

fair specimen of his handwriting. There are not only many establishments for the reception of the aged, but the penal code provides severe punishments for those who refuse to relieve the poor in their declining years. Age may also be pleaded in extenuation of crime and in mitigation of punishment. Imperial decrees sometimes order presents to be given to all indigent old people in the empire. I am not aware of any detailed statistics giving the number of such recipients since a return published in the time of Kanghi (1667) Kienlung (1735) directed that all those claimants whose age extended sixty should receive five bushels of rice and a piece of linen; those above eighty, ten bushels of rice and two pieces of linen; those above ninety, thirty bushels of rice and two pieces of common silk; and those above one hundred, fifty bushels of rice and two pieces, one of fine and one of common silk. He ordered all the elders to be enumerated who were at the head of five generations, of whom there were 122, and, "in gratitude to heaven," summoned 8000 of the oldest men of the empire to receive Imperial presents, which consisted principally of embroidered purges, and badges bearing the character *shou*, meaning "longevity."

THE RIVER POPULATION.

The enormous river population of China, who live only in boats, who are born and educated, who marry, rear their families, and die—who, in a word, begin and end their existence on the water, and never have or dream of any shelter other than the roof, and who seldom tread except on the deck or boards of their sampans—how to what an extent the land is crowded, and how inadequate it is to maintain the cumberers of the soil. In the city of Canton alone, it is estimated that 300,000 persons dwell upon the surface of the river; the boats, sometimes twenty or thirty deep, cover some miles, and have their wants supplied by ambulatory salesmen, who vend their way through every accessible passage. Of this vast population, some dwell in decorated river boats used for every purpose of license and festivity, for theatres, for concerts, for feasts, for gambling, for lyric, for solitary and social recreations; some craft are employed in conveying goods and passengers, and are in a state of constant activity; others are moored, and their owners are engaged as servants or labourers on shore. Indeed their pursuits are probably nearly as various as those of the land population. The immense variety of boats which are found in Chinese waters has never been adequately described. Some are of enormous size, and are used as magazines for salt or rice—others have all domestic accommodations, and are employed for the transfer of whole families, with all their domestic attendants and accommodations, from one place to another—some called *centipedes*, from their being supposed to have 100 rowers, convey with extraordinary rapidity the more valuable cargoes from the inner warehouse to the foreign shipping in the ports—all these, from the huge and cumbersome junks, which remind one of Noah's ark, and which represent the rude and coarse construction of the remotest ages, to the fragile pleasure boats upon which a solitary leper hangs upon the outskirts of society—boats of every form, and applied to every purpose—exhibit an incalculable amount of population, which may be called amphibious, if not aquatic.

GREAT MORTALITY AND DISREGARD OF HUMAN LIFE.

There is probably no part of the world in which the harvests of mortality are more sweeping and destructive than in China, producing voids which require no ordinary appliances to fill up. Multitudes perish absolutely from want of the means of existence—inundations destroy towns and villages and all their inhabitants; it would not be easy to calculate the loss of life by the typhoons or hurricanes which visit the coasts of China, in which boats and junks are sometimes sacrificed by hundreds and by thousands. The late civil wars in China must have led to the loss of millions of lives. The sacrifices of human beings by executions alone are frightful. At the moment at which I write, it is believed that from 400 to 500 victims fall daily by the hands of the headsmen in the province of Kwang-tung alone. Reverence for life there is none, as life exists in superfluous abundance. A dead body is an object of so little concern that it is sometimes not thought worth while to remove it from the spot where it putrifies on the surface of the earth. Often have I seen a corpse under the table of gamblers—often have I trod over a putrid body at the threshold of a door. In many parts of China there are towers of brick or stone where toothless—principally female—children are thrown by their parents into a hole made at the side of the wall. There are various opinions as

to the extent of infanticide in China, but that it is a common practice in many provinces admits of no doubt. I have seen ponds which are the habitual receptacles of female infants, whose bodies lie floating about on their surface. It is by no means unusual to carry persons in a state of exhaustion a little distance from the cities, to give them a pot of rice, and to leave them to perish of starvation when the little store is exhausted.

