

EVERYTHING IN STYLE

HARRIETT LOW'S MACAU

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Published in conjunction with



澳門特別行政區政府文化局

INSTITUTO CULTURAL do Governo da R.A.E. de Macau

香港大學出版社



HONG KONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

Hong Kong University Press

14/F Hing Wai Centre

7 Tin Wan Praya Road

Aberdeen

Hong Kong

© Hong Kong University Press 2006

Hardback ISBN-13: 978-962-209-788-9

ISBN-10: 962-209-788-X

Paperback ISBN-13: 978-962-209-789-6

ISBN-10: 962-209-789-8

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Secure On-line Ordering

<http://www.hkupress.org>

Printed and bound by Kings Time Printing Press Ltd., Hong Kong, China.

香港大學
出版社

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"At first glance, Square Word Calligraphy appears to be nothing more unusual than Chinese characters, but in fact it is a new way of rendering English words in the format of a square so they resemble Chinese characters. Chinese viewers expect to be able to read Square Word Calligraphy but cannot. Western viewers, however are surprised to find they can read it. Delight erupts when meaning is unexpectedly revealed."

— Britta Erickson, *The Art of Xu Bing*

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1

A Passage to China

Until the beginning of the 19th century, women rarely had the opportunity to travel much beyond their country of residence. In general, the proverb “a woman’s place is in the home” characterised the prevailing ideology, which was subscribed to by both sexes. If women travelled at all, it was in their function as domestic beings, namely accompanying a male member of their family as spouses, daughters, or sisters. At that time, each journey was an arduous task, considering the slow and uncomfortable means of transportation, the poor standard of hygiene in public inns and taverns nor to mention the dangers of robbers and impostors of all kinds. There was no possibility of insuring one’s health, life or luggage. Furthermore, the confrontation with different beliefs and customs abroad was seen as potentially harmful to a woman, especially if she was still young and impressionable.¹

Since the 1820s, the traditional view of women primarily as domestic beings was challenged in many Western societies, due to the increasing industrialisation and expansion of commerce and all the social changes it entailed. The continuous progress in the development of faster and safer means of transportation encouraged more and more women to accompany their loved ones to virtually any place on the globe, or to hit the road on their own in the search for adventure, erudition, excitement, or self-realisation. A few decades later, travel was seen as a status symbol and an indicator of economic power. The experience of having travelled abroad was then regarded as an asset for a young, middle-class lady at the age of marriage.²

Although Harriett Low’s journey took place in the shelter of kinfolk and thus can be considered under the traditional motives for travelling, she cannot be denied a good sense of adventure in view of the potential dangers and uncertainties that such a long voyage entailed. In the latter sense, Harriett Low and other travelling wives, sisters and daughters can be seen as true pioneers of their country and kind.

A momentous invitation

Harriett Low was born and raised in Salem (Massachusetts), as the second child among twelve of Seth Low (1782–1853) and of his wife Mary Porter Low (1786–1872).³ Her father was a trader, importing medicinal drugs and other goods from overseas. The family belonged to the early 19th-century North American bourgeoisie, White, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant, with all their beliefs and habits. Harriett had visited a school for young ladies in Salem, where she learnt what girls of her social position had to know, including a basic knowledge of French. At the same time, however, she also had to assist her mother with the daily chores:

*Before her departure for China, Harriett Low's life had been defined more by hard work than dancing. Her role in the large and economically pinched household had been that of seamstress — constantly making button holes or mending clothes for herself and seven brothers and three sisters.*⁴

The opportunity for a change from the daily routine came, when her uncle William Henry Low (1795–1834) was invited to go to Canton as partner and head of the American company Russell & Co., in order to substitute Samuel Russell, one of the founding members, who wanted to retire.⁵ Since he would be living mainly in Canton, a city that was off-limits for Western women, he challenged Harriett, who was his favourite niece,⁶ to stay with his wife Abigail Knapp Low (born in 1800) in Macau to keep her company, as the couple had no children. Thus, in order to feel always close to home, she decided to write a journal for her elder sister Mary Ann, who also kept a diary to be exchanged with her.⁷

Harriett Low and her aunt became a part of the first generation of North-American women who ventured beyond the borders of their country. This process started in the 1820s and it proved to be irreversible:

*In an unprecedented female exodus, they fanned out around the globe on the waves of ideological, economic, political, and technological developments. ... Travel was transforming women from private into public actors on the world stage.*⁸

Two months after their departure in May of 1829, this branch of the Low family moved from Salem to Brooklyn (New York), where several members and descendants would assume important public positions. Since the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, New York had rapidly turned into a navigational centre, while the harbour of Salem, due to problems of silting, could no longer receive large vessels.

*These Lows were remarkable people. Everything they became involved with on the sea turned to gold, but they kept up their cultural interest as well.*⁹

First impressions of a long voyage

The Sumatra and her crew

As regards the characteristics of the ship on which the Lows travelled to the Far East, the first editor of the journal, Harriett's daughter Katharine Hillard, who lived in the golden age of ocean steamers, wrote:

*It is hard to realize that it then took four or five months, at best, to reach China, and that nearly a year must elapse before an answer could be received to a letter sent from there. In those days a ship of seventeen hundred tons was considered a marine marvel, and its accommodations were spoken of as "magnificent".*¹⁰

The Lows travelled to Macau on board the *Sumatra*, a sailing boat of 287 tons. She was commanded by Captain Charles Roundy (1794–1864), who regularly sailed between Salem and the Far East. It was not very common for ships to have many passengers, because at that time only those people who wanted to do business in China, to convert the heathen or to heal the wounded, travelled there. Apart from the three Lows there was merely one other passenger listed, Philip Ammidon Jr. (born 1804),¹¹ whose father was the co-founder of the firm Russell & Co., which Harriett's uncle was going to join. Only at a later stage in the journal we learn that the Lows had also taken a maid, Nancy, with them. However, her name does not appear on the passenger list.

A very important element on these long intercontinental voyages was the crew on board. Individuals with criminal and violent tendencies, or alcoholics, could easily put the success of a journey at risk. In this respect, the men on the *Sumatra* were exemplary, just like their captain.

They are all orderly in their deportment and you hear no swearing, see no fighting or anything of the kind. The greatest harmony prevails through out. The Captain first chop, the officers excellent, the sailors all good, the Cook good, and sanctified enough in his appearance. Seems as though he thought it a sin to smile. The Steward active and attentive. Uncle William kind. Aunt Low ditto. Mr. A. agreeable. Myself the same fascinating, engaging,

enchanting, sweet tempered, obliging, passive creature that I ever was. (3.6.1829)

Thus, all the conditions for a harmonious voyage seemed to have been present.

Before the anchor is lifted: travel preparations and food supply on board at the time of the big sailing boats

The journal does not tell us much about Harriett Low's personal preparation in terms of clothes and books taken, but Katharine Hillard mentions the following in her introduction, giving us an idea about some crucial supplies:

*As there was no possibility of having anything washed on board, an enormous amount of linen had to be carried, a lady was obliged to provide herself with at least six dozen of every kind of under-clothing, not to mention the variety of other garments that were needed for a voyage that took the traveller from the temperate to the torrid zone and back again to the temperate.*¹²

35 days after leaving the United States, the *Sumatra* crossed the equator, and then the inversion of the seasons on the southern hemisphere could soon be felt:

[The weather is] tolerably pleasant, though we are now in cold weather. We are glad enough of woollen stockings, and shut up the cabin. (13.7.1829)

But even the woollen socks were not enough, to prevent the appearance of chilblains, "my old complaint in the winter season" (12.8.1829).

As regards the food supply on board, Hillard wrote:

*There were no such things then as canned meats, fruits, and vegetables, or condensed milk; and we can readily imagine that provisions for the table, on so long a voyage, must have been somewhat monotonous.*¹³

Harriett confirmed the truth of this observation with the following entry:

I should not know the days of the week were it not for our dinners. Methinks I hear you say a novel way for noting time. But every Tuesday and Friday we have Bean Soup which I depend upon, and anticipate them from one to the other. It tastes more like what I eat at home than any thing else we have, though every thing is cooked in the best manner. Yet there is that relish wanting that you never can get any where but at Home. (27.6.1829)

The boats used to supply themselves with fowl and pigs before their departure. The latter, apart from serving as foodstuff, also represented a source of distraction for the passengers:

By the bye, the pigs are a great amusement to us. They quarrel so. Mr. Johnson sometimes makes caps for them to keep them from biting. (11.6.1829)

During the voyage, the sea obviously also served as an important source of food, supplying fish and train-oil.

Mr. Johnson caught a porpoise last night. It was very large — he judged it weighed 300 weight [sic]. This morning we had the pleasure of seeing it dissected. Was a very interesting exhibition. It was about 2 yds long. The outside contains blubber which they get considerable oil from. The meat looks like beef, is very good eating. (18.8.1829)

But fresh fruit was a rarity. Only three months after their departure, on arriving in Malaysia, they ate fresh fruit again, the hitherto unknown fruits of the tropics.

Sad feelings at the beginning of the voyage and a difficult acclimatisation to the ship

The first entry in Harriett's journal dates from 24 May 1829, the day she left the house of her parents in Salem, bound for Macau. However, in a marginal note she informed that

this journal was commenced a week after we sailed. It then appeared like a month. (24.5.1829)

Both leaving her family, as well as the change from land to sea, demanded a lot of energy and resolution:

Embarked on board Ship Sumatra bound to Manilla from thence to Macao where I shall probably take up my residence for the next 4 years and for you my Dear Sister shall this journal be kept. I left home at 5 o'clock with feelings not to be described, nor imagined, but by those who have been placed in a similar situation. We were escorted out, as far as Baker's Island by a few friends from Salem which made it rather pleasanter for me, though I cannot say that I enjoyed any thing that took place that day. The morning was delightful as it could be, a delightful breeze that soon wafted

us beyond the sight of our native land. About 9 o'clock our party left us. However I behaved like a heroine, as I had resolved to be — at 10 o'clock was taken sick and remained so for the next day. Suffered nothing in comparison to what some people do, though enough to feel that state of utter hopelessness. Such prostration of strength and spirits as I never before knew or desire to feel again. Remained on deck most of the day but cared neither how, or where, I was going — continued pleasant throughout the night. (24.5.1829)

Becalmed today, low in spirits. Think a sailor's life the worst of all others. Tolerably well in health though have not felt bright yet. Cannot relish coffee or tea without milk. Lead a listless sort of a life, not having energy to do, or say any thing. (27.5.1829)

The state of absolute weariness, indifference and weakness lasted for about one week. On the Saturday after their departure, Harriett was already sewing with pleasure and walking on deck, as well as eating and drinking without problems and she was even singing at night. The search for a new rhythm of life had begun, as well as for diversions in order to interrupt the monotony at sea. Harriett warned her sister of the dullness of her life, which would inevitably reflect in her journal:

You must excuse me my Dear Sister if in this you find many things uninteresting, but I give you free permission to omit reading any, or the whole of it. I write as much for my own amusement as any thing. So few are the incidents in this place, that I am obliged to put in more about myself than I otherwise would. A less partial eye than yours however must never see it, that I strictly enjoin. We have some jokes, which if I could tell them would excite your risibles but will not have the effect coming from paper. (27.5.1829)

When finally feeling herself again, Harriett decided to orient her life according to the following motto:

*To be resigned when ills betide
Patient when favours are denied
And pleased with favours given. (2.6.1829)¹⁴*

Some inconveniences of sea travel

The powers of Nature

Having overcome an attack of seasickness did not guarantee immunity against it. On the contrary, feeling seasick was a complaint made with a certain regularity, depending on the state of agitation of the sea, which could turn very simple tasks such as walking and eating into huge problems:

Strong wind and squally. Pitching, tumbling and tossing, very much to the annoyance of the Bean soup. Oh the ... exercise, the skill, that is required to make sure of a dinner at such a time — and more especially to sit down with a good appetite. It is as good as a play however for a spectator. (14.8.1829)

Many of these violent movements of the ship happened without previous warning. They did not grow from a light agitation to a more severe one, but surprised everybody on board.

After dinner I was seated in the cabin at work, when I was suddenly taken from my chair and thrown over the other side, by the sudden lurch of the ship, and as unceremoniously thrown back again, with all violence, but fortunately escaped without any broken bones, which is quite miraculous. Begin to think however that I must have some of the qualities of Gum Elastic, as I always rebound, very much to the amusement of the company. (12.8.1829)

I cannot keep the skin on my elbows — am continually bruising myself. (30.7.1829)

These tremors were particularly dangerous when on deck, because they were frequently accompanied by a surge of water and could even throw a person over board.

But in general the *Sumatra* was very lucky with the weather, even when sailing around the dangerous Cape of Good Hope.

We get along pretty well. 72 days since we have seen land. But we have had most delightful weather most of the time. I cannot yet tell you what a storm at sea is. ... & My Dear Sister if you did but know it; it is a very rare thing to go round the Cape of Good Hope in the winter season and have such beautiful weather. We certainly ought to be very grateful. (4.8.1829)

Yet there was one kind of wind hated by everybody, head wind, because it slowed down their progress, thus prolonging their stay on water. According to Harriett,

*[a head wind]'s worse than the tooth ache. It gives us all the blues.
(2.6.1829)*

However, the *Sumatra* did not completely escape all hazards. There were some dangerous incidents during her voyage.

Capital breezes. Met with the first accident to day of consequence since we have been out. At 1/2 past 7 carried away our Fore Top Mast and Royal Mast. Were going at the rate of 9 knot an hour. Was no danger attending but made something of a job for all hands. We have been remarkably favoured in every respect. The Captain frequently tells us we do not know what it is to go to sea. But I think I know as much as I want to. (21.8.1829)

Just one week after this incident everybody on board was woken up at 4.30 in the morning with the warning to get ready for the lifeboats, as the *Sumatra* had been caught by a very strong current during a calm and was being pulled towards a reef. Only in the last minute another current miraculously prevented a disaster from happening.

