

## The Aged Itinerant.

BY JULIA A. TIRRELL.

SILENTLY the loved ones gathered  
In the quiet, darkened room;  
Hushed were sobs, though hearts were breaking,  
For a soul was going home.  
Pressed against the snowy pillow  
Lay a face as snowy white.  
Dying? Nay, God's saint was passing  
From the shadows into light.

Suddenly the dim eyes opened,  
But their gaze seemed far away.  
"Are our goods all packed and labelled  
Wife, this is our moving-day.  
Moving-day! And we have laboured;  
You may well be weary, dear;  
Moving-day! Long since familiar  
Have those words grown to my ear.

"I remember our first station,  
Where I carried you a bride;  
How I marked the admiration  
You received, with secret pride.  
Two years fled so swiftly onward!  
Yes, the hardest part of all  
Was to say farewell and leave it.  
But 'twas at the Master's call.

"Then at Easton little Mabel  
Came to fill our cup of joy.  
Next we moved to River Valley,  
Where God gave our precious boy.  
Souls were saved; believers strengthened;  
Blessed indeed the work has been.  
What are fame and worldly honours  
With a crown of life to win?

"Baby left us at Ashburnham;  
Oh, how heavy fell the blow!  
Kind and thoughtful were our people—  
God's own angels here below.  
But I need not name the charges—  
You remember every one.  
Think on heaven's glad reunions  
When this pilgrimage is done!

"Moving-day—now all—is ready—  
We must—rest—a little while—  
Ere we go—'tis long—the journey—  
Darling—come"—a gasp, a smile,  
And the soul had fled its prison,  
Earthly changes all were o'er;  
Called to the celestial city,  
Forever to go out no more.

## School-Life in China.

It is a credit to the Chinese that, although there is no such thing as "compulsory education" in the land, yet since the one qualification for office is education, and the way to literary distinction and public honours is through competitive examination, there is a general desire, even among the poorest people, to send their children to these schools "for a little schooling."

The teachers of these are men of absolute power, not even having one assistant. They are known by their long gowns, stern looks, and forms rounded by continuous study. They are treated with great honour by all, and particularly by the parents of the children. They are usually invited to live in the houses of the wealthier pupils. If one is an elegant penman, he can add to the income he derives from his school by writing scrolls; if an artist, by painting pictures on fans. If he has not taken a degree, he is a perennial candidate for academic honours, which only the government has a right to confer.

The tuition fee of the pupil ranges from two to twenty dollars a year, according to the ability and reputation of the teacher, and also according to the age and advancement of the pupil. One who teaches thirty or forty boys, at an average tuition fee of four dollars, is doing tolerably well in China—for the sum there will buy five or six times as much provision and clothing as it will here.

These schools are held either in a private house

or in the hall of a temple. The ancestral temples, which contain the tablets of deceased ancestors, are usually selected, because they are of no other use, and are more or less secluded. The large hall, open on one side toward a court, and having a high ceiling supported by pillars, has in one corner a square wooden table, behind which is the wooden chair of the schoolmaster. In front of him, or at right angles to him, are the tables and stools of the pupils.

These oblong tables, if long in use, will show what Yan Phou Lee must have also noticed in America—the "carving habits and talents of their occupants." In conspicuous view are a wooden ruler and a rattan stick. Flogging with this stick is the severest punishment allowed. For slight offences, the ruler is used upon the palms of the hands; for reciting poorly, upon the head. The pupils are all boys. Girls attend schools kept in the family, but only until they are eleven or twelve years of age. In an ordinary school, the boys range from six or seven to sixteen or seventeen years of age.

There is no such thing as organizing them into classes or divisions. Each one studies for himself. There are schools, however, where all are advanced and all are beginners—but such are rare. All the studying is done aloud. The louder they speak or shriek, the more credit they get as students. This is the only way by which Chinese teachers can make sure their pupils are not thinking of something else, or are not playing under the desks. The boys usually behave well; if not, the rattan stick is promptly used. They have a reverence for their teacher as a rule.