POLITENESS IN MARRIED LIFE.

"Will you?" asked a pleasant voice.

And the husband answered, "Yes, my dear; with pleasure."

It was quietly but heartily said, the tone, the manner, the look, were perfectly natural but very affectionate. We thought, how pleasant that courteous reply! how gratifying must it be to the wife! Many husbands of ten years' experience are ready enough with the courtesies of politeness to the young ladies of their acquaintance, while they speak with abruptness to the wife, and do many rude little things, without considering them worth an apology. The stranger whom they may have even but yesterday, is listened to with deference, and although the subject may not be of the pleasantest nature with a ready smile; while the wife, if she relate a domestic grievance, is snubbed, or listened to with ill-concealed impatience. Oh! how wrong this is—all wrong.

Does she urge some request—"oh, don't bother me!" cries her gracious lord and master. Does she ask for necessary funds for Susy's shoes and Tommy's hat—"seems to me you're always wanting money!" is the handsome retort. Is any little extra demanded by his masculine appetite—it is ordered, not requested. "Look here, I want you to do so and so; just see that it's done;" and off marches Mr. Boor, with a bow and a smile of gentlemanly polish, and friendly sweetness for every casual acquaintance he may chance to recognize.

When we meet such thoughtlessness and coarseness, our thoughts revert to the kind voice and gentle manner of the friend who said, "yes, my dear, with pleasure." "I beg your pardon," comes as readily to his lips, when by any little awkwardness he has disconcerted her, as it would in the presence of the most fashionable stickler for etiquette. This is because he is a thorough gentleman, who thinks his wife in all things entitled to precedence. He loves her best—why should he hesitate to show it, not in sickly, maudlin attention, but in preferring her pleasure, and honouring her in public as well as private. He knows her worth—why should he hesitate to attest it? "And her husband he praised her," said Holy Writ; not by fulsome adulation, not by pushing her charms into notice, but by speaking as opportunity occurs, in a manly way, of her virtues. Though words may seem little things and slight attentions almost valueless, yet depend upon it they keep the flame bright, especially if they are natural. The children grow up in a better moral atmosphere, and learn to respect their parents, as they see them respecting each other. Many a boy takes advantage of a mother he loves, because he sees often the rudeness of his father. Insensibly he gathers to his bosom the same habits, and the thoughts and feelings they engender, and in his turn becomes the petty tyrant. Only his mother, why should he thank her! father never does. Thus the home becomes the seat of disorder and unhappiness, only for strangers are kind words expressed, and hypocrites go out from their hearthstone fully prepared to render justice, benevolence, and politeness to every and any one but those who have the justest claims.

Ah! give us the kind glance—the happy homestead—the smiling wife and courteous children of the friend who said so pleasantly, "Yes, my dear; with pleasure."

THE LOSSES IN THE CRIMEAN ARMY.—The general total of all the regiments or corps which originally landed in the East was 55,530; the total of non-commissioned officers and men who were added to these during the progress of the war was 27,371;—thus the total of British troops from first to last amounted to no less than 82,901. Of these, 18,927 were killed or died. No less than 11,374 men were invalided or became non-effective up to September 1855. Put, then, those two numbers together—the 18,927 who actually died, and the 11,374 who were disabled—and we have the total loss of the British army—30,301—for a period of eighteen months, only 12 of which were passed in presence of the enemy. In round numbers, out of 80,000 men we lost 30,000 during the war.

If you forget God when you are young, God may forget you when you are old.

CATACOMBS OF MOUNT OLIVES.—A correspondent of the *New York Observer* who recently visited this interesting locality, gives a description which we copy. The discovery of tombs and sarcophagi in Syria and the Holy Land bids fair to throw additional light upon that country, similar to that already shed upon Egyptian and Assyrian history by discoveries made in those countries.