Need I say that we felt very grateful to our constant protector. The greatest danger in the Straits of Sunda and Gaspar lies in these strong currents. We are so apt to have calms here, and there are many Shoals and points to be avoided, which gives the Captain great anxiety, or rather keeps him upon the look out. (27.8.1829)

Man and his anxieties

Apart from the dangers and furies of nature other problems existed, created by the human mind, such as the occurrence of depression, frequently called the "blues" by Harriett, caused by the monotony and the restricted living space on board, as well as by homesickness.

Have spent the day below reading. This eve spent on deck. Got a little of the blues. Sunday eve seems to be favourable for them. Long still eve — a beautiful moon now. Have thought much of home. (5.7.1829)

Uncle and Aunt are as happy as they can be. They have all that they wish for, but with all the rest of us, the heart, the heart is lonely still. Something wanting. (8.7.1829)

Even the captain was not exempt from an occasional attack:

Rainy to day — light airs. Captain got the blues. (6.6.1829)

Head wind today. The Captain looks blue. Lost his appetite. (9.6.1829)

An anxiety of another nature was provoked by the announcement “sail O!”.

Just before tea Sail O was heard. We were all on deck in short time — a sound that makes us start like the cry of fire in Salem but which excites a great variety of feelings. A fear that it may be a pirate, though joy and hope predominate. A hope that she may be bound home, and a hope that she may have some of our friends in her. A desire to speak with her and a regret that we can not, as is generally the case. We watched her till dark — found she was bound to the Westward but could not speak her — how aggravating. (7.6.1829)

Fortunately the *Sumatra* never had problems with pirates, although fear of them was always latent:

Have had one severe attack of the pirates however which was not quite so pleasant — in my dreams. (29.5.1829)

The lack of medical support

Diseases or accidents could be fatal more easily at sea than on land, because many ships did not have a doctor on them.¹⁵ William Hunter, for example, who travelled shortly before Harriett, describes how the ship’s cook burnt himself seriously with boiling liquid, when caught by a tremor of the vessel:

His lower limbs were almost peeled and had it not been for the presence of the “doctor” [a Scottish passenger], he would have inevitably died.¹⁶

As regards the health of the passengers on the *Sumatra*, the journey came off without major problems. But, as we shall see on the voyage home in 1834, the Lows had to make a lengthy stop in South Africa, because Harriett’s uncle was not fit to continue the journey by sea. The only health-related incident mentioned by Harriett during their voyage to Macau was their maid Nancy’s toothache:

Mr. Johnson took out a tooth for Nancy to day. Thanks to those who persevered in my having my teeth extracted. I should have suffered enough, I have no doubt, if I had not have had them out. She did for 3 days and nights. (3.7.1829)

It is not clear which teeth Harriett is referring to, the wisdom teeth or some decayed teeth, because during her stay in Macau she often suffered from severe toothache, and even broke a tooth.

Fighting against monotony: the pastimes on board the *Sumatra*

It is not difficult to imagine that the possibilities of entertainment on board the *Sumatra* were very restricted. The landscape, or rather seascape, was always the same, except for the changes in the colour of the sky and sea and the height of the waves. The group of passengers was very small, and the day-to-day was characterised by the same occupations: reading, walking on board, observing nature, writing letters, eating, trying to catch fish and to shoot at passing birds, sewing, playing cards, telling jokes and proposing a toast to the ones that stayed behind.

O what a task to find anything to write in a journal. I however write just what pops into my head. Mr. Ammidon advises me to write my dreams, which are generally very interesting, as you probably recollect. Methinks I hear Mother say, I hope she does not tell all her silly dreams. No, Mother, I do not, only once in a while when they are very witty. (30.6.1829)

Harriett kept her promise and did not bother her sister with her dreams, which, apart from this, were not very entertaining or witty, but rather an expression of her homesickness. Instead, she liked to impress Molly with her newly gained knowledge about seafaring.

Learning to be a sailor

Take a lesson in the rigging of the vessel every day. I now know the head from the stern and likewise that it is a difficult matter, to cut the water with her Taffril which is more than I once did. (29.5.1829)

As the time on board passed by, Harriett commenced using more specific vocabulary, such as the designations for the various masts and their sub-divisions or the great number of different sails, which are unintelligible for landlubbers. Hummel mentions in this context:

Metaphors relating to the sea came easily to the tongues and pens of New Englanders. Even their womenfolk, who went to sea only occasionally, spoke the language of mariners, and possessed an awareness of wind and weather which we, in this century, no longer cultivate.¹⁷

An indication that often appears next to the date in the journal, like in a captain's logbook, is the position of the *Sumatra* in terms of latitude, proving her progress. It seems natural that her course was a daily topic among passengers and crew.

*My first questions in the morning are, How does she head,
Captain? and how fast are we going now?. (1.6.1829)*

The determination of the longitude at sea was a more complicated matter. It depended on a clock that could withstand pitch and roll, variations in humidity and temperature and keeping exact time at sea. If the clock can accurately indicate one's home time, the only thing needed is to determine one's local noon, that is when the sun has reached its zenith and the shadows are shortest. The difference between the two indicates one's longitude.¹⁸ Therefore, when the *Sumatra* met an English ship while sailing around the Cape of Good Hope,

*the Captain agreed to stay by us till 12 o'clock to give us the
Longitude, ours differing some from his as it had been some days
since we have had a Lunar. (26.7.1829)*

Observing nature

People who never travelled by sea cannot imagine its charms and beauty. Harriett was no exception in this respect, becoming enthusiastic about it once her seasickness had passed. Therefore nature is a frequent topic in the first volume of the journal. She describes smells that are new to her, the different qualities of the water, from smooth as glass to agitated and stormy, its tiny and enormous inhabitants, and the sunsets. Even later in Macau she would remember some of the spectacular sunsets of her voyage. Memories of this kind seemed to be more precious than nowadays, perhaps because there were no means yet to fix them "eternally" on a photograph.

O Mary Ann if I could describe to you the beauty of the sunset tonight! I never saw anything half so splendid before. ... I have thought two or three times before I had seen a glorious sunset, but never did I before. It was worth the whole voyage. I thought how my Dear Father would have enjoyed it, and indeed all of you — one colour in particular, and that was a beautiful green. The atmosphere was remarkably clear. (22.7.1829)

But all the charms of the sea could not compensate Harriett's longing for terra firma. After having been on sea for more than three months without ever seeing land, everybody was anxiously waiting for the call "land O".

This afternoon about 5 o'clock heard the cheering sound of land O, and I'll assure you I was on deck in a short time. Christmas Island (within 4 degrees of Java head) had just opened to our view; it was 36 miles from us, but we watched it till we passed it. ... If it had been in the day we should have had a fine view of the Island, passed within 6 or 8 miles of it. I should have thought it a black cloud if I had not known to the contrary. We shall probably see Java head tomorrow night. (24.8.1829)

After a sleepless night because of the anticipation of seeing land the following day, Harriett got up at 6 o'clock in the morning, enchanted with seeing Java and other smaller islands.

You may judge of our felicity, after having but one scene for three months, to be suddenly enclosed with land covered with cocoa, pine apples, etc., in consequence of which before night my face was almost blistered. I set in the long boat all day, hardly spending time to eat. ... We entered the Straits of Sunda in the forenoon with a delightful breeze. Had a fine opportunity to view the land as we went very near in shore — some very high land covered with an impenetrable forest. Looked very green, many bluff rocks and points — but many pleasant little spots I discovered. ... Suffice it to say that I was pleased with every thing I saw, but I cannot say that I saw any spot on the Island of Java or any other in which I should like to take up my abode. I could not help thinking what a graveyard it has been, and still is, for all foreigners. (26.8.1829)

Later in Macau she would hear many stories confirming the truth of this observation.

Daily and weekly rituals

It is tedious to be on the water so long, even to have pleasant weather so long and so little variety. It is a life to be endured, not enjoyed. Books is my only resource; cards have exhausted their charms, and almost everything else except eating, and that is every thing. The moment I have done my breakfast, I begin to anticipate dinner, and so on. I am now as fat as I ever wish to be. I have gained as much as 10 lbs since I came away from home, the weather is now so cold it is not comfortable on deck. Without great exercise, which it is impossible to take without endangering your [heads], I go bouncing about at a great rate. (10.8.1829)

This was written shortly after they had sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, in full winter. Before reaching these southern latitudes, Harriett used to walk a lot on deck, alone or with whoever wanted to accompany her and measured the distances thus covered in terms of walks that she used to do in Salem:

Walked, I should judge, as far as Buffums Corner, two or three times, had a very pleasant walk. In imagination went with two or three of my friends. (12.6.1829)

Or:

After tea took a long walk with the Captain we thought as far as the Danvers Meeting house. (17.6.1829)

But Harriett's favourite pastime was, without any doubt, reading. It is not written anywhere how many books and journals the Lows took with them, nor whether there was something like a small library on board, but until they reached Manila, Harriett enumerated more than 20 books read by her. It can be assumed that she had read even more, because of the following remark made more or less in the middle of their voyage:

I am now going on a different plan with my journal. I intend to write every day and put some ideas or extracts of what I have been reading in the course of the day. It will be an advantage to me, as it will serve to impress it upon my mind. (20.7.1829)

The choice of titles gives us a first idea of Harriett's interests and character. There are many books related to religion and faith, such as collections of homilies by Unitarian ministers, the faith that she professed. Every Sunday she would read some sermons alone, as well as listen to their proclamation by either her

uncle or Mr. Ammidon. Furthermore, descriptions by missionaries, mainly in Asian countries such as India or Burma, also belonged to this group. Sometimes she even ventured into works with a more theological-philosophical character. On her list of preference followed books about history, which during the voyage were limited to biographies of English and French royalties. Only then appear romances, mainly written by English authors, and also poetry, preferably Byron. Books or articles about China were not on her reading list.

Sunday on board always felt special, not only because of its religious significance, but also because this day, like some kind of milestone, marked the beginning of a new week, thus giving a clearer idea of the passing of time and of the ship's progress.

4 weeks to day since we left all our dear friends, 1/4 of the time that we shall probably [be] on the water. The other 3 months will pass rapidly away. It really seems like Sunday even at Sea to me. I went on deck after breakfast. There all seemed still and quiet. The Jack's [sic] were all dressed clean, sitting with their books, forward. Every thing on deck nice. The heavens above and the waters below were alike serene, I stayed on deck an hour, then went below combed my hair and dressed in my black silk, and felt like a Lady, which is not the case except Sundays. At 10 we had our Sermon, one or two of Mr. Robinsons, an Englishman, ... which were very good. (21.6.1829)

Another of Harriett's pastimes was writing and reading letters. As it was very complicated to receive or to dispatch correspondence at sea, she had wisely taken closed letters with her from family members and friends. Every Sunday she would almost religiously open one of them:

After sermons read Abbott's [a brother] letter, it is really very pleasant to have those letters. Only when I have one I want to open all the others but I command all my self denial on the occasion. Have not yet transgressed. Only wish that I could sit down and answer them. I have so many things I want to say to you all. I long for the time to come when I can sit down and write with a prospect of sending them. It grieves me to think how many anxious thoughts I shall occasion the best of parents — but I comfort myself with the thoughts that you will not have time to think of me. (21.6.1829)

However, the Sunday came when there were no more closed letters left, a problem solved by Harriett in the following way:

Read over old letters, for the lack of any thing new. It is not the first time they have been pored over, nor will be the last. O I long for the time when I shall have a fresh supply. (28.7.1829)

But she had to demonstrate a lot of patience before receiving the first letters from home, a fact that would still cause her lots of grief. On the other hand, they could dispatch their letters only when the *Sumatra* anchored at Anger (Anyer, on Java), on 26 August 1829, that is three months after they had left the United States.

First encounters with different peoples

An encounter with a British ship

The first opportunity to see new faces occurred two months after their departure from Salem, when they met a British vessel at the Cape of Good Hope. Harriett was quite thrilled with this encounter:

It was a large English ship, filled with passengers. We saw about a dozen ladies and a great number of gentlemen, babies, servants, etc. — it looking like a moving world. And you can imagine the pleasure it must have given us to have seen so many human beings and so much life on the water. (26.7.1829)

As a gesture of attention, the English captain even sent several men over, with whom they could practise their intercultural skills.

He lowered his boat soon after and sent 4 of his youths on board the Sumatra, 3 of the passengers and the mate, the latter the only decent one among them. The other three were dressed as fantastically as you can imagine. They appeared to think we looked on them with admiration, but I'll assure you they have been the subjects of many a joke. They and we however were very civil, and after taking a glass of wine and begging a pack of cards, inviting us to dine, offering anything they had on board, asking and answering questions, they bid us good morning. I must describe their looks a little, because we do not have such a chance very often. The first then that jumped on board was a long, lean looking chap,

supporting a huge pair of mustachios and whiskers, on a pale and sickly phiz. He for an Englishman was very cordial, but we accounted for it by his being a Mason. He wore a drab coloured pair of pants, blue coat, etc. Last not least his cap. It was made of leather with a strap coming down and buckling under the lip, which gave him a singular appearance. We have had many conjectures about that strap. He endeavored to look interesting, but Uncle W. thought by the looks of his fingers he must be a tailor.

The second was fair to middling. His dress consisted of light pants, a blue frock coat embroidered from top to the toe with cord, a military undress, and to crown all a scarlet cap. I cannot give you any idea of that — it is beyond description. But the colour was bright scarlet, drawn on one side and looked singularly I'll assure you. He was cultivating a pair of mustachios but as yet they were in infancy. He likewise endeavored to leave an agreeable impression. The third was dressed in common style but was a great buck. Indeed they all were. We conclude they are military characters, going out to join their regiment, as the vessel was bound to Madras and Calcutta. (26.7.1829)

At this first occasion of contact with the English, Harriett's undecided and insecure attitude towards the representatives of this nation, which pervades her journal, is already visible.

I could not help thinking how differently we should have felt if it had have been an American. We should have been so delighted to have seen any one from our dear country. I was astonished to find that I possessed so much more love for my countrymen than any other people. To be sure, it is most natural that we should, but I always thought I could greet a strange Englishman with as much cordiality as I should a strange American. But now I know to the contrary. To be sure the prejudices we have towards Englishmen in particular influence our feelings in a measure. The cold haughty manner of the English is proverbial you know. I however will say no more upon the subject. ... However, we are much indebted to them for this day's amusement and many a standing joke. (26.7.1829)

This quotation reveals another particularity of Harriett, testifying to her good nature or character: always after having made some unkind or unfriendly observations, be it about the English, Chinese or anybody else, sooner or later

she tried to attenuate her remarks. In a marginal note next to the above quotation, without date however, she wrote:

I have again altered my opinion of the English. How often we make mistakes from ignorance. All the English I have seen are quite as cordial in their manners and even more so than the Americans.

