

A CHINESE ENCYCLOPÆDIA.

The celebrated "Chinese Encyclopædia," which was purchased some months ago by the trustees of the British Museum for fifteen hundred pounds sterling, has been safely lodged in that institution. It forms the most important acquisition to the great national library which has been made for some time past. The work is remarkable as having nothing parallel to it extant in other countries. It is comprised in 5,020 volumes, and consists of a vast thesaurus, into which is digested the entire mass of Chinese literature extant to the date of its publication, classified under appropriate headings, and accompanied with illustrative drawings, plans and maps. It includes treatises ranging from 1150 B.C. to about the year 1700 of our era, and it professes to represent every branch of Chinese literature, with the single exception of works of fiction.

It was compiled in the early part of the eighteenth century by an imperial commission under the orders of the great emperor Kang Hi So, well known to us, from the accounts of the Jesuit missionaries, whom he favoured and assisted, and who were his instructors in European art and learning. The emperor was himself a great writer, and he was struck in the course of his literary investigations by the alterations and corruptions which were being gradually introduced into the texts of standard works. He therefore conceived the idea of reprinting from the most authentic editions the whole body of Chinese literature then in existence. A commission of high officials was appointed to select and classify the texts, and its labours extended over forty years, terminating in the publication of the work in 1726. For the purpose of printing it a complete font of copper type was cast under the direction of the Jesuits, who probably superintended the printing.

Only one hundred copies were printed, the number of which has been much reduced since the time of the issue by various casualties. The whole impression was distributed as presents among the princes of the imperial family and the great state officials. The type used in the production of the work is said to have been melted down shortly afterward, and converted into money to meet the exigencies of the government during a financial crisis, and in this way the means of producing a second volume was destroyed. The copies which still exist are in the hands of the families of the original recipients, from one of whom the copy thus happily brought to London has been purchased. So completely private is the ownership of copies of this encyclopædia in China that no copy is known to be accessible for reference to the general body of students of that country.

AN ANGRY TREE.

A gentleman of this place has a tree which is a species of acacia. It was grown from a seed brought from Australia. The tree is now a sapling some eight feet in height, and it is in full foliage and growing rapidly. It is leguminous, and very distinctly shows the characteristics of the mimosa, or sensitive plant. Regularly every evening, about the time the "chickens go to roost," the tree goes to roost. The leaves fold together, and the ends of the tender twigs coil themselves up like the tail of a well-conditioned pig.

After one of the twigs has been stroked or handled, the leaves move uneasily, and are in a sort of mild commotion for a minute or more. All this was known about the tree, but it was only recently that it was discovered that the tree had in it much more life and feeling than it had ever before been credited with. The tree

being in quite a small pot, one which it was fast outgrowing, it was thought best to give it one of much larger size. Yesterday afternoon the tree was transferred to its new quarters. It resented the operation of its removal to the best of its ability.

Arriving at his residence about the time the tree had been transplanted, the gentleman found the house in grand commotion. On asking what was up he was told that they had transplanted the tree according to orders and the operation had "made it very mad."

Hardly had it been placed in its new quarters before the leaves began to stand up in all directions like the hair on the tail of an angry cat, and soon the whole plant was in a quiver. This could have been endured, but at the same time it gave out an odour most pungent and sickening—just such a smell as is given off by rattlesnakes and many other kinds of snakes in summer when teased. This odour so filled the house and was so sickening that it was found necessary to open the doors and windows. It was fully an hour before the plant calmed down and folded its leaves in peace. It would probably not have given up the fight even then had it not been that its time for going to roost had arrived.—*Virginia (Nev.) Enterprise.*

HOW SIR GEORGE JESSEL GOT THROUGH HIS WORK.

