

to it. By the Manchus especially the mountain was held in the deepest reverence, and I quote from Mr. James's book a translation of a poem by the Emperor Kieulung regarding it—

“To ascend to the primitive source of our August Race, which has founded our Tai-tsing (Great-dear dynasty), we must carry ourselves to that mountain, distinguished in like fashion (with the dynasty) for the size and for the colour with which it shines. The famous lake Tamoun occupies part of its summit; the rivers Yalu, Hun tung, and Ai hu' arise from its bosom, carrying fertility over the fields which they water; and the fragrant mists which for ever rise in this charming spot are, without contradiction, those of true glory and solid happiness. On this blessed mountain, a celestial virgin, a daughter of heaven, tasted a fruit to which she was attracted by the brightness of its colour above all others, ate, conceived, and became the mother of a boy, heavenly like herself. Heaven itself gave him the name of Kioro, to which it added, by way of distinction, that of the precious metal, and ordained that he should be called Aisin Kioro, or Golden Kioro.”

The Ever-White Mountain was reported to be situated in the heart of an immense forest, to be of enormous height (the name itself suggesting a snow-clad peak), and to have an unfathomable lake at its summit. We were accordingly fired with enthusiasm to penetrate its mystery and ascend its summit, and on May 19 we left the treaty port of Newchwang with this object in view.

We now had our first taste of Chinese travel, and it proved on the whole by no means unpleasant. In the first place, the climate was perfect—mild and soft, like an English summer. The country was everywhere richly cultivated, and was dotted over with well-built, pent-roofed farmhouses, not at all unlike those which one sees in England. We travelled in carts—the small carts so often described in books on China—with two mules each, driven tandem, the baggage piled up inside and