The first contact with Asians

On reaching the Indonesian archipelago, having left behind them the immense Atlantic and Indian Oceans, everybody on board began to cheer up at the prospect that the end of the voyage was near. Besides, a totally new world opened up to them, featuring peoples of different races, cultures and languages to their own. Already before arriving at Anger, Harriett had an opportunity to observe Malays catching fish from their *proas*, as their bamboo boats are called. Her description may still sound familiar to those who have visited these latitudes nowadays, as well as the following scene, where, however, we have to substitute the *Sumatra* for some noisy and smelly vessel full of tourists: A small Malay boat, trying to sell pineapples, bananas, mangoes, sweet potatoes and other fruits, approached the *Sumatra*, which was sailing at full speed. But after doing good business, the small boat, compared to a nutshell by Harriett, began to sink rapidly before their eyes.

I thought of course they were gone and it was out of our power to save them. But the men said it was as impossible to drown them as it would be to drown a fish. And I was soon relieved by seeing them astern. Two of them were swimming and holding their frail vessel up while the other baled it out. But the poor fellows lost their dollar. (26.8.1829)

The voyage to Macau also offered her the opportunity to “study” the anatomy of the opposite sex, because, apart from the great differences in climate, there were also great differences in terms of decency and shame between the North American and the Malay societies.

I suppose you will like to know what I thought of a Malay and how my modesty could withstand such a shock as to see a man unclad. But I agree with Bishop Heber in thinking their colour serves as a covering. They seem like a different race of beings. Some of them had on jackets and sort of an apron, or loose petticoat. Their faces (those we saw) were bright and intelligent. They are very short. They average 5 feet 2 inches, the men; the women, 4 feet 11. Their

teeth from the constant use of the betel become very black, which they take great pride in. A young man, before his teeth gets well blacked, feels quite mortified to see any one. (26.8.1829)

Manila — a “pleasant disappointment”

Before definitively setting sail for Macau, the *Sumatra* stayed in Manila for three weeks. The Philippines were a Spanish colony then and Manila was an important way station in the trade between China and Latin America. A nephew of Philip Ammidon, George Robert Russell (1800–1866), had founded the house of Russell, Sturgis & Co. in Manila in July 1828, together with Henry Parkman Sturgis (1806–1869).¹⁹ Harriett’s commentary before disembarking seems a little bit surprising, considering that everybody on board was already anxious to feel terra firma beneath their feet:

I cannot say that I think of it [stopping in Manila] with much pleasure. I however may be disappointed agreeably in the place.
(6.9.1829)

This attitude reveals itself as a characteristic of Harriett, as the journal continues. In Macau she often expressed negative expectations towards a certain event, for example dinners or walks in the company of people that she did not like, which afterwards were praised in the highest tones. Her entry on departing from Manila, illustrates this observation very well:

I have got so much attached that I felt really gloomy. Reminded me also of the morning when I left my own dear native land. ... I never left any place except my home with so much regret. I shall always remember my visit to Manilla with much pleasure.
(22.9.1829)

Among the things that made her visit in Manila so pleasant and memorable, were the beautiful house of Mr. Russell, the company of many compatriots, and the excellent food. For the first time they had the opportunity to taste the pleasures of a colonial life style in an exotic environment.

I really do not know what to say about Manilla. You cannot have any idea of the place by description. I am told it is like all Spanish towns. The forts, Convents and Churches take a great portion of the place. The roofs of the houses are covered with tile, mostly of one story and some of them very spacious. They have no glass windows. The sides and front of their houses are of pearl shell in little squares, and venetian blinds to some of them. The houses

are all whitewashed, which the climate soon makes black, which gives the whole city an appearance of being smoked as though there had been a great fire. An immense number of people live on the water in Bancos, Cascos,²⁰ and smaller boats. We arrived at Mr. Russell's about 10 o'clock. The boats go directly to the gate. A canal runs from the river up to a lake a little beyond, which affords us much amusement in seeing the Boats continually passing. He has a fine spacious house, very airy. The rooms are all [on] one floor — very high and immensely large. Found a number of American gentlemen there after dinner. I had a most delightful ride with Mr. Russell on the Calzada²¹ where we met all the nobility of Manilla. It is the fashion to ride every day about 6. No ladies walk out. Very suddenly the postillion stopped; Mr. R. told me that it was the hour of vespers, when every one was obliged to stop and say a prayer for the occasion. (9.9.1829)

Harriett did as the nobility in Manila, not walking but travelling mainly by coach. On her excursions, she was sometimes confronted with images that would have been considered completely inadequate for a young woman back home in the United States.

Saw a great many sights on our ride that would have shocked a young lady in America, but I have now got quite hardened.
(12.9.1829)

Once or twice they even went to the countryside with its plantations of rice, bananas and other plants.

But it takes half the pleasure of riding in the country away, to ride through the suburbs, which are very extensive, and filled with babies and pigs which are brought up in the same style. I never knew anything like the babies, and children a little larger than babies.
(15.9.1829)

Apart from this she observed and disapproved of many of the Catholic customs, a topic that would still consume lots of ink in Macau.

About 10 we rode out through the city, to visit the churches. The Cathedral was not open. We went to the Church of St. Domingo. It is a pretty church, rather gaudy in its ornaments however. There were several women there had just been confessing. They go away happy, thinking they are absolved from all sin and ready to begin a new list. (14.9.1829)

On the next Sunday, Harriett made a similar entry in her journal:

It is true they all go to Mass in the morning and confess, but they spend the rest of the day in frolicking. (20.9.1829)

As we shall see later, during her first year in Macau she was unable to conform minimally to the non-observance of Sunday, in accordance with the Puritan habits of their Unitarian creed, as regards “frolicking”, as she called it, both by the Catholics and by the Anglicans.

Taking course on Macau: the arrival and the first impressions of their house

The *Sumatra* left Manila on 22 September, but head wind withheld them in a bay nearby for several days, causing long faces on everybody.

I have felt really homesick this three days past. How shall I support 4 years absence? 4 months to day since left. (25.9.1829)

As regards Harriett’s expectations about Macau, she wrote the following during the short passage between Manila and Macau:

I long, yet dread, to see this place. I have heard so many different opinions about it — some in favour but more against — but I have determined to take no one’s opinion but my own. (26.9.1829).

Some months after having installed herself in Macau, she commented:

Phil [Ammidon] dined with us. ... I took much pleasure in telling him how much we had enjoyed ourselves since here. He had endeavored all the passage to make us think this a dreadful place. (25.3.1830)

After having been on land again, in Manila, the last bit of the journey was very hard for all on board, mainly because of the torrential rains and strong winds, causing everybody to be seasick. The powerful downpours and winds may have been the effects of a typhoon, but which did not hit them fully. September coincides with the end of the typhoon season, which usually starts in late May or June. The *Sumatra* arrived in Macau on the morning of 29 September 1829. The agitation of the sea made getting ashore a little adventurous:

This morning all busy enough getting our loads of things out of the boat. A heavy sea which makes it very difficult for a boat to come

along side — indeed we were obliged to lower them over the stern. You would have been amused to have seen us tied into a chair, swinging over the stern of the ship, but we got along very comfortably. (30.9.1829)

The first impression of Macau and of their new home, the mere description of which must provoke a sigh of envy in contemporary Macau residents, was a favourable one:

Macao from the sea looks beautifully. Some most romantic spots. We arrived at Macao about 10 o'clock. Took Sedan chairs and went to our house, which we like the looks of much. The streets of Macao are narrow and irregular, but we have a garden to our house where I anticipate much pleasure. There are two, one above another. All the isles have flat stones and as smooth as a floor. You ascend 5 flights of steps and come to an observatory from which we have a fine view of the Bay and harbour and can see all over the town. Round it there is a terrace and many pretty plants. It is not in as good order as it must be soon. With this little spot and a few birds, I shall get along very comfortably. I had no idea there was so pretty a place here. Again I want someone to enjoy it with me. (30.9.1829)

The birds are flying through the house all day. Frequently see 5 in the hall and dining room at one time. There are some trees round the house in which they lodge. Some fine singers among them. (9.10.1829)

Samuel Russell, whom Harriett's uncle was going to substitute, had prepared the house, in which the Lows lived during the first six months of their stay in Macau. In a later entry Harriett described the beautiful view from the summerhouse in the garden, indicating some landmarks:

From the front of the summer house we have a fine view of the fort on a high hill. On another hill near stands what is called the Gear,²² signifying beacon. [It] is very high and it is a convent, I believe. Below we have a view of the town and the Beach, a view of the Church and Franciscan Green where the Ladies walk. And every Saturday eve there is a band that plays here, which is pleasant. I can hear them from the summer house. On the other side we have a little view of the sea, which would be complete if it was not for a new house built up lately which interrupts the view

much. On the other side we have a fine view of the harbour and surrounding hills. On the other is an ancient Church and convent. It is really a delightful spot. I love it now, and if we remove as we soon expect too I shall regret it much. (24.10.1829)

Since foreigners in Macau were not allowed to buy land or to own houses, they had to rent them from the Portuguese or Macanese. According to Major Samuel Shaw, who was the first American consul at Canton and who had to reside almost six months at Macau in 1787, after having lost his passage to India, the housing question gave rise to frequent disputes between the Portuguese and the foreigners.

Another instance of the injustice of the Portuguese on the one part, and the submission of the Europeans on the other, is in relation to houses. These are generally in a wretched condition when let to the Europeans. As soon as a house is put in good repair, which is done at the expense of the tenant, the proprietor, although the lease may have been given for a number of years, demands his house again, or else an addition to the rent. Unless one of these conditions is complied with, the owner takes possession the moment the tenant leaves it to go to Canton, and the latter is then obliged to look out for another house. The Swedes' house was the best in Macao, and for repairs and improvements had cost their company upwards of eight thousand dollars. The governor, or rather his lady, took a fancy to it, and the Swedes were under the necessity of consenting to an exchange, which was in every respect unfavourable to them, for the governor's house is not worth half the money which the mere improvements on the other have cost. In matters where an individual European is concerned, they do not use even the ceremony of asking consent.²³

There are no complaints about this matter in Harriett's journal anymore, allowing us to conclude either that the Portuguese had moderated their unreasonable demands in the meantime, or that the foreigners had become careful with their investment in the reparation of the houses. According to another testimony, many Portuguese seemed to have lived in more Spartan conditions than the members of the foreign community:

The houses of the Portuguese are mostly very spacious, but dreary and uncomfortable, from the scanty furniture and want of carpets, which are not used except in the houses of the richest citizens. ... Fires are not used in the winter, although many days occur during

*the season, in which a warm room is very desirable, and even necessary, to those who are suffering from indisposition. Stoves or grates are always placed in the houses occupied by Americans, English, &c. but either the poverty or avarice of the inhabitants induces them to dispense with this comfort.*²⁴

Foreigners arriving in Macau today have a vast range of flats to choose from, which is good news for those who want to rent or even buy, although real estate prices have risen quite a lot over the past few years. Newly built houses, especially on the Newly Reclaimed Areas of the Outer Harbour (NAPE) and on Taipa Island, are also much more spacious than the traditional flats in Macau. However, the density of construction, which is contrary to one's idea of privacy, is something that outsiders will have to get used to.

Notes

Preface

1. Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life. The Journal of Harriett Low, Travelling Spinster*. 2 parts, Woodinville (WA), The History Bank, 2002.
2. These two abbreviated, very similar editions were prepared by close relatives of Harriett Low, namely her daughter Katharine and her granddaughter Elma. See Katharine Hillard (ed.), *My Mother's Journal. A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829–1834*, Boston, George H. Ellis, 1900, and Elma Loines (ed.), *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York*, Manchester (Maine), Falmouth Publishing House, 1953. Regarding the differences between the two editions, see footnote 3 of chapter 1.
3. Another journal and letters written by an American lady in Macau between 1843 and 1847, Rebecca Chase Kinsman, have not been studied yet to the extent they deserve. Being a married woman and mother, her life, interests and responsibilities were obviously different from those of the single Harriett Low. But many impressions about daily activities and the life and society in Macau are very similar to the ones depicted in this book, considering that only 10 years had passed since Harriett Low's departure from Macau in 1833. However, many situations described in this book could not be experienced by Rebecca Kinsman anymore, because of the dramatic changes in the Sino-foreign relations following the Opium War. For a short selection of excerpts from Kinsman's letters and diary see Cecília Jorge, "Rebecca Chase: an American in Macau", in *MACAU*, no.11/2002, pp.38–53.
4. Hodges relates the following about the circumstances of their acquaintance: "A letter of introduction from George Stillman Hillard, a brother-in-law in Boston, had enabled the young attractive couple of Harriett and John Hillard to be introduced to Martineau, her mother, and the tight circle of friends around the outspoken writer". In Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.1.
5. The letter was written in London on 5 June 1837. See Harriett Low, *Letters*, Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Manuscript Section, Low-Mills Family Papers, Box no.2, Folder "General Correspondence, 1836 to 1870".
6. Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.17.

Chapter 1 A Passage to China

1. In those times, travelling was still closer to its etymological meaning of “work” or even “torture”! The English noun “travel” has its origin in the French word *travail*, meaning “work”, “hardship”, and also “being in labour”. This French word in turn derives from the Latin word *trepalium*, referring to an instrument used in torture.
2. See Mary Susan Schriber, *Writing Home. American Women Abroad, 1830–1920*, Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia, 1997, p.13.
3. See Elma Loines (ed.), *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York*, Manchester (Maine), Falmouth Publishing House, 1953, p.16 and pp.315, 316. This book is a tribute to the descendants of Seth Low and to their achievements in the China trade throughout much of the 19th century, namely from the 1830s to the 1870s. It also contains an almost untouched copy of Hillard’s edition of Harriett Low’s journal. The major difference and improvement in Loines’s edition consists in spelling out fully the names of the individuals mentioned in the journal, which in Hillard’s edition often appear abbreviated to the first letter of their name or surname. Obviously, this complicates their identification, as there were several Mr./Mrs. B. (Baynes, Beale, Blight, Bradford, Bridgman) and so on. Most other documents in Loines’s book are commented transcriptions of letters belonging to the Lows who had spent some time in Macau and Canton, together with a series of photographs and maps. Of the descendants of Seth Low, Harriett was merely the first to go to Macau, accompanying her uncle and aunt. Four brothers would follow later.

