury of my own); they think me mad to find pleasure in such a fest as they call it) the religious buildings, solidly handsome, tho' plain; the portuguese superstitions; the memory & marks of their former activity of mind & body; the remembrance of the suits excited by the organs, the bells &c, with which those active learned & extraordinary men have endowed this place. These and other little bundles of delight are sufficient for me.

Then for society, I find it there. French & Italian missionaries, some resident, some coming in from various parts - from Tonguin, from Macilla &c. Various mercantile people of various nations, & from various parts - and all can speak french. You can't think what a comfort I find in being able to converse fluently in that language. Then there is our own society, and the other European residents, & to crown all these are two very agreeable English women Mrs Baring, & Mrs Putcalf, the former of whom plays in an accomplished manner on the grand forte, & also on the harp. We have concerts (bad enough except the duets) and as they have found out that I can sing by notes, which no one else there can, I am drawn in to take a part. We have balls too at which I am a spectator only, not choosing to discompose the seemingly order of my beard by such light

fantastic motions.

I have just sent my things down
the river, & am going to embark for Cochin
China where I propose staying for a
few months if I can get leave. Of the
results of this expedition you shall
hear another time. —