At six o'clock in the morning, when the schools generally begin, no matter how noisy they may be, upon the appearance of their teacher they instantly pause, and, standing before him, cry out, "Lao Se" (venerable teacher). As he sits down, all follow the example. There is no roll-call. Then one boy takes his book up to the teacher's desk, turns his back to him, and recites. He hesitates a moment; but, being prompted, goes on smoothly, and at last returns to his seat satisfied. A second boy goes up—forgets once, twice, three times. At the third time the teacher becomes impatient, and down comes the ruler on the poor boy's head! He goes to his seat to learn his lesson over. This goes on till all have recited; after which the writing lessons begin. Great pains are taken with these—for writing is as great an art in China as painting and drawing are in other countries. Good specimens of elegant penmanship are valued there as fine paintings are here.

After the master has made his tour of inspection, the school is dismissed for breakfast—this is at ten a.m. On re-assembling at eleven, the lesson for the next day is explained to each one separately; the teacher reading it over and the pupil repeating it after him until a majority of the words are learned. Each boy then returns to his seat, and shouts anew to get the lesson fixed in his mind. At one o'clock there is a recess of about an hour, for a lunch. From two to four is the afternoon session, when the younger pupils learn the next day's task, and the older write compositions in prose and verse, or study some literary essay. The parents furnish the text-books as a rule. These are usually printed and bound into a volume. At four o'clock the school is closed for the day. These are the general school-hours, but the teachers are at liberty to change them if they choose.

This pleasant glimpse into school-life in China, through the eyes of one who has experienced it, seems to me to have a unique interest in that it gives an added opportunity to compare methods of a foreign people in the art of teaching with those of our own.

## A Temperance Lecture by a Goat.

HERE is a lively account by a soldier, of a practical temperance lecture which was once given to a company of soldiers by a goat. Some goats have more sense than some men:—

Never had regimental goat been more attentive to duties than was Billy. At drill, parade, and roll-call, Billy was ever to the fore. He seemed to take as much pride in the regiment as the men did in him. And when the men—overgrown boys as they were—had leisure, as they had in abundance, they found in Billy as hearty a playfellow as they found him a ready comrade in duty.

Well fed, well groomed, well housed, well cared for in every way, Billy's lot among goats was indeed a happy one. But, alas! pride goeth before a fall, and Billy was to be no exception to the rule.

Billy had not merely the right of entry to the mess-room, but was always a welcome guest there, and received many a dainty morsel from the friendly hands of the men. One evening, however, it happened that Corporal Price, in a spirit of thoughtless mischief, proposed that Billy should share the liquids as well as the solids of the mess-table. The suggestion was at once seized upon, and the men eagerly watched to see what Billy would do.

Corporal Price coaxingly held out his cup, and Billy, after a suspicious preliminary sniff, lapped up the contents. Another and yet another of the men gave Billy a drink, and at last the earthen vessel which held the beer at the head of the table was put upon the floor, and Billy was directed to help himself, which he did so greedily that he became—to the amusement of the men, I am ashamed to have to acknowledge—helplessly, unmistakably intoxicated.

I do not attempt to describe its symptoms. Suffice it to say, that the next morning Billy was, for the first time, absent from roll-call, and did not turn out all day. Nothing would tempt him to leave his stable.

When a second day brought a repetition of the desertion, and a second evening mess began without Billy putting in an appearance, Corporal Price was directed to bring the deserter before a court-martial of the men's mess.

With some difficulty he persuaded Billy to leave his lair, and it was only by dragging him by main force that he could get him inside the door of the room which had been the scene of his orgies two nights before. Billy's appearance was greeted with a cheer; but sadly changed were his looks. His once glossy coat had an unkempt appearance; while the once proud and erect head was lowered in shame.

"Come, Billy, take a drink!" said the sergeant at the head of the table.

The words seemed to rouse the animal. He lifted his head, his eye lit up, his fore hoof beat the floor. Then, with a snort, a rush, and a bound, Billy butted full against the large earthen vessel containing the men's evening allowance of ale, breaking it into a thousand pieces, and deluging not only the table but the men who sat near. Then, with his head once more erect, he stalked out of the room.

"And really, sir," said the corporal to me, in telling the incident, "Billy's was the best blue-ribbon lecture that ever was given to us."

A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.—Prov. xv. 1-3.