It must also be mentioned that Hillard, apart from abbreviating the journal substantially, is not always loyal to the original in her quotations. As a rule, she never indicated any omissions or leaps in the original text. At other times she changed the sequence of words in a sentence, made two sentences out of one and vice versa, or substituted certain words with synonyms without any apparent necessity. Apart from these stylistic changes, she also introduced passages, probably from letters, and sometimes forgot to indicate this.

4. In Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life. The Journal of Harriett Low, Travelling Spinster*. 2 parts, Woodinville (WA), The History Bank, 2002; see p.3.
5. For an exhaustive history of the house Russell & Co. see Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto. The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844*, Bethlehem, Lehigh University Press, 1997, pp.162–189. The book also contains portraits of its most important members. Downs’s book continues to be the most complete work on the individual members and companies of the American community in Canton from its beginning until the signature of the Treaty of Wanghsia (Mong-Há) between China and the USA in Macau, in July 1844. Shorter descriptions of the house Russell & Co. can be found in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.301, 302, and in William C. Hunter, *The Fan Kwae at Canton before Treaty Days 1825–1844 by an Old Resident*, Shanghai and others, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1911 (b), pp.156, 157.
6. See Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.17.

7. Regarding the motivations for diary writing among nineteenth-century American women, see Catherine Petroski, *A Bride's Passage. Susan Hathorn's Year under Sail*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1997, footnote 14, p.240. But not only American women were keeping diaries. For a European perspective on diarists, both male and female, see Alain Corbin's "The Secret of the Individual", in Michelle Perrot (ed.), *A History of Private Life. Vol. IV. From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, Cambridge (Mass.) and London (UK), The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990, pp.497-508.
8. In Mary Susan Schriber, *op. cit.*, 1997, p.13.
9. Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison in the Introduction to Elma Loines's book, *op. cit.*, p.viii.
10. Katharine Hillard (ed.), *My Mother's Journal. A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829-1834*, Boston, George H. Ellis, 1900, p.v.
11. Ammidon Jr. would only stay for a short while in Canton. Early in 1831, William H. Low was trying to get rid of him as clerk, describing Ammidon Jr. as "*useless lumber*" and even as "*fillup*" (in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 71, pp.394, 395). His example thus confirmed the negative opinion reigning in Canton about the male offspring of successful former residents, who aspired to follow in their father's footsteps, but frequently proved to be wastrels. See Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.225.
12. Katharine Hillard (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.v.
13. *Ibidem*, p.v.
14. The quotation is from *The Fireside* by Nathaniel Cotton, Stanza 3. In Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.22.
15. Before publishing Harriett Low's journal, Hodges edited the journal of a naval surgeon, Benajah Ticknor. He had met Harriett Low at Lintin Island near Macau. It was through him that Hodges became interested in Harriett Low. See Nan P. Hodges (ed.), *The Voyage of the Peacock: A Journal by Benajah Ticknor, Naval Surgeon*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991.
16. William C. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911 (b), p.7.
17. Arthur W. Hummel, "The Journal of Harriet Low", *The Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*, vol.2, nos.3 and 4, 1945, pp.972-989. Quotation on p.977. This article is Hummel's only publication on the journal.
18. The governments of several sea-faring nations had offered high rewards to the person/s who could solve the longitude problem. It took British clockmaker John Harrison (1693-1776) 40 years to come up with the perfect timekeeper, which nowadays is known as the chronometer. For a more technical description of the calculation of the longitude see Manuel Bairrão Oleiro and Rui Brito Peixoto, *Museu Marítimo de Macau*, Macau, Museu Marítimo de Macau, s.d., pp.122-125.
19. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnotes 51 and 52, pp.372, 373. More on the different members of Russell, Sturgis & Co. in Manila and the complicated relations with Russell & Co. in Canton can be found in Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.190, 191. In 1840, Russell & Co. absorbed Russell, Sturgis

- & Co., resulting in the strongest American company in the East and second in business after the British company of Jardine, Matheson & Co.
20. *Bancos* and *Cascos* are types of native Philippine boats.
 21. *Calzada* is Spanish and means paved road or highway.
 22. Harriett must have known the designation only from hearsay, because this is the way an English-speaker would spell the Portuguese word *Guia* (guide, lead). *Guia* is the highest elevation in Macau (90 metres).
 23. Josiah Quincy (ed.), *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw, the First American Consul at Canton*, Boston, Wm. Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1847, pp.239, 240.
 24. William W. Wood, *Sketches of China; with Illustrations from Original Drawings*, Philadelphia, Carey & Lea, 1830, pp.23, 24.

Chapter 2 Macau — Then and Now, Old and Modern

1. There are a variety of books on the history of Macau in English. In terms of general readability and interest, Jonathan Porter's *Macau: The Imaginary City. Culture and Society, 1557 to present*, Boulder (Col.), Westview Press, 1996, is highly recommendable. Other titles, in alphabetical order, are Austin Coates, *A Macao Narrative*, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 1993; Ralph D. Cremer (ed.), *Macau — City of Commerce and Culture*, Hong Kong, API Press, 2nd ed., 1991; Geoffrey Gunn, *Encountering Macau: A Portuguese City-State on the Periphery of China, 1557–1999*, Boulder (Col.), Westview Press, 1996. An interesting approach to Macau's history through the presentation of short texts from a variety of literary sources is Donald Pittis and Susan J. Henders's *Macao. Mysterious Decay and Romance*, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 1997. More references can be found in the bibliography, see for instance Christina Miu Bing Cheng, Anders Ljungstedt and C. A. Montalto de Jesus.
2. Charles R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon*, Macau, Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1988, p.7. Boxer is the great historian of Macau's first Golden Era, the period of the Japan trade (1557–1639). In this book he describes the yearly Portuguese voyages to Japan, which were undertaken in the so-called Great Ship or Black Ship (*nau do trato*, in Portuguese).
3. In Charles R. Boxer (ed.), *Seventeenth Century Macau in Contemporary Documents and Illustrations*, Hong Kong, Heinemann (Asia), 1984, p.80.
4. This letter is part of the documents inserted by Hillard in her edition of Harriett's journal, in order to bridge the gap of a volume lost at sea. It is dated 3 March 1831. See Katharine Hillard (ed.), *My Mother's Journal: A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829–1834*, Boston, George H. Ellis, 1900, p.86.
5. William W. Wood, *Sketches of China; with Illustrations from Original Drawings*, Philadelphia, Carey & Lea, 1830, p.20.
6. Father Manuel Teixeira (1912–2003), an eminent local historian and priest who came to Macau as a boy and retired to Portugal in 2001, distances himself from these

two authors in his foreword to a complete reprint of Ljungstedt's work in 1992. In Anders Ljungstedt, *An Historical Sketch of the Portuguese Settlements in China and of the Roman Catholic Church and Mission in China & Description of the City of Canton*, Hong Kong, Viking Hong Kong Publications, 1992, pp.xi, xii.

7. William W. Wood, *op. cit.*, pp.20, 21.
8. Anders Ljungstedt, *op. cit.*, p.30.
9. This quotation is from a letter home, dated 3 March 1831. In Katharine Hillard (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.86.
10. This topic will be dealt with extensively in chapter 6.
11. As regards the genesis of the name of Macau and other designations referring to the peninsula, see for example Manuel Teixeira, *Toponímia de Macau*, 2 vols., Macau, Instituto Cultural de Macau, 2nd ed., 1997, vol.I, Ruas com Nomes Genéricos (Streets with Generic Names), pp.38–41 and 162–165, and Jonathan Porter, *op. cit.*, pp.36–42.
12. Anders Ljungstedt, *op. cit.*, p.22.
13. William W. Wood, *op. cit.*, p.23. Batalha mentions that in Portuguese India a distinction was made between *cafre* and *Negro*, or *preto* (black), until the 18th century at least. *Cafre* referred to Blacks from the eastern shoreline of Africa, while the other two expressions were applied to Blacks from the western shoreline. In Graciete Nogueira Batalha, *Glossário do Dialecto Macaense. Notas Linguísticas, Etnográficas e Folclóricas*, Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras, Instituto de Estudos Românicos, 1977, p.100.
14. Hillard introduced this description from a letter, which is more detailed than Harriett's reference to the new house in the journal. The letter is dated 3 March 1830. See Katharine Hillard (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.60.
15. The fortress refers to the Fortress of St. Francis (Fortaleza de São Francisco), next to which existed a convent with the same name. Both were demolished in 1864, to make way for the Barracks of St. Francis, which today are used as headquarters of the security forces.
16. Teixeira was the first to edit a small booklet about Harriett Low's journal in Portuguese, based on Katharine Hillard's book, with the title *Macau no Século XIX Visto por uma Jovem Americana* [Macau in the 19th century as seen by a young American lady], Macau, Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Cultura, 1981; see the Foreword, *Duas palavras* ("A few words"), no page number.
17. Both Loines in her book *The China Trade Post-Bag* (p.125) and Teixeira in his *Toponímia de Macau* (vol.I, ch. XXIV, no page number) include a photograph of the house, in which Harriett Low is said to have lived. However, the two buildings are clearly different. The picture in Loines's book, taken by Hummel in 1953, does not seem to be the correct house. On the photograph in Teixeira's book, showing a lateral view of the house, a small part of the cathedral is visible, thus making it a more likely hypothesis.
18. Anders Ljungstedt, *op. cit.*, p.25.
19. When Morrison's first wife Mary died in 1821, there was no place within the city walls where the Protestants could have buried their dead, because the Catholics

would not allow them to be interred on their cemetery or territory. Therefore, they were buried near the northern extremity of the peninsula, on Meesenberg Hill (which has disappeared long since to serve as fill-in for land reclamation). However, since this was near Chinese villages, it was feared that the graves might become subject to vandalism and desecration. Seeing Morrison's despair about a safe burial place for his wife, the British East India Company managed, with the help of a Portuguese, to establish a small cemetery. Mary Morrison was the first person to be buried there. The history of the cemetery and its "inhabitants" was carefully traced and written down by Sir Lindsay Ride and his wife May in their beautiful book *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant burials in Macao*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2nd ed., 1998 (edited by Bernard Mellor).

20. *Ibidem*, p.67.
21. This is the location indicated on a panoramic view of Macau from 1840 (see plate 5). Teixeira mentions that Beale lived in Rua do Hospital (Hospital Street), which was in quite a different corner of Macau, namely in the road of the former St. Raphael's Hospital, which now houses the Portuguese Consulate (in Manuel Teixeira, *op. cit.*, vol.I, p.284). Interestingly, on plate 7 we can see a *volière* next to a luxurious mansion, with the St. Lawrence's church and the St. Joseph's church (Igreja de São José) in the background, which seems to confirm the indication on the panoramic view. However, it is possible that Beale's house was not located next to the garden, but elsewhere.
22. For more details regarding Thomas Beale's life and earthly possessions, his debts and mysterious suicide, see Teixeira, *Ibidem*, pp.284–295. William Hunter also dedicated a few pages to this dazzling figure in his *Bits of Old China*, Shanghai and others, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1911a, pp.73–77.
23. See Martyn Gregory Gallery, *Artists of the China Coast*, Catalogue no.57, Summer 1991, p.31.
24. Teixeira mentions the names of influential Portuguese and Macanese contemporaries of Harriett Low, who possessed properties alongside the Praia Grande, such as members of the Pereira and Paiva families. See *Toponímia de Macau*, vol.I, p.68.
25. *Ibidem*, p.74.
26. Anders Ljungstedt, *op. cit.*, p.19.
27. See Manuel Bairrão Oleiro and Rui Brito Peixoto, *Museu Marítimo de Macau*, Macau, Museu Marítimo de Macau, s.d., pp.100, 101.
28. See Robin Hutcheon, *Chinnery, the Man and the Legend*, Hong Kong, 1975, p.74. A sampan boat is a very simple embarkation with a stern-oar. The literal translation from Chinese means "three boards" (*sam-pan*).
29. *Tiffin* is a word of Anglo-Indian origin referring to a light meal, especially lunch (see Graciete Nogueira Batalha, *op. cit.*, p.281). The *Josh* (or rather *Joss*) house mentioned must be the Lin Fong temple, which nowadays is far away from the shore. *Joss* is Pidgin English for "God", a word derived from the Portuguese *Deus* ("God").
30. Anders Ljungstedt, *op. cit.*, p.20.
31. *Lascars* were people from India, usually seamen.
32. *Cavaleiro* means "horseman" in Portuguese. *Rua*, *Beco* and *Rampa* refer to the type of street.

33. Manuel Teixeira, *Toponímia de Macau*, vol I, pp.284–286.
34. William W. Wood, *op. cit.*, p.157.
35. Anders Ljungstedt, *op. cit.*, p.19.
36. The church is dedicated to the mother of God, as the inscription “Mater Dei” can be clearly seen written in stone above the main entrance. Therefore, the correct designation for it would be Church of the Mother of God (Igreja da Madre de Deus). According to Pereira, the first designation for the Monte Fort also carried the name of “Mother of God”. But since the Jesuits were commonly called “Paulists” by the local population, because many of them had studied at the College of St. Paul’s in Goa, the structures erected and operated by them were called “St. Paul” too. For further details see Fernando A. Baptista Pereira, “A ‘Acrópole’ de Macau. O Complexo Religioso, Cultural e Militar da Companhia de Jesus”, in *Um Museu em Espaço Histórico. A Fortaleza de S. Paulo do Monte*, Macau, Edição Museu de Macau, 1998, pp.14–58.
37. “Catty” is a weight unit used in China and southeast Asia corresponding, with local variations, to about 500 to 600 grams. In China a catty corresponds to 500 grams.
38. A few days before this entry, Harriett had decided to get up at 6 o’clock, in order to make better use of the day.

