

## THE SCRAP BOOK.

## THE CHINESE QUARTER OF SAN FRANCISCO.

IN Mrs. Pfeiffer's recent volume of travels, "Flying Leaves from East to West," the following account is given of a visit to the Chinese quarter of San Francisco: "In the afternoon we visited the Chinese quarter—Chinatown as it is called—and saw all that was to be seen from the outside. The Chinese population in California numbers at this time 100,000 souls, 3,200 of whom dwell in San Francisco, occupying but six blocks of the part of the town they have appropriated to themselves. They live close, like bees in a hive; and as bees, they are industrious. There is said to be no trade or calling known among men, save only that of blacksmith, which has not its adepts among the dwellers of Chinatown. The Chinaman, though tolerated, favoured even in California as nowhere else in the States, is not permitted to become the possessor of freehold property; but, taking his houses upon long lease, he has contrived in many instances so to surround some big hotel, or better street, the objects of his ambition, as to drive away the white occupants and step quietly into their places. One hotel thus taken possession of is now the resort, workshop, and dwelling-place of no less than 600 of these busy bees. In the later part of this day we took a survey of the interior of one of their restaurants, and afterward found our way, by the paying of half-a-dollar, into a joss-house."

The inside of the restaurant did not justify the promise made from without. "I can imagine nothing short of being one of the 'useless mouths' of a city in a state of siege that could make me partake of any of the kickshaws of that devil's kitchen; even then I think I should have grace to prefer a more lingering death. Hashes of tubular organisms looking like earth-worms, birds of the size of chickens and the form of cranes made ready for the spit in the cruel mockery of flight, multifarious messes in little saucers, pots and pans, and refuse of all sorts mixed with shells having a fatal affinity with those of snails, must have sufficed to rebut any but an appetite to the manner born. I am afraid my polite endeavours to look pleased, as I walked from one table to the other and examined these dainties, were very unsuccessful; for the Chinamen watched my movements with angry eyes, and their loud voices bawling to each other in the harsh accents of the native tongue made me fear that we were hardly wise in having entered this elysium unattended. Be that as it may, the clamour and the odours exhaled drove us down the dirty stairs into the street quite as quickly as we had ascended."

The joss-house was not more fragrant than the eating-house, and the impure air was further loaded with the fumes of a not very aromatic incense. "We faced the darkness and endured the closeness, upheld by an irresistible curiosity. The Chinaman at the wicket had the dull eye and falling lip of what we had now learned to recognize as the 'opium face'; but he managed to pull himself together when we spoke to him, and to shout out a monosyllable which brought to our service that other one of the servants of the temple who was now our guide. This last had a very limited acquaintance with the English tongue, but we contrived to make out that the idol occupying the first shrine was the representative of one who in life had been an unsuccessful speculator. Passing on to other tabernacles, our attention was called to kings and emperors, black, white and red, and always three together; and in a shrine, shut in by a black veil, to a 'good woman,' to whom Oriental politeness had allowed a head. The 'good' lady, also making one of three, was seated between two others unaccommodated with characters. The last image to which we were introduced was that of an aged man, who had walked or crawled the earth for 150 years, and who possessed the power of imparting in some occult manner, the secret of longevity to his worshippers. At one of the tabernacles of the kings, by the side of the burning incense, we remarked a sort of doses of medicine to be taken in order to a cure of his particular malady. We made some attempts to extract from our guide the nature of his religious convictions; but he was either very reticent on the point, or his imperfect vocabulary was a bar to the exchange of abstract ideas."

