

**THE LAND OF THE PIGTAIL,
ITS PEOPLE
AND CUSTOMS: FROM A
BOY'S POINT OF VIEW**

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The land of the pigtail, its people and customs: from a boy's point of view by Benjamin Clarke

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BENJAMIN CLARKE

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CHARLEY MAKES HIS BOW.



THE
LAND OF THE PIGTAIL,

Its People and Customs,

FROM A BOY'S POINT OF VIEW.

BY

BENJAMIN CLARKE,

EDITOR OF "KIND WORDS," AUTHOR OF "FOURCHURCH HALL," ETC. ETC.



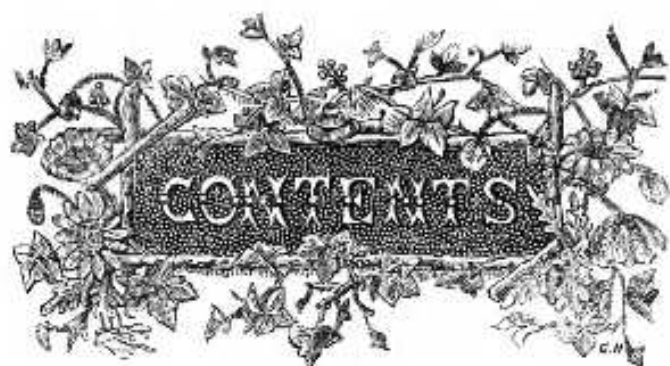
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THE LAND OF THE PIGTAIL.

CHAPTER I.

CHARLEY MAKES HIS BOW.



OW do you do, old fellow? Got back safe and sound, eh? I'm so glad to see you!"

"Yes, thanks; safe enough, thank God! and as for sound, have knocked about a bit; rigging somewhat worn, stores exhausted, and cargo all disposed of. Glad to come home again to re-fit, I can tell you!"

This was Charley Cromwell's brief description of himself and his circumstances, on his return from a voyage to China.

His friend was Stephen Willis, a former schoolfellow,

and now a clerk in a merchant's office in the native town of both the lads. Charley's career had been one of much interest to the Brillmouth boys, for he was the first from his school, of the present generation, who had gone to sea; and, moreover, he was a favourite with most of the pupils of Mr. Tozer's "Select Academy for Young Gentlemen."

It had been known for some time past that Charley was expected home, and a daily application at Mr. Cromwell's was at length rewarded with the intelligence that he would arrive in a day or two.

Great expectations were raised concerning his return, for though none of the boys expected presents, they all hoped he would bring home with him some curiosities which they might inspect, and they were quite sure he would have some fine long yarns to tell, to which they might all listen.

The fact was that Charley had always been noted for his story-telling, and latterly he had secured Mr. Tozer's approbation for the manner in which he wrote his themes. Scraps from some of his letters had been repeated to the boys, but he had always apologized for his short epistles, on the ground that he was keeping a log, which would more fully describe all he had seen.

Steve Willis was the first to see him: Charley was standing at his father's door, looking out for the man who was bringing up some of his baggage.