Chapter 3 The Power of Religion

1. The classic to quote here would be Émile Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1917). A more recent reference, on how religion influences our behaviour, life and society, both positively and negatively, is Michael Argyle’s *Psychology and Religion. An Introduction*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000.
2. The supporters of Monarchianism, a Christian school flourishing between 150 and 300, insisted on the unique and indivisible divinity of God. It was intended to strengthen monotheism within Christianity. The followers of the orthodox doctrine of Trinitarianism defended the equality of the three divine persons, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian version of God’s nature was adopted as official Christian doctrine in the 4th century, but the controversy was revived again during Reformation, on which modern Unitarianism is based.
3. Quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York*, Manchester (Maine), Falmouth Publishing House, 1953, p.20.
4. Samuel Couling, *The Encyclopaedia Sinica*, Hong Kong and others, Oxford University Press, 2nd impression, 1991, p.382.
5. Quoted from a letter to her sister Mary Ann, written in December 1829, in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.34.
6. Arthur W. Hummel, for example, quotes Samuel Wells Williams, who knew Morrison personally and who wrote of him: “*He was not by nature calculated to win and interest the sceptical or the fastidious, for he had no sprightliness or pleasantry, no versatility or wide acquaintance with letters, and was respected rather than loved by those who cared little for the things nearest his heart*”. In Arthur W.

- Hummel (ed.), *The Journal of Harriet Low. Annotated Transcription*. Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Manuscript Section, Low-Mills Family Papers, boxes 22 and 23, footnote 62, p.964.
7. See Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto, The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844*, Bethlehem, Lehigh University Press, 1997, pp.229–231. Excerpts from the works of other Western missionaries, who lived in China in the 19th century, can be found in Colin Mackerras' *Sinophiles and Sinophobes. Western Views of China*, Oxford (and others), Oxford University Press, 2000. Far from focusing on religious questions only, the missionaries also discussed social problems such as female infanticide, official corruption, opium consumption, and others.
 8. Two months later, this event was mentioned again and explained more in detail:
Capt. Little says just before he left the Presbyterians there compelled by the point of the bayonet a little band of Catholics to leave the Island, and treated them in the most unchristian manner, and for some time past had had a guard of soldiers stationed at the Catholic Church door to prevent any native from entering, and if they attempted it to take them from it by force. (11.6.1832)
 9. Ideas of “happy, unspoilt primitives” or of the sagacity of non-European rulers as compared to absolute European monarchs were very popular during the Enlightenment, mainly among the French encyclopaedists. However, Harriett does not seem to have known, for instance, Voltaire's *L'ingénu*.
 10. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.93.
 11. Guetzlaff used to dress like the Chinese. Chinnery once made a full-figure drawing, showing him in Chinese outfit from top to toe. Because of his perfect understanding of Chinese, Guetzlaff was sometimes even mistaken for a Chinese. His Chinese name was Kuo Shih-li.
 12. This is an extract from a letter to her brother Abbot, written in December 1831. It is quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.48.
 13. *Ibidem*, p.48.
 14. Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life. The Journal of Harriett Low, Travelling Spinster*, 2 parts, Woodinville (WA), The History Bank, 2002; see footnote 16, p.793.
 15. Samuel Couling, *op. cit.*, p.345.
 16. See Arthur Waley, *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes*, Stanford (California), Stanford University Press, 1968, pp. 222–244. The quotation is on p.233.
 17. Trinity Sunday is the Sunday after Whit Sunday. Athanasius was an ardent opponent of the doctrine of Arianism, a movement in early Christianity, which also contested equality between Father and Son. He defended what later would become official orthodox doctrine through the Council at Nicaea in 325, that God was three persons in one, being the Son consubstantial with the Father.
 18. This is particularly visible in the case of the wives of Protestant ministers and missionaries. While he is in charge of the spiritual well-being of his flock, the wives are involved in fulfilling the more physical — or lower-order — needs of

the community. In the case of the Catholic Church, the nuns are comparable, in terms of free labour, to the wives of the missionaries, although their greater number and organisation seems to make them more efficient. Another example of a social institution that gets two (or more) people for the “price” of one is the government, which often advises against or even forbids diplomats’ wives to pursue their own career for the sake of serving their country in a variety of unpaid jobs and functions.

19. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.57.
20. In her defense of Unitarianism, Harriett Low may have inspired herself in publications such as *One Hundred Scriptural Arguments for the Unitarian Faith*, published by the American Unitarian Association, which tried to impress its readers with numbers. “Of 1300 passages in the N.T., wherein the word God is mentioned, not one necessarily implies the existence of more than one person in the Godhead, or that this one is any other than the Father”. In American Unitarian Association, *One Hundred Scriptural Arguments for the Unitarian Faith*, Boston, Bowles and Dearborn, 4th ed., 1827, p.16.
21. Harriett in a letter to her “beloved parents”, dated 20 April 1832. In Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.50.
22. *Compradore* is the designation used for the Chinese agents employed by the Westerners in Canton, in order to buy and sell their goods. The term derives from the Portuguese word for “to buy” (*comprar*). A detailed description of the tasks and duties of a *compradore* is given by William C. Hunter in his book *Bits of Old China, Shanghai and others*, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1911 (a), p. 53 and pp.55, 56.
23. *Walky* was supposed to refer to a procession. In chapter six of this book, a few lines are dedicated to the special language in use among foreigners and Chinese, known as Pidgin English.
24. Mr. Otaduy was one of Harriett’s Spanish teachers and Mr. Pereira was a very wealthy Portuguese. *Misericórdia* literally means “mercy”. The full designation for this institution is Santa Casa da Misericórdia (Holy House of Mercy). It is one of the oldest institutions in Macau, dating back to 1569. Then as now, its main task is to take care of the needy, without distinction of race or religion. See Manuel Teixeira, *Toponímia de Macau*, vol.I, Macau, Instituto Cultural de Macau, 2nd ed., 1997, pp.103-105.
25. Nowadays, the procession of Our Lord of the Passion (Nosso Senhor dos Passos) is the most important Catholic procession in Macau. It is held on the first Sunday of Lent. The statue of Christ carrying the Cross is taken for one night from the St. Augustine’s church to the Cathedral. On the following day it is carried through the streets and restored to St. Augustine’s.
26. This is an extremely sentimental romance by the French author Sophie Cottin (1770-1807). The full title of the book is *Mathilde, ou Mémoires Tirés de l’Histoire des Croisades* (1805).
27. Manuel Teixeira, *Macau no Século XIX Visto por uma Jovem Americana*, Macau, Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Cultura, 1981, p.36.
28. The idea of American exceptionalism can traced back to John Winthrop, who was

fleeing England in 1630 with his Puritan brethren. Aboard the *Arbella* he delivered his famous sermon “A Model of Christian Charity”, in which he compares America to a “city on a hill”, in direct relation to Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. The quote not only reflects the idea that America is special in the world, but also a responsibility to do good. The concept became known to a wider audience through Alexis de Tocqueville’s book *Democracy in America* (vol. I, 1835; vol. II, 1840).

Recently, Staci Hosford formulated a variant of American exceptionalism, in her study of “gendered exceptionalisms”. She examined Harriett Low and other American women in the light of her concept of “maternal exceptionalism”, being defined as “*a gendered form of American exceptionalism. It is the ideology that expatriate women preached — intentionally or unintentionally — to fellow Americans ... and occasionally to non-Americans — that the United States and U.S. culture is special, unique, or “chosen” in particular ways. This exceptionalism is linked to American expatriate women’s sense of themselves as particularly unique because of their opportunity to live outside the U.S. ... As such, their narratives reflect the way American women used their national identity and their gender identity to ‘teach’ or ‘preach’ in ‘motherly’, ‘helpful’, or ‘nurturing’ ways*” (in Staci Ford Hosford, *Gendered Exceptionalisms: American Women in Hong Kong and Macao, 1830–2000*, The University of Hong Kong, PhD Dissertation, Feb. 2002, p.6). Hosford describes the factors that lead to Harriett’s feelings of exceptionalism and specialness and the impact on and changes in her identity as an American woman resulting from the cross-cultural encounter (see *Ibidem*, pp.11–57).

29. William W. Wood, *Sketches of China; with Illustrations from Original Drawings*, Philadelphia, Carey & Lea, 1830, pp.28, 29. Elsewhere in his book (pp.178–181), Wood describes the two major religions in China, Buddhism and Taoism, mostly based on Morrison’s writings.

Chapter 4 The Daily Life of Foreign Women on the China Coast

1. Katharine Hillard (ed.), *My Mother’s Journal. A Young Lady’s Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829–1834*, Boston, George H. Ellis, 1900, p.vi.
2. The best source for Harriett Low’s letters from Macao days is Elma Loines’s *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York*, Manchester (Maine), Falmouth Publishing House, 1953. Loines mentions in the Foreword that she had already given most of the original letters in her possession to the Library of Congress and intended “*to give the rest*”, but I have not found any of Harriett’s letters quoted by her, which seem to be the most interesting ones, among the Low-Mills papers.
3. Quoted by P. D. James in the Foreword to Olga Kenyon’s book *800 Years of Women’s Letters*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994, p.viii.
4. Sometimes the letters and other written elements, such as newspapers or maps, were

detained by the captain, if he thought that business rivals might gain an advantage by their release. For an example of this practice see Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life. The Journal of Harriett Low, Travelling Spinster*, 2 parts, Woodinville (WA), The History Bank, 2002; see footnote 90, pp.397,398.

5. Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto, The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844*, Bethlehem, Lehigh University Press, 1997, p.47.
6. In his annotated transcription of the journal, Hummel tried to trace the names of the authors, the exact title and the publishers of the books read by Harriett. Hodges completed all missing details in Hummel's bibliography, such as place or year of publishing, and often adding a few lines on the main characters and the plot of the books.
7. This is the ground that brought forth the influential American movement of Transcendentalism during the late 1820s and 1830s. It is intrinsically linked to Unitarianism, counterbalancing its rationality with the introduction of a certain sentimentalism.
8. Admirers of Jane Austen will be astonished not to find any reference to her among Harriett's extensive bibliography, leaving them to wonder when Austen's fame reached the USA. Her *Northanger's Abbey*, for instance, provides some interesting thoughts on writing letters and journals and on reading novels that certainly would have pleased Harriett Low, apart from the plot obviously. Another possibility is that she had read Austen back home already.
9. The word "poetess" is written in enormous letters. The *Canton Register* was a weekly English-language newspaper.
10. Arthur W. Hummel (ed.), *The Journal of Harriet Low. Annotated Transcription*, Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, Manuscript Section, Low-Mills Family Papers, Boxes 22 and 23, footnote 85, p.974.
11. See Roswell S. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800–1912* (Shanghai, Kelly and Walsh, 1933), in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 30, p.403.
12. Charles Marjoribanks was then President of the British East India Company's Select Committee (*ibidem*, footnote 103, p.399). More examples of Wood's aggressive style can be found in footnotes 63, 64 and 78 of the joint Hodges/Hummel edition (*ibidem*, pp.407–409).
13. Paul Pickowicz analysed in detail Wood's editorial activities in Canton, as well as his political intentions and the economic goals that he wanted to achieve through them. See his article "William Wood in Canton: A Critique of the China Trade Before the Opium War". In: *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, no.107, January 1971, pp.3–24. Wood was even challenged to a duel once by the editor of the *Canton Register*, Arthur Saunders Keating, because of a disagreement, which was battled out publicly via the *Register* and the *Courier*. However, Keating withdrew in the last minute and Wood could consider himself as "*honourably exonerated from the duel*" (30.4.1832), according to Harriett, who relates the whole story of the duel-

- to-be. Jacques M. Downs also refers to this case, with particular emphasis on Wood's and Keating's seconds, Augustine Heard and James Innes respectively (*op. cit.*, pp.55, 56).
14. Samuel Couling, *The Encyclopaedia Sinica*, Hong Kong and others, Oxford University Press, 2nd impression, 1991; p.105. The *Canton Register* and *The Chinese Repository* constitute important documents for the study of this particular time period. Hummel, for instance, is constantly referring to the *Canton Register* in his (unpublished) edition of the journal.
 15. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p. 92. Regarding the products that came out of the commercial and the religious (or missionary) printing presses in Macau and Canton, see Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.91–93.
 16. William C. Hunter, *Bits of old China*, Shanghai and others, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1911 (a), p.156.
 17. Harriett Low, *Letters*, Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, Manuscript Section, Low-Mills family papers, box 11, folder 21, "Material Concerning the Far East", 1829–1831.
 18. Otherwise the expression "made in Macau" is nowadays representing quality clothes that can be found on many designer labels in both Europe and North America. Textiles are among Macau's most important export items.
 19. Harriett in a letter to her parents, written in April 1832. In Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.50.
 20. As regards Chinnery's life and work, see the informative and beautifully illustrated books of Patrick Conner, *George Chinnery, 1774–1852. Artist of India and the China Coast*, Woodbridge, Antique Collectors' Club, 1993, and of G. H. R. Tillotson, *Fan Kwae Pictures. Paintings and Drawings by George Chinnery and Other Artists in the Collection of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation*, London, Spink and Son Ltd., 1987. Conner's book also contains interesting information on other Macau residents.
 21. For the joint edition of the journal, Hodges chose several drawings of Chinese and Portuguese from Lucy Cleveland's sketchbook as illustrations.
 22. Hodges reports that Wood had learnt to sketch, among other useful accomplishments such as operating a printing press and preparing natural specimens, at the Charles Wilson Peale's Museum in Philadelphia. He was also a member of the Academy of Sciences of his hometown and collected natural specimens for it even after his time in Macau. His talent with the pencil had made him one of the main illustrators of the second volume of the book *American Entomology* by Thomas Say. In Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 3, pp.400, 401.
 23. Harriett copied her last sketch from Chinnery, a representation of Camoens's cave, on 15 November 1833, a few days before their departure from Macau.
 24. Conner mentions that this seemed to have been common practice, mainly when Chinnery's clients found that he had exaggerated in the use of vermilion around their noses or eyes. See Patrick Conner, *op. cit.*, pp.121, 122.
 25. William C. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911 (a), pp.273, 274.
 26. Harriett in a letter to her sister Mary Ann, written in December 1829, in Elma Loines

