

distance appearing to encircle the extensive plain, and though barren, forming a fine background to the scene. In the magnificent river are many islands, on one of which is built the small town of Wampoa.

The boats on the river are objects of interest to strangers. "The boats of the Hong merchants and the large flower-boats," writes Mr. Fortune, are very splendid. They are arranged in compartments like the others, but are built in a more superb and costly manner. The reader must imagine a kind of wooden house raised upon the floor of a boat, having the entrance near the bows, space being left there for the boatman to stand and row. This entrance being the front, is carved in a most superb style, forming a prelude to what may be seen within. Numerous lanterns hang from the roof of these splendid showy cabins; looking-glasses, pictures, and poetry adorn their sides; and all the peculiarities of this singular people are exposed, to one view, in these their floating palaces."—*London Illustrated Times*.

THE DEAD SEA.

Though in breadth not exceeding ten miles, the Dead Sea seems boundless to the eye when looking from North to South; and the murmur of waves, as they break on its flint-strewn shore, together with the lines of drift-wood and fragments of bitumen on the beach, give to its waters a resemblance to the ocean. Curious to experience the sensation of swimming in so strange a sea, I put to the test the accounts of the extreme buoyancy felt in it, and I was quickly convinced that there was no exaggeration in what I heard. I found the water almost tepid, and so strong that the chief difficulty was to keep sufficiently submerged, the feet starting up in the air at every vigorous stroke. When floating, half the body rose above the surface, and with a pillow, one might have slept upon the water. After some time the strangeness of the sensation in some measure disappeared, and on approaching the shore I carelessly dropped my feet to wade out, when I felt as if a bladder had been attached to each heel, they flew upward; the struggle to recover myself sent my head down; the vile, bitter, and briny water, from which I had hitherto guarded my head, now rushed into my mouth, eyes, ears, and nose; and for one horrible moment the only doubt I had was whether I was to be drowned or poisoned. Coming to the surface, however, I swam to land, making no further attempt to walk in deep water, which I am inclined to believe is almost impossible.—*Eastern Travel*.

MEDICAL.

A writer in the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* thinks that he has discovered that the different colours that stain the walls of rooms occupied by workers affect the spirits of the occupants. In one room coloured with yellow ochre all the persons employed were inclined to melancholy, and were complaining of pains in the head, forehead and eyes. He had the yellow ochre all washed off, and the walls and ceiling whitewashed; the workers ever after were more cheerful and healthy. There was no lack of ventilation or light; nothing about the drainage of the room before and after the whitewashing that could affect the place differently.

Mr. Waring gives a table in his "Notes on the Diseases of India," which tends to show that a teetotaler is more liable to fever than a moderate or even an immoderate drinker, but that the teetotaler is more exempt from most other diseases.

The Registrar-General of England and Wales

concludes that of twelve classes of occupational farmers have the longest lives. The order of longevity is as follows:—

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| 1—Farmers. | 7—Tailors. |
| 2—Shoemakers. | 8—Labourers. |
| 3—Weavers. | 9—Miners. |
| 4—Grocers. | 10—Bakers. |
| 5—Blacksmiths. | 11—Butchers. |
| 6—Carpenters. | 12—Innkeepers. |

The extraordinary mortality of butchers is a fact for which we are indebted to the last census. Their red-flushed face has produced, it seems, a wrong idea as to the healthful nature of their business. Whether it is their excess of animal food, their proneness to drink, or their exposure to the decaying matter that surrounds the slaughter-house, that is the cause of this newly-discovered mortality, is yet to be investigated. The highest rates of mortality are found in the class of inn-keepers and licensed victualers;—not a bad argument for the teetotalers,—though their exposure from frequent intercourse with large numbers of people should not be left out of account.

Much doubt is thrown upon the story of the Styrian arsenic-eaters which has been published on the evidence of Von Tschudi, Boner, Johnston, and others. Indeed from the reports of gentlemen who have thoroughly investigated the matter lately, the conclusion is drawn that the whole story of there being people in portions of Hungary who eat arsenic for the sake of its fattening and beautifying effects is inconsistent, improbable, and utterly incredible.

Professor Dietl, of Cracow, advocates pure air and good nourishment (not mere slops) for typhus fevers, a free use of phosphoric acid and of quinine in large doses. He objects to cold applications to the head, and urges pretty nearly the practice of Dr. Stokes and his school.

THE NEW SUGAR PLANT.

From an American Journal.

The cultivation of the *Sorghum*, or Chinese sugar-plant, has thus far proved so decidedly successful in this country, not only in the South, where it seems to have been demonstrated that two crops or cuttings of sugar bearing stalks can be obtained in one season from the same roots of that year's planting, but even so far north as Minnesota, where it is testified that good syrup was made in 1856 from stalks hardly a hundred days from the seed, that we are impelled to urge upon our farmers and gardeners the importance of early attention to the procuring of seed and planting for the season just before us. Let us all grow the seed this year, so that it can never more be so scarce that speculators may run it up to an enormous price. A great deal remains to be settled with regard to this plant, especially the best mode of converting its saccharine properties into crystallized sugar; and it is highly probable that better varieties of it will ultimately be discovered, at least for certain localities, than that now current in this country. For the present, however, it is advisable to continue and extend the cultivation of that which is accessible, and thus test the effect of acclimation on the character of the plant, and the sweetness of its juices. We suspect that for Louisiana, Florida, and Texas, the *Sorghum* of Southern Africa will ultimately be found preferable to that obtained from France by our patent office, and from China by France. If it prove true that this plant, or certain varieties of it, can be grown in semi-tropical latitudes from the same root, as the cane is grown in the West Indies, and that two or more crops of sugar-yielding stalks may be