"On a fine bright day during the season of the year which in Jerusalem is the most favorable for exploring (viz., the winter or rainy season) I was invited, early in 1846, by a friend well acquainted with the environs, to visit the catacombs in the Mount of Olives. So few travellers mention them that my curiosity was excited, and accompanied by a party of young people, I started in search of these almost unknown caverns. We each were provided with twisted English papers, and our friend who acted as guide with a small ball of twine. The dignified beauty of the scenery, the abundance of associations which it supplied, and the glorious anticipation of its coming destiny, seemed to inspire some of us with emotions of deep and mysterious pleasure, while the freshness of the atmosphere, and the rich display of wild flowers imparted elasticity and gladness to the junior members of the party, who, some mounted and some on foot, hurried forward with a joyous laugh as they rivalled each other in the pursuit or possession of some new plant. When we had ascended the mount about half-way, our guide requested us to help him in his search for a hole in the ground, as such was the entrance to the mysterious caverns. While thus employed, he amused himself in exciting our alarm by saying that some time previously three Jews had entered the catacombs, and having been watched by a Mussulman their egress had been rendered impossible by his placing a large stone to occlude the daylight, so that only after many days was their horrible position discovered, when they were found dead not far from the entrance."

"This narrative, being true, produced a sudden change of feeling in the party. The younger ones turned pale, and declined the undertaking, preferring to remain with the armed native servant, who, as a guard, was to wait outside with the animals. Thus when the aperture was found, only our guide and two others ventured in. The aperture is a natural opening formed by the decay and falling in of a part of the roof, and is just large enough to easily admit one adventurer at a time, while the crumble wall formed a rude kind of staircase by which, clinging with hands and feet, we descended into the darkness below."

"Feeling ourselves on firm ground, we lit our tapers, and looked around; we were in a circular chamber, out of which there appeared at first no means of egress except by the roof again; but at our sight adapted itself to the obscurity, we observed that all around the floor of this chamber were low-arched passages, so low and so narrow as only just to admit us singly, as one after the other we crept through the one selected on hands and knees, holding our tapers as well as we could. Happily the passage was only a few feet long; and soon emerging thence, we stood upright in a long narrow winding corridor, the low ceiling of which we could mark with smoke of our tapers. Old dates and strange characters were there in great variety, but the only smoke-written autograph which I can now recall to mind was that of "John Clarke, 1794."

"On either wall of this corridor, on the floor, were low arched recesses, quite near together, which once had contained the dead, long since returned to dust. From this corridor branched others; we selected one, and from it again branched others, all apparently alike appropriated to the long forgotten dead. Thus on we went till our tapers failed, then remembering the sad stories told of the catacombs at Rome, we did not proceed; but silent and thoughtful, through the wilderness of sepulchres we retraced our steps to the round chamber."

"Here for a few moments we paused to think on the mysteries of this remarkable mountain. We had only explored one path, and that not to a great distance—where did the others lead?—all perhaps to similar scenes, and through groves of sleeping dust, awaiting that day when he shall appear again in like manner as he ascended from the said Mount Olivet, (Acts i. 11, 12,) who shall cleave the mount asunder and reveal to its awakened inmates the dawn of the resurrection. Imagination attempts to picture these corridors suddenly filled to overflowing with mortals who have put on immortality. The mountain breaks with its burden, (Zech. xiv. 4,) groans and bursts asunder, while myriads rise to meet their Lord! But then by what age or people have these caverns been filled? The answer may produce a sad reverse to the solemn picture. Alas, that question cannot be satisfactorily answered, for most travellers have assigned them originally to the worship of Ashtaroath, in the days of Solomon, while they were probably afterwards used by repentant Israel, and converted into a burying place for their dead. Whatever may be their history, they furnish much profitable reflection, and much illustration of Scripture; and to my own mind, as I have hinted, they furnished a literal interpretation to the passage quoted above, standing as it does in connection with the events of the latter days."

God has written on the flowers that sweeten the air—on the breeze that rocks the flowers upon the stem—upon the rain drop that refreshes the sprig of moss that lifts its head in the desert—upon its deep chambers—upon every pencilled sheet that sleeps in the caverns of the deep, no less than upon the mighty sun that warms and cheers millions of creatures which live in its light—upon all his works he has written: "None liveth for himself."

HUSBAND.—Theology of this world may not be generally known. The head of a family is called husband from a fact that he, or ought to be, the band which unites the household together—on the bond of