- (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.35. At this point a reference has to be made to the work of Susanna Hoe, and in particular to her book *The Private Life of Old Hong Kong. Western Women in the British Colony, 1841–1941*, Hong Kong and others, Oxford University Press, 1991. Her book actually begins with accounts of (mainly) British women in Macau, be it the wives of Company traders or of independent country traders, who had accompanied their husbands to China, and many of whom would later continue in Hong Kong. Hoe also includes several quotations from the Hillard edition of Harriett Low's journal.
27. Knowing about the intense social life that would await them in Macau, Harriett's uncle had paid for dancing lessons for her before their departure to China, which was not common in Unitarian circles. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.3.
 28. The day before Harriett had been to a party at the Davises', characterising Mrs. Kierulf: "*There is a Danish lady here or rather Norwegian, her husband is a Dane. Her Norwegian airs are very pretty and her execution fine, the airs are quite wild and different from what we are accustomed to, and peculiarly suited to her voice.*" (6.5.1831)
 29. Harriett, Caroline, Aunt Abigail, and Mrs. Macondray, the wife of an American captain who had arrived on the day of the party from Lintin island.
 30. A *punkah* is a large wooden frame covered with cloth and suspended over a table or a bed, kept in motion by a servant pulling a rope, sometimes from an adjoining room. It is therefore something like a man-powered fan.
 31. In a marginal note to this entry written on 17 August Harriett remarked: "*That was by partial eyes. You will observe what follows regarding them.*"
 32. The play was *The Poor Gentleman* (1801) by George Coleman.
 33. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.47, 48.
 34. Aunt Cleveland was the wife of a captain, and met the Lows in Macau. They were all from Salem.
 35. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.54.
 36. The murder case or references to it are omitted in Hillard's edition of the journal. Loines quotes one of Harriett's letters to her parents, written in summer of 1830. "*We are of course horrified at the account of old Mr. White's murder. Old Salem, who would have looked for so shocking an event in peaceful old Salem! It is to be hoped for the sake of the innocent suspected, that the guilty ones may soon be discovered*". In Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.37.
 37. Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 18, p.810. Other references to the murder case can be found in footnote 92, p.398 (the murder story); footnotes 32 and 35, p.404 (on Nathaniel Knapp, a third brother of Abigail Knapp, who was a Harvard-educated lawyer); footnote 53, p.406 (on the efforts of Nathaniel to get his brothers out of prison), and footnote 13, p.415 (W. H. Low paying for the debts that the hanging of his wife's brothers caused her family). The author of the "Air" turned out to be James P. Sturgis, who "*did not deny authorship of a scurrilous song referring to Mrs. Low's family*" (in Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.55).

38. This explanation about the spread of cholera by the atmosphere was the standard medical view at that time, also designated as miasmatic theory. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 49, p.796.
39. The painting is reproduced in Patrick Conner's book on Chinnery (*op. cit.*, p.232).
40. One of Harriett's brothers, William Henry, who was in Canton at that time, described Colledge's loss to Harriett in a letter dated 1 August 1841. "*Mr. Colledge lost his books and papers and a large quantity of clothing, of Chinese and European manufacture. These things are very valuable as they are not easily replaced. When Mrs. Colledge left China for home in the Akbar (April 12) with your old friend Capt. Dumaresq, Mr. C. very foolishly removed everything from his house in Macao to Canton. He received but very little sympathy from his countrymen, as he of all others should have left Canton in time, having nothing to detain him*". In Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.92.
41. The letter, written in September 1829, is quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.28.
42. In her introduction, Hodges insinuates that Colledge may have fathered the child, stating "*Dr. Colledge's concern for Nancy may have been more personal than Harriett wanted to admit*". (See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.9). A passage in the journal seems to confirm that Harriett had heard a rumour about Colledge's possible fatherhood of Nancy's child, although the subject is never mentioned directly ("*The man whom above all others I thought perfect, or the one who for the last three years I have thought not capable of a dishonorable act, has sunk in my mind to the level with the rest of his sex*" [22.12.1832]). However, she rejected this idea immediately in a strong and incredulous manner. Already on the following day, according to my interpretation, Colledge's innocence was proven. ("*When the sun [Colledge] appeared behind the clouds, all was cleared up and we find it untarnished by the clouds which have dimmed it. I thought so, I knew it would prove so. Yes! ... It should teach us to be slow in condemning*" (23.12.1832)). As there are no more doubts raised about Colledge's moral integrity further in the journal, the suspicion seems unsubstantiated to me.
43. Traditionally, the orphanage of the Holy House of Mercy has accepted Chinese orphan girls or any abandoned girls, such as the child of Nancy, and raised them in the Catholic faith. There they also received basic instruction in what a future (house)wife should know, like cleaning, cooking and needlework. As such they became eligible for marriage by Portuguese men at a time, when Portuguese women were scarce in Asia. Many girls, however, were not thus fortunate and had to earn their living as maids or even prostitutes. See Ian E. Watts, "Bi-racial identity, bi-racial status: Two Chinese orphans raised by the Canossian sisters in Macao", in *Review of Culture*, ser.2, no.31, April to June 1997, pp.77–88.

Chapter 5 Matters of the Heart and of the Home

1. There is an interesting analysis of the social role of the piano in post-revolutionary France by Alain Corbin in Michelle Perrot's *The History of Private Life. Vol.IV.*

From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War, Cambridge, Mass. and London, UK, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990, pp.531–533. Although referring to the French cultural domain, some of Corbin's main findings are also true for neighbouring European countries. "The great vogue for the instrument began in 1815. Prudery helped, because the harp, the cello, and the violin all came to be seen as indecent. ... The ability to play the piano well established a child's reputation and gave public proof of a good education. Virtuosity figured, along with the rest of the 'aesthetic dowry', in marriage strategies. ... Finally, the piano helped women idle away the hours while awaiting the arrival of a man. According to Hippolyte Taine, playing the piano helped women resign themselves to the 'nullity of the feminine condition'" (*Ibidem*, pp.531 and 533).

2. Sandra Adams has published a well-illustrated article about the two major deformities that tradition and fashion dictated on women in the East and West, foot binding and lacing. See "A Woman's Place in the West and East: Corset versus Bound Feet", in *Review of Culture*, ser.2, no.24, July to September 1995, pp.62–83. Since the 1990s the body of literature on foot binding has been increasing rapidly, there is also a wealth of information on foot binding and corsets on the Internet, but because of the volatility of many sites I refrain from quoting any. In China, foot binding is not a closed chapter yet. According to a study carried out by researchers from the University of California San Francisco in 1997, based on a randomly drawn sample of 193 women in Beijing aged above 70, 38 percent of women in the 80s age group and 18 percent of women in their 70s displayed bound foot deformities. The last factory in China to supply special shoes for women with lotus feet ceased production in 1998.
3. Gordon's nickname was Old Patna (see 28.6.1830), which reveals the cause of his wealth: opium.
4. According to Hunter, who described the bungalow of James P. Sturgis on Penha hill in detail, as well as the view from there, it "was the most beautifully situated of all others". See William C. Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, Shanghai and others, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1911 (a), p.159.
5. Cap-sing-moon was an anchorage to the east of Lintin island, the centre of opium smuggling, where boats would seek shelter in the case of a typhoon.
6. "Jawaub is said to be ... a Hindi word meaning dismissal, 'also used in Anglo-Indian for a lady's refusal of a marriage offer, whence the passive verb "to be jawaub'd" ' " (in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life. The Journal of Harriett Low, Travelling Spinster*, 2 parts, Woodinville (WA), The History Bank, 2002; footnote 59, p.805).
7. The letter was written on 16 December 1832. See Elma Loines (ed.), *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York*, Manchester (Maine), Falmouth Publishing House, 1953, pp.308, 309.
8. *Ibidem*, p.308. This was Wood's second visit to China. He had come for the first time in 1825, when he shared an office with Hunter at Russell & Co.. See William C. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911 (a), p.271. During his second term in Canton, Wood worked temporarily for Harriett's uncle.

9. In Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.308.
10. This was on 18 March 1832, and on 31 July 1832. The latter date was possibly decisive for Wood's proposal to Harriett.
11. In Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 308, 309. Hunter's description of Wood corresponds to the one given by Harriett Low regarding Wood's main characteristics and talents, and it also adds some new piece of information on Wood's looks. "*The poor fellow was awfully pock-marked; his face resembled a pine cone, but his expression was one of very good humour and full of intelligence. He was besides well educated and a most gentlemanly young fellow. He was the son of the famous tragedian of Philadelphia. ... Wood was clever at drafting and sketching; thus on his visits to Macao, as well as in Canton, he met Chinnery constantly, and being brother chips with the pencil, of similar tastes, besides being a most amusing fellow, and a toss-up in respect to looks, they became fast friends. Wood was quite equal to Chinnery in wit and metaphor, while over their mutual disfigurement each one insisted that he was the most marked of the two. Meeting one day at Macao, Chinnery assumed an air of displeasure, held up his clenched hand, and shaking it at him, exclaimed, 'Oh, you wicked man! I was some one until you came. You are marked, it's true, but I was remarked. Passers-by would say, 'There goes old Chinnery, what an ugly fellow.' Poco poco [Macao-Portuguese, 'poco-poco', little by little], my title became undisputed. What a triumph! Now you would carry off the palm. Oh, you ugly piece of wood.' There followed, of course, a deal of fun*". In William C. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911 (a), pp.270, 271.
12. Also quoted in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 36, pp.794, 795.
13. Hodges quotes from an article written by Wood in the *Chinese Courier* (24.11.1831) under the pseudonym Hesperus, with the title "A Defense of Bachelors". In this "manifesto", Wood blames the existence of misogynists on the practice of "jilting, ... which is no doubt very agreeable to the fair renegade, but has the same effect upon a lover's temper as thunder upon small beer" (*ibidem*, part 2, footnote 73, p.799). If he had but seen into Harriett's heart, he would have known better ...
14. *Ibidem*, part 1, p.16.
15. Lindsay and May Ride, *An East India Company Cemetery. Protestant Burials in Macao, Hong Kong*, Hong Kong University Press, 2nd ed., 1998, edited by Bernard Mellor, p.44.
16. Vachell was corresponding with the famous English naturalist and friend of Charles Darwin, Rev. Leonard Jenyns (1800–1893). He also prepared a *hortus siccus* (literally "dry garden"), including a variety of Chinese flower and fruit seeds, and a Herbarium for Jenyns, both for him and for the Botanical Garden in Cambridge. Besides, he sent various specimens preserved in spirit to England, for a museum in Cambridge, such as all kinds of sea animals, land animals and insects. Interestingly, on the list accompanying the boxes is also "*a model in plaster of the foot of a young Chinese Female of Rank, with the bandages by which the growth of the foot is impeded in infancy, the 4 toes will be seen are turned under the sole of the foot*". Quoted from Roger Vaughan's Homepage (www.rogerco.freeserve.co.uk/), *The Events in the Life of the Rev. Leonard Jenyns in the Year 1830 and 1831*.

17. ... to avoid meeting him. At an earlier occasion, when Vachell had incidentally joined their party at a walk, Harriett remarked: "*Am sorry because it will make a fuss in Canton*" (18.11.1831).
18. The designation "the Factory" refers to the members of the British East India Company, which is sometimes also called "John Company".
19. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 67, p.375.
20. The attitude of society towards "old maids" is very well documented in Cécile Dauphin's article "Single Women", in Geneviève Fraisse and Michelle Perrot (eds.), *A History of Women in the West. Vol. IV. Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War*. Cambridge, Mass., and London, UK, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995, pp.427–442.
21. The Immaculate Conception, for example, became dogma in 1854. At around that time, the cult of the Virgin reached its climax, too. See Michelle Perrot and Anne Martin-Fugier: "The Actors". In Michelle Perrot (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.150.
22. The marriage took place at the St. Lawrence's Church and the name of the lucky husband of Ana Rita de Paiva was Portugal-born Bernardino da Costa Martins (see Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel [eds.], *op. cit.*, footnote 25, p.794). In Jorge Forjaz's *Famílias Macaenses*, the date of the wedding is indicated as 10 September 1831, i.e. one week earlier (see vol.III, Macau, Fundação Oriente, Instituto Cultural de Macau, Instituto Português do Oriente, 1996, p.962).
23. "*He was a scholar and a philanthropist, but he does not seem to have given much satisfaction to Hongkong as a diplomatist and governor, and when he left Hongkong in March, 1848 there was no public farewell or banquet; the leading paper of the Colony stated that the was 'unpopular from his official acts and unfit for a Colonial Government by his personal demeanour and disposition'*". In Samuel Couling, *The Encyclopedia Sinica*, Hong Kong and others, Oxford University Press, 2nd impression, 1991 p.140.
24. Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto, The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844*, Bethlehem, Lehigh University Press, 1997; p.49.
25. Right after the arrival of Caroline Shillaber, for example, her physical and mental attributes were discussed in various letters by John Murray Forbes to Augustine Heard (and probably in letters of other writers that did not survive to our times), William H. Low's partner. After an initially positive impression, which apparently was gained at night time, Forbes wrote: "*By day she looks haggard and old — her Hair and eyes are very beautifull and her figure is good — but she has not been enough in Ladies society to be exactly 'the thing'*" (quoted in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel [eds.], *op. cit.*, footnote 12, p.792). In Caroline's defence it must be mentioned that just before arriving at Macau she had recovered from a severe illness in the Indonesian archipelago. Forbes admitted in the same correspondence that he would prefer Harriett Low for a "*rib*" (wife), although he was not tempted.
26. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, footnote 112, p.389.
27. *Ibidem*, footnote 112, p.389.