Some few years since I appeared before the late Master of the Rolls as party to a friendly family suit, where the advice and whitewashing by the Court of Chancery was sought by trustees, of whom I was one. The case was simple. A discrepancy between a marriage settlement and a will, both drawn by the same firm of lawyers and never contemplated by the testator, involved a point patent of solution to any outsider, but which, after acres of counsel's opinions and legal pour-parlers, the lawyers persuaded the trustees to take it before the Master of the Rolls. Never shall I forget the electrical rapidity with which Sir George Jessel grasped the facts. In fewer minutes than I take to pen these lines he asked why he had been troubled in so simple a matter, stating that if the beneficiary were not rich he should have ordered the trustees to pay the costs out of their own pockets, thus marking his objection to their wasting the court's time by obtaining an opinion from him that was not wanted in so clear a case. So struck was I with this great judge's perception that once in Chancery I could not get out of it, and I remained for the next case. Some trustees for a young lady, a minor, whose fortune was growing potentially, applied for increased alimony, and the counsel quoted a decision of Lord Mansfield's in support of his application. Sir George, listening for a moment, asked counsel if the testator was in his right mind when he made his will. "Yes, my lord," answered the learned gentleman. "Then I shall not alter its terms or provisions. The testator knew best what he wanted for his child; I am here to carry out those terms and provisions and, though Lord Mansfield was a clever man, yet he was not God Almighty. Mr. So-and-so, you may sit down. What is the next case?"

A LITERAL TRANSLATOR.

A copy of Moody and Sankey's volume of hymns lately reached one of the Turkish Post Offices in Armenia to the address of an American missionary. Of late the imperial restrictions on the importation of foreign literature, as well as on the printing press, have become more stringent than ever, so, as a matter of course, Moody and Sankey must pass under the eagle eye of Bukh-

sheesh Effendi, the Governor-General's factotum, who knows a few words of English. He was all the sharper on this occasion because he had very recently passed by inadvertence a book consisting of letters from one of the New York papers, the author of which roundly denounced the misgovernment he had witnessed in Armenia during the campaign of 1877. And this volume was addressed to the same quarter as the present hymn book. "Dogs," exclaimed Bukhsheesh Effendi, as he turned over the leaves. "Hold the fort! What fort? Treachery, as I live! May Satan seize them!" They were patriotic songs for the use of the Armenians, those hymns, and the musical notation proved it, and that particular song, "Hold the Fort," must have reference to an intended insurrection. So "Hold the Fort" was cut out by order of Bukhsheesh, and the expurgated volume sent to its destination.

THE POWER OF IMAGINATION.

There has just died at Charenton, near Paris, a man who has had a very curious history. Thirty years ago this person, whose name was Roussot, was condemned to death at the Seine Assizes for the murder of an old gentleman, M. Deraoury. The case had excited considerable interest, and the court was crowded with spectators. Among the persons standing immediately behind Roussot, who was flanked by a pair of gendarmes, was one Planchat, an employé of the *Presse* newspaper, who had somehow contrived to wriggle himself into that position without attracting notice. Scarcely had the sentence been pronounced when Planchat, moved, as he afterwards explained, by an uncontrollable impulse, passed the side of his hand over the prisoner's neck in imitation of the keen blade of the guillotine, at the same time emitting a whirring sound. Roussot instantly fell forward with a shriek of terror, and the bystanders, indignant at this heartless and shocking act, rushed upon Planchat and roundly abused him. Planchat was subsequently condemned to two years' imprisonment. As for his victim, he never recovered the shock, but remained insane until the day of his death. He was pardoned by the Emperor, and confined, first at Bicetre, and afterward at Charenton, where he has just expired. The unfortunate man was under the impression that he had been actually beheaded in the Palais de Justice, and when relating the story was in the habit of imitating the sound that haunted him for thirty years.

HONESTY IN WORK.

We are all of us workers in one way or another, but how many of us are possessed with an earnest desire that the work we put from our hands shall be a thorough, honest faithful performance that shall fulfil its purpose, and withstand the ravages of time? The great difference in labour is not what is done—not the kind of work we perform—but in the spirit we put into it. From the cleansing of a room to the purification of a government, from the clearing of a forest to the chiselling of a statue, from the humblest work of the hands to the noblest work of the heart and brain, it is the determination to make it of the best possible quality that places it in the front rank. The work that is performed only for the sake of what it will bring, not for what it will carry forth, is like cloth of shoddy, which may please the eye, but will not wear. It is cheap, flimsy stuff, woven with no nobler purpose than to hold together long enough to be bought and paid for.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.