28. Austin Coates wrote a captivating historical novel, based on true characters, which focuses on this particular topic, around the turn from the 18th to 19th century in Macau. His book with the telling title *City of Broken Promises* describes the rise of Martha Merop from abandoned Chinese orphan girl to “*pensioner*”, a euphemism for a slave-like prostitute, to powerful trading tycoon. Her full body portrait is in the Holy House of Mercy (Santa Casa da Misericórdia) in Macau.
29. Quoted in Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.50.
30. In Robin Hutcheon, *Chinnery, the Man and the Legend*, Hong Kong, *South China Morning Post*, 1975, p.74.
31. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.49.
32. “Catty” and “tael” are weight units used in China and other southeast Asian countries. The words are of Malay origin (*kati* and *tahil*). The weight of a catty in China corresponds to 500 grams. One tael is 1/16 of a catty.
33. In Manuel Teixeira, *Macau no Séc. XIX Visto por uma Jovem Americana*, Macau, Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Cultura, 1981 p.27.
34. “*I know Uncle and Aunt are very glad it is all off — But I had no wish to change. I feel that I have done right — and that is a* [the rest of the letter is missing]”, quoted from a letter to her sister dated 16 December 1832, in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.309.
35. Queen Victoria (1819–1901), for example, had nine children herself and probably would have had more, if her husband Albert had not died relatively young, at the age of 42.
36. According to Dauphin, “single blessedness” was an expression frequently used in early 19th century American writing. See Cécile Dauphin, “Single Women”, in Geneviève Fraisse and Michelle Perrot (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.440.
37. See Lindsay and May Ride, *op. cit.*, pp.175–178.
38. William Henry Chichely Plowden (1788–1880) was President of the Select Committee of the British East India Company for quite some time during Harriett Low’s stay in Macau. The name of his second wife, by whom he had two sons and a daughter, was Annette Campbell.

Chapter 6 Macau, Canton and the China Trade

1. Many books dealing with the China trade contain a description of tea culture in China and of the various kinds of tea and their quality. See for example in Elma Loines (ed.), *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York*, Manchester (Maine), Falmouth Publishing House, 1953, pp.311–315, and in Robert B. Forbes, *Remarks on China and the China Trade*, Boston, Samuel N. Dickinson, 1844, pp.69–75. Downs includes statistics on the American tea and opium trade with China, as well as the destinations of American exports from Canton. See Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto, The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844*, Bethlehem, Lehigh University Press, 1997, appendix 2, pp.348–357.

2. This was a very durable and coarse cotton cloth in various colours, such as brownish, yellow and blue, and “*served, along with native American homespun, as the workaday fabric of early America*”, in Jonathan Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682–1846, Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects*, University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978, p.3. In later decades, however, it was the turn of the Americans to export cotton goods of native production to China. The figure indicated for 1842 and early 1843 is 500,000 pieces American cotton goods (in Robert B. Forbes, *op. cit.*, 1844, pp.27–29).
3. Like tea, the production of silk was another Chinese millenary art, or science. Many of the names commonly used in the 19th century to designate various types of silk and their use, such as pongee or sarsenett, cannot be found in the average English dictionary anymore. The export of Chinese silk in American vessels grew steadily, due to the rapidly increasing demand for this fabric. From 25,000 pieces silk in 1805/06, the quantity gradually rose to a high of 421,000 pieces in 1827/28, and fell to around 260,000 pieces in 1830/31 (in Robert B. Forbes, *op. cit.*, 1844, p.26).
4. See Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, pp.17, 18.
5. *Ibidem*, pp.24, 25.
6. The first ship venturing east was the Boston sloop *Harriet*, in December 1783. However, she never reached China because she was able to sell her cargo, consisting mainly of ginseng, to a captain of a British East India vessel at the Cape of Good Hope. The exchange rate of two pounds of tea for one pound of ginseng was considered very good (*Ibidem*, pp.26, 27).
7. John Kuo quoted in Staci Ford Hosford, *Gendered Exceptionalisms: American Women in Hong Kong and Macao, 1830–2000*, The University of Hong Kong, PhD dissertation, Feb. 2002, p.14.
8. The Chinese still use ginseng as a cure-all and aphrodisiac. In North America it was found in the Appalachians from Quebec to Georgia, and along the valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. Until recent times ginseng could not be cultivated artificially. According to Goldstein, one particular variety “*was selling in China as late as 1911 for 250 times its weight in silver*” (*op. cit.*, p.21).
9. *Ibidem*, pp.26–30.
10. *Ibidem*, p.34.
11. Quoted in Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p.3. Excellent illustrations and authoritative information about the large variety of products fabricated in Canton and other parts of China, from painters to weavers to cabinet makers and many others, can be found in Carl L. Crossman’s book *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade, Paintings, Furnishings, and Exotic Curiosities*, Woodbridge, Antique Collectors’ Club, 2nd impression, 1997.
12. See Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, pp.2, 3.
13. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.236.
14. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life. The Journal of Harriett Low, Travelling Spinster*. 2 parts, Woodinville (WA), The History Bank, 2002; quoted from footnote 60, p.407.

15. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.227. See also pp.223–229. In the appendices 4 and 5, Downs lists the “*Known Partners of American Firms at Canton, 1803–1844*” and describes “*Commercial Family Alliances*”, pp.364–366 and pp.367–370 respectively.
16. See Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, pp.40–45. Downs (*op. cit.*, pp.237–245) divides the returned Canton residents into “*second careerists*” and “*retirees*”. While members of the first group continued to work actively in commerce, industry or management as a way of investing their wealth gained in Canton, individuals from the second group bought estates and property to enjoy for the rest of their lives. Former Canton residents of both groups, however, served in honorary positions in a wide variety of institutions, from the government to boards of trade, museums, universities and all kinds of social organisations.
Downs also includes a section on “*The Good Life*” (pp.245–255) of China trade nabobs, in terms of material well being, after their return to the US, showing photographs of their magnificent stately residences and countryseats, some of which still exist.
17. Only an insider could describe the general situation at Canton in such a succinct and appropriate way as Hunter did: “*Life and business at Canton before Treaty days was in fact a conundrum as insoluble as the Sphinx*” (in William C. Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, Shanghai and others, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1911 (a), p.3).
18. The origin of the *hong* merchants dates back to the late Ming period, when thirty-six *hongs* were trading with foreign countries. The number of *hongs* dropped to thirteen at the end of the Ming period, when the designation “The Thirteen Hongs” originated. It continued to be used during the Ch’ing period, although the number of *hongs* oscillated quite a lot. Only twice, in 1813 and in 1837, their number was thirteen (in Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, New York and others, Oxford University Press, 5th ed., 1995, p.142).
19. *Cohong* is the corrupted version of the Chinese designation *kung-hang* (officially authorised guild), which was used by the Westerners in order to refer to his organisation (Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p.27).
20. William W. Wood, *Sketches of China; with Illustrations from Original Drawings*, Philadelphia, Carey & Lea, 1830, p.222.
21. Robert B. Forbes, *op. cit.*, 1844, p.12.
22. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, 1997, p.76.
23. William C. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911a, p.278. See also Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *op. cit.*, p.142–146 and Robert B. Forbes, *op. cit.*, 1844, pp.10–17.
24. Robert B. Forbes, *op. cit.*, 1844, p.14.
25. See Josiah Quincy (ed.), *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw, the First American Consul at Canton*, Boston, Wm. Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1847, p.183.
26. The names of the *hong* merchants are written differently in various publications and languages. I follow the spelling of the respective authors. The suffix *qua* in their names is an honorific designation deriving from the Chinese word *kuan*, meaning official. It was attributed for important contributions to the imperial court.
27. William C. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911a, pp.80, 81.

28. *Ibidem*, pp.31, 32. A more detailed description of the splendid gardens and dwellings can be found on pp.79–80 of the same book.
29. Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p.69.
30. Abiel Abbot Low, quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.68, 69.
31. This passage, most probably quoted from one of Harriett's letters home, was introduced by Hillard on 3 February 1830. In Katharine Hillard (ed.), *My Mother's Journal. A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829–1834*, Boston, George H. Ellis, 1900, p.51.
32. William C. Hunter, *The "Fan Kwae" at Canton before Treaty Days 1825–1844 by an Old Resident*, Shanghai and others, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1911b, pp.60–64.
33. William C. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911a, p.269.
34. In Lindsay and May Ride, *An East India Company Cemetery. Protestant Burials in Macao*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2nd ed., 1998, edited by Bernard Mellor, p.258.
35. This is the title of Downs's book, much referred to in this work. It is the most complete and exhaustive book on the individual members and companies of the American community in Canton from its beginning until the signature of the Treaty of Wanghsia (Mong-há) between China and the USA, in July 1844.
36. William W. Wood, *op. cit.*, p.140.
37. Hunter (*op. cit.*, 1911b, p.20) explains that "*the word 'factory' was an importation from India, where the commercial establishments of the 'East India Company' were so designated, and synonymous with 'agency'*". The word actually derives from the Portuguese word *feitoria*, meaning exactly "commercial agency". When the English arrived in India, where the Portuguese had had trading posts or colonies since the early 16th century, they incorporated the word *feitoria* into their language, adapting it to "factory".
38. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p. 27. On page 26, Downs reproduces a map-like sketch of the Canton factories and their immediate surroundings, with an indication of the respective nation occupying them. On page 28 follows a diagram of a factory, subdivided into ground floor and second story, and its functional division into go downs (storage rooms), offices, kitchens, servants and coolies rooms, counting rooms, parlours, dining hall, chambers, and so on.
39. In Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 105, p.400.
40. In Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.73.
41. Quite a few members of the British East India Company studied Chinese, such as John Francis Davis, who was also one of the first British sinologists, James F. Daniell, and others. William C. Hunter, as already mentioned, was the only American trader fluent in this language. The missionaries must have acquired the basics of the language, too, at least in its spoken form.
42. The trading season lasted from October to March, when the ships sailed home. During the following "dead season" the men could spend more time in Macau, except for the opium traders, whose business thrived all year long.
43. For a full set of the rules existing in Canton, see for example Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp.150, 151.

44. See Tom Mitchell's article "A Foreign Affair", in *South China Morning Post* Features, 15 April 2002.
45. William Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911a, p.3.
46. William W. Wood, *op. cit.*, pp.64, 65.
47. Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *op. cit.*, p.161.
48. *Ibidem*, p.162.
49. Between 1700 and 1725, the British East India Company bought around 400,000 pounds of tea per year from China, this amount rose to 23.3 million pounds in 1800, and to 26 million pounds after 1808. These quantities are twice as much as those shipped by other countries (in Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *op. cit.*, p.149).
50. *Ibidem*, p.168.
51. William W. Wood, *op. cit.*, pp.206, 207.
52. Robert B. Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences*, Cambridge (Mass.), John Wilson and Son, 1876, p.144. For a more interesting and less apologetic comparison between the effects of alcohol and opium, see W. A. P. Martin's article on "The scourge of opium" (in Colin Mackerras (ed.), *Sinophiles and Sinophobes. Western Views of China*, Oxford (and others), Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.83, 84). Many missionaries like Martin were outspoken critics of the opium trade.
53. Robert B. Forbes, *op. cit.*, 1876, pp.144, 145.
54. William W. Wood (*op. cit.*, p.210) provides some interesting details about the varieties of opium on the market, as well as about the shipment, packaging and storage of opium. See also Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp.168, 169, and Austin Coates, *Macao and the British; 1637 to 1842. Prelude to Hongkong*, Hong Kong and others, Oxford University Press, 2nd impression, 1989, pp.65–67.
55. William W. Wood, *op. cit.*, p.206.
56. Robert B. Forbes, *op. cit.*, 1876, p.144. See also the statistics on "*Specie and Bills Imported by American Ships*" in Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.361–363.
57. For a short description of the major foreign opium dealers and companies see Austin Coates, *op. cit.*, 1989, pp.139–143.
58. In Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *op. cit.*, p.171.
59. Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p.49.
60. William W. Wood, *op. cit.*, p.209.
61. *Ibidem*, pp.35, 36.
62. *Ibidem*, p.211.
63. See Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.128–131.
64. See Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, pp.53, 54, and Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.112–128.
65. In Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.124–128, "*Americans and the Indian Opium trade*".
66. It is said that the *Lord Amherst* expedition actually incurred a loss of more than £5600 (see Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 10, p.414).
67. Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, p.127.
68. There is a six-foot granite statue and a museum in Macau's Lin Fung Temple (Lotus Temple), commemorating the incorruptible commissioner and this particularly

agitated period in Sino-foreign relations. The temple itself is among the oldest in Macau, dating back to the late Ming dynasty. For centuries it accommodated Chinese mandarins from Guangdong province on visit in Macau, and Lin himself visited it on the occasion of his call at Macau in September 1839.

69. Abiel Abbot Low, quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.72.
70. See Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.331, 332.
71. *Ibidem*, p.335.
72. Jonathan Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p.51.
73. Quoted in C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao*, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 1984, p.296.
74. In Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *op. cit.*, p.180.
75. C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *op. cit.*, p.295.
76. See Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.334–336 and 337–340.
77. Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1986 (edited with an introduction by Alethea Hayter), pp.31, 32.
78. In Katharine Hillard (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.75–86. The visit to Canton is also copied, from the same source, in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp.190–196.
79. Katharine Hillard (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.75.
80. The designation for this passage derives from the special formation of rocks, which are said to resemble a tiger's open jaws.
81. In Katharine Hillard (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.76–79.
82. *Ibidem*, pp.79, 80.
83. *Ibidem*, pp.81, 82.
84. *Ibidem*, p.82.
85. *Ibidem*, pp.83–85.
86. William C. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 1911b, p.121.
87. The *Lintin* (390 tons), which originally had been built for R. B. Forbes, was later co-owned by Russell and Company, with F. W. Macondray as commander (in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 40, p.795).
88. In the Hodges/Hummel edition of the Harriett's journal, the lifetime of Sarah Procter Shillaber is indicated as 1758–1832 (footnote 18, p.793). Since Caroline was born in 1812, which would make her mother over 50 years old when giving birth, I suspect that Caroline was raised as Sarah Shillaber's daughter and that the real mother had died untimely or abandoned her.
89. The Dr. Ticknor mentioned here as member of the excursion is the one whose journal was edited by Nan P. Hodges with the title *The Voyage of the Peacock: A Journal by Benajah Ticknor, Naval Surgeon*, 1991.

Chapter 7 Intercultural Relations in Early 19th-Century Macau

1. The South Carolinians tried to nullify the Federal tariffs of 1828 and 1832. Jackson answered with a Nullification Proclamation and threatened with military suppression in the case of any defiance to Federal Law. The conflict was solved in 1833 through a compromise tariff, which prevented a final confrontation. See also Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life. The Journal of Harriett Low, Travelling Spinster*. 2 parts, Woodinville (WA), The History Bank, 2002, footnote 25, p.802.
2. Harriett was right with her guess about the Proclamation, which was written by Edward Livingston, Jackson's Secretary of State. (*Ibidem*, footnote 35, p.803).
3. "Consul for Portugal in Shanghai in 1851 and awarded the French Legion of Honor in 1856, Chay Beale achieved a position in society that Harriett may not have foreseen", in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 6, p.414.
4. Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto, The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844*, Bethlehem, Lehigh University Press, 1997, p.55. Hodges confirms this characterisation of William H. Low, most clearly in part 2 of the Hodges/Hummel edition of the journal: "*He [Coolidge] admired Heard and Low as business men, and found Heard kind and friendly, but felt that Russell and Company labored 'under one serious disadvantage; which cannot but be, in time, an injury to their business: this is the unpopularity of Mr. Low'*" (in footnote 66 on p.806).
5. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 18, pp.809, 810.
6. See Jacques M. Downs, *op. cit.*, pp.166–168.
7. Katharine Hillard (ed.), *My Mother's Journal. A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829–1834*, Boston, George H. Ellis, 1900, p.VI.
8. William C. Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, Shanghai and others, Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1911 (a), pp.265–267.
9. Pamela Neville-Sington (ed.), in Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., 1997, p.XXIX.
10. Pamela Neville-Sington (ed.), *Ibidem*, p.VII.
11. Frances Trollope, *op. cit.*, p.314.
12. Harriett in a letter to her sister Mary Ann, dated 29 July 1833. Quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York*, Manchester (Maine), Falmouth Publishing House, 1953, p.53.
13. Fanny Wright was an early advocate and activist of women's rights.
14. Harriett in a letter to her family, dated 20 July 1830. In Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.38.
15. It was not the queen, but the Queen-Mother, Carlota Joaquina, who had died in

- January 1830. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 74, p.409.
16. The Macanese have been defined traditionally by three vectors: mixed blood (usually Chinese or other Asian from the female side and Portuguese from the male side), bilingual fluency (Portuguese, written and spoken, and Cantonese, spoken only) and Catholic religion. Nowadays the increasing sinification of the Macanese can be observed. See João de Pina Cabral and Nelson Lourenço, *Em Terra de Tufões. Dinâmicas da Etnicidade Macaense*, Macau, Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1993, pp.20–23. See also Jorge Forjaz, *Famílias Macaenses*, vol. II., Macau, Fundação Oriente, Instituto Cultural de Macau, Instituto Português do Oriente, 1996, pp.988–991.
 17. *Caffres* was the designation for black Africans from the eastern shoreline, while the word *negro* or *preto da Guiné* was used to refer to blacks from West Africa. Slaves from Timor were also grouped with *caffres* and *pretos*, because of their dark skin colour (see Graciete Nogueira Batalha, *Glossário do Dialecto Macaense. Notas Linguísticas, Etnográficas e Folclóricas*, Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras, Instituto de Estudos Românicos, 1977, p.338). The word *sepoi* is of Hindi origin and was employed for natives of India who worked as soldiers or guards for Europeans.
 18. In Jorge Forjaz's *Famílias Macaenses* (vol. II, p.989) the date of the wedding is indicated as 29 October 1833. The wedding took place at the private chapel in the mansion of the Pereira. The Paiva family history is described in Jorge Forjaz, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp.961–964.
 19. Katharine Hillard (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.198.
 20. For more information on the Macanese ladies and their peculiar dress see Ana Maria Amaro, *O Traje da Mulher Macaense. Da Saraça ao Dó das Nhonhonha de Macau*, Macau, Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1989. An interesting photograph, showing a group of Macanese ladies from the back at the Praia Grande (p.134), seems to be well fit to illustrate the scene described by Harriett Low. There is no way, however, to exemplify her olfactory impression in this book. Graciete Batalha also traces the controversial etymology of *nhonha* (*op. cit.*, p.230).
 21. Harriett in a letter to her brothers William, Edward, Francis and Josiah Low, written on 18 July 1831. Quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.41.
 22. Harriett had to remove all her books temporarily, when her room was painted new.
 23. "Ole Mrs." is Pidgin English for *Lao T'ai-t'ai*, the Chinese term of respect for the older married women of a household. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 29, p.403.
 24. Several of the former Canton residents contributed significantly to the introduction and divulgation of knowledge about China and the Chinese on their return to the United States. One of the most important initiatives in this respect was Nathan Dunn's "Chinese Museum", which contained life-size clay figurines made in China and dressed in full costume, such as mandarins, scholars, ladies, actors, and others. There was even a farmer with a water buffalo pulling a plough. More than 100,000 Americans visited the "Chinese Museum" between 1839 and 1842. See Jonathan Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682–1846, Commercial, Cultural,*

- and Attitudinal Effects*, University Park and London, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978, pp.73–79. A medley of impressions about China and the Chinese throughout the centuries is gathered in Colin Mackerras's book with the telling title "*Sinophiles and Sinophobes. Western Views of China*", Oxford (and others), Oxford University Press, 2000.
25. Ellen was Harriett's youngest sister, then aged 2.
 26. William Wood, *Sketches of China, with Illustrations from Original Drawings*, Philadelphia, Carey & Lea, 1830, pp.135 and 137. As to the whys of foot binding, which dates back to the Southern Tang dynasty (907–923), the habit is said to have begun at the Court, from whence it spread gradually to the lower classes. There were seven exigencies for the perfect feet, they had to be thin, small, pointed, crooked, perfumed, soft and symmetrical. Obviously, this refers to golden lilies in shoes, because the sight of a bound foot *in natura* was certainly not pleasurable at all. Besides, they were considered a most intimate part of a woman's body and never openly displayed. The peculiar walk of a woman with bound feet was supposed to have an erotic effect on men. It is also said that the muscles in the female abdomen changed through foot binding, tightening the muscles of the vagina and thus making sexual intercourse more pleasurable for men. Later, during the Qing dynasty, bound feet served to distinguish Han Chinese women from the women of the Manchu invaders, who did not practise this custom. Considering the importance of the feet in Chinese traditional medicine, as mirroring the body as a whole, foot binding assumes a dimension of cruelty far beyond the physical pain endured by the girls and women, who were forced into it. Therefore, the current fashion — mainly among Western residents in China or travellers to China — of having shoes for bound feet as decorative items in their homes, comes close to the exhibition of medieval instruments of torture for instance, which thankfully have not reached decoration status yet.
 27. *Ibidem*, pp.133–135.
 28. *Ibidem*, pp.134, 135.
 29. In the Hodges/Hummel edition of the journal it is explained that "*the 'singing tone' of the school boy was the monotone in which he repeated the classics by heart as he stood, with his back to the teacher. The Chinese called it pei-shu, 'backing the book'*". See footnote 29, p.416.
 30. There is another, earlier description of the "sweeping of the tombs", as this ritual is called, which is not so detailed however (see 1.5.1830).
 31. Near Canton there was a place known as City of the Dead, where rich people kept their deceased family members, until a *feng shui* master had found an auspicious place for a grave, which however could take months or even years. A Portuguese traveller, who visited the City of the Dead at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, wrote: "*In this city, which houses more than a hundred or two hundred coffins, ... there is no bad smell or anything offensive to the viewer, everything is nicely whitewashed and gilded, painted, swept, tidy, in short spotlessly clean, which makes the contrast with the city of the living, where there are dirt, negligence, bad smells and ugliness, all the more striking. ... Some of the deceased are waiting there for*

their burial places in China since more than three years". In Filipe Emílio de Paiva, *Um Marinheiro em Macau — 1903. Album de Viagem*, Macau, Museu Marítimo de Macau, 1997, p.21.

32. Crespo confirms this rule and added another one, which however applied only to the male members of the Imperial Family, namely that during the mourning period they were forbidden to have sexual relations. According to him, when the wife of a prince gave birth shortly after the mourning period, her husband was punished with some rod blows, for (supposedly) having violated this rule, although the poor prince was probably innocent ... See Joaquim H. Callado Crespo, *Cousas da China. Costumes e Crenças*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1898, pp.152, 153. More detailed information on the prohibitions and ceremonies connected with this kind of events can be found in the *Chinese Repository* for July 1833, in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 71, p.806.
33. See Josiah Quincey (ed.), *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw, the First American Consul at Canton*, Boston, Wm. Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1847, pp.339, 340, and Austin Coates, *Macao and the British; 1637 to 1842. Prelude to Hongkong*, Hong Kong and others, Oxford University Press, 2nd impression, 1989, pp.79, 80.
34. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 34, pp.811, 812.
35. This quotation is an extract from fragmentary letters to her family, introduced by Hillard in her edition of the Journal, in order to fill in the gap created by the loss of a volume of the journal at sea. See Katharine Hillard, *op. cit.*, p.84.
36. In 1830, the total number of slaves amounted to about 1150 in Macau, according to estimates by Ljungstedt (see Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 83, p.807).

Chapter 8 Homeward Bound

1. Quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York*, Manchester (Maine), Falmouth Publishing House, 1953, p.52.
2. *Ibidem*, p.52.
3. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life. The Journal of Harriett Low, Travelling Spinster*. 2 parts, Woodinville (WA), The History Bank, 2002; see footnote 18, pp.809, 810.
4. According to the letters transcribed in Loines, Harriett's brother Edward Allen was in Canton still by the end of 1849. His last letter quoted dates December 1849. See Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.284.
5. According to Batalha, in Macau the word *lorcha* was used only to refer to big fishing boats. Other ships of a similar design, but used for cargo, were called *junco* or *tous*. In English, there is only one word for them, namely "junk". This type of boats could be seen in the harbours of the Pearl River Delta until far into the 20th century. Nowadays, some of them have been converted for tourism (See Graciete Nogueira Batalha, *Glossário do Dialecto Macaense. Notas Linguísticas, Etnográficas e*

- Folclóricas*, Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras, Instituto de Estudos Românicos, 1977, pp.471, 472).
6. On another occasion (7.7.1834), Harriett Low mentioned the distance, namely 5 miles or more, at which people could hold conversations by means of these signals.
 7. James Low, a brother of Seth and William Henry Low, was master of the ship *Cabot*. He had arrived in Macau on 2 September 1833 (in Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 7, p.809).
 8. The “two ladies” were the daughters of the owner of the Boarding House, a Mrs. Cruywagen.
 9. The gentlemen visited on 3 and 9 March 1834.
 10. Hodges informs that the cemetery was considered as unsanitary by the city authorities of Cape Town in 1870. The remains and stones were later transferred to another site, but no trace of William Low’s gravestone survived. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 47, p.815.
 11. Jacob’s ladder, as it is known, was built in 1829 and rebuilt in 1871. It has a length of 924 feet and ascends over a vertical height of 602 feet. In certain places the ladder is as steep as 45 degrees.
 12. In 1840, exactly 25 years after his arrival on St. Helena, Napoleon’s remains were transferred to Les Invalides in Paris. On old engravings of this spot one can see the tomb as described by Harriett Low, including the mourning willow trees.
 13. Hodges located the quotation: “*To the Abbé du Pradt, on the return from Russia (1812), referring to the retreat from Moscow*”. In Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.749
 14. Marginal note: “*How much fancy will do*”.
 15. Thomas Daniell (1749–1840) and his nephew William Daniell (1769–1837) were both painters. In 1810, they published *A Picturesque Voyage to India; by the Way of China by Thomas Daniell and William Daniell*. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 65, p.817.
 16. As already mentioned earlier, Ayok’s father worked for Colledge and was depicted together with him and three other Chinese showing Colledge in the exercise of his profession as an eye surgeon.
Somerset House was the venue of the yearly Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, for which Chinnery had sent some paintings. It still is a thriving centre for the arts in the heart of London. Since 1869, the Summer Exhibition is held in Burlington House.
 17. Hodges contrasts Harriett’s reaction with that of Fanny Trollope, who at the Philadelphian Academy of Fine Arts had been asked by an attendant to speed up her view of the sculptures while there were no men in the gallery, which she considered an affront. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, footnote 63, pp.816, 817.
 18. The famous Rock of Scone, also known as the Stone of Destiny, was returned to Scotland on 15 November 1996, 700 years after the army of King Edward I of England had dragged it away to Westminster Abbey.
 19. Katharine Hillard (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.318, 319.

20. *Ibidem*, p.320.
21. Harriett Low in a letter to her father, written in London on 5 June 1837. See Harriett Low, *Letters*, Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Manuscript Section, Low-Mills family papers, box no. 2, folder “General Correspondence 1836 to 1870”.
22. In a letter to her sister Ellen (Nelly), written in London on 31 March 1842. *Ibidem*.
23. This is another quotation from the same letter.
24. In a letter to her father, written in London on 28 June 1837. *Ibidem*.
25. See Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.18 and 315.
26. Harriett in a letter to her sister Ellen, dated 10 and 11 February 1848. See Harriett Low, *Letters*, Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Manuscript Section, Low-Mills family papers, box no. 2, folder “General Correspondence 1836 to 1870”.
27. Harriett in a letter to her father, written in Manchester, on 2 March 1845. *Ibidem*.
28. *Ibidem*.
29. Sarah kept a diary while staying with Harriett in England and Paris, which can be found among the Low-Mills family papers, in the Library of Congress.
30. Harriett in a letter to her sister Ellen, written in Manchester, on 17 March 1846. *Ibidem*. Ellen Low described the marriage in detail, in a letter to her brother Edward in Canton. Quoted in Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.252, 253.
31. Harriett in a letter to her brother Josiah, written in Edinburgh on 10 April 1840. See Harriett Low, *Letters*, Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Manuscript Section, Low-Mills family papers, box no. 2, folder “General Correspondence 1836 to 1870”.
32. Harriett in a letter to her sister Ellen, written in Manchester on 24 February 1848. *Ibidem*.
33. Harriett in a letter to her sisters, written in London on 8 April 1848. *Ibidem*.
34. See Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.59.
35. For more information on the A. A. Low & Brothers’ Fleet, the history of the ships, and the reasons why the Lows gave up the China trade, see Elma Loines (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.285–291.
36. See Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp.14–15.

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