From the joss-house they went to Chinese Alley, where they had the sad sight of several vacant girlish faces, hapless rather than unhappy, planted behind little latticed windows, and looking fair, with their glabrous black tresses and eyes aslant, upon the sunless background of their dens. "Here, as in China proper, where polygamy is and always has been in full force, the plea of Mormonism, that it is a preventive of prostitution, receives emphatic contradiction. We hurried from this hapless inferno, and, unattended as we were, thought it better not to venture into the opium dens, and indeed had seen enough of what was unsavoury, darksome and pestilent in Chinatown for one day. What strikes one as anomalous is the look of personal cleanliness and high-keeping of these ill-living Orientals. The barbers' shops, which abound in every street, are never without customers, whose figures are to be seen through window and door, with heads thrown back, resigned to the play of razor and tweezers and other mysterious little instruments, in all which they seem to find a kind of lazy delight. No well-licked puppy can look more sleek than these quaintly-dressed beings as they issue from under the hands of the professional manipulators, razed and plucked, with not a hair of shining pig-tail or interrogative eyebrow awry. We occasionally saw women of the decent classes, but not of that distinction which is marked by crippled feet, gliding or shuffling on their white-soled shoes, apparently unsoiled by the dirty street, passing on their way with a furtive air and look of haste, often beautifully dressed, and always with carefully arranged hair. But the most grotesque of all these figures were those of the little children, whose wadded garments made them as broad as they were long, and whose little pig-tails generally stood out on end. On the whole we did not regret the time passed in this transplanted portion of the Flowery Land, however villainous the perfume of many parts of it."

## GRANT'S DEFEAT OF JOHNSON'S PLOT.

THE December number of the *North American Review* contains a paper by Ex-Secretary Boutwell, on "Johnson's Plot and Motives." This interesting article makes Johnson's general position very clear, and probably establishes it about as it will go into history. Mr. Boutwell gives, also, a vivid account of General Grant's relation to the matter, and of his firm conduct, which had so much to do with defeating the Johnson policy and plot. Mr. Boutwell says:

Upon my arrival in Washington to attend the session of Congress which began December 3, 1866, I received a letter from Mr. Stanton asking me to call at the War Department at the earliest moment possible. I called without delay. He directed me to his private room, where he soon joined me.

Without preface he said: "I am more concerned for the fate of the country than I was at any time during the war." His exact words further I cannot recall, but he gave me to understand that the President had issued orders to officers of the army, of which neither he nor General Grant had knowledge, and that there was danger that General Grant would be sent away from Washington.

At the request of Mr. Stanton, I wrote at his dictation the substance of what afterward became the second section of the Army Appropriation Act, approved March 2, 1867.

In that section it was provided that the headquarters of the General of the Army should be at the City of Washington, and that he should not be detailed for service elsewhere except at his own request or by the previous approval of the Senate; that all orders and instructions relating to military operations issued by the President or Secretary of War should be issued through the General of the Army, or in case of his disability through the officer next in command; and, finally, that all orders issued in any other manner should be null and void, and that the officers issuing such orders, and all officers that might obey them, knowing that they had been issued in any other manner, should be alike guilty of a misdemeanor.

After the election of General Grant to the Presidency, he gave me an account of his interviews with President Johnson, in reference to the project of sending the General to Mexico in the autumn of 1866. It was in substance this: "At a casual meeting the President said, 'I may have occasion to ask you to go to Mexico.' I said in reply, 'I am so situated that it will not be convenient for me to leave.' Not many days after this conversation the President sent for me to come to his office. Upon my arrival I found Mr. Seward and the President. Mr. Seward opened his portfolio, and read a long paper addressed to me, and containing instructions for my guidance in Mexico. When Mr. Seward had concluded, I said to the President, 'You know I told you that it would not be convenient for me to go to Mexico.' The President then began to argue with me, and to urge. I as steadily resisted his arguments. The President grew warm; and finally, rising from his chair and striking the table violently with his fist, he said, 'I would like to know if there is an officer of the army who will not obey my orders!' I rose, took my hat in my hand, and said, 'I am an officer of the army, but I am a citizen also. The service you ask me to perform is a civil service, and, as a citizen, I may accept it or decline it; and I decline it.' I then left the room."

The distinction thus made by General Grant left to the President authority to assign him to duty as a soldier in any point within the United States that the President might select, and hence the solicitude of Mr. Stanton for the passage of the section in the Army Bill of the 2nd of March, 1867.

## THE DANISH CRISIS.

"SCANDINAVIA" has from time to time explained the state of social and political affairs which has necessarily led to the present crisis in Denmark. There are on one hand the classes formed under the absolute Government—a university-educated bureaucracy, with some feeble remnants of an aristocracy; on the other, the peasantry, labourers and yeoman proprietors, now well-to-do, but who were depressed into miserable serfs until the latter part of the last century. The liberal constitution of 1848, which was of the common European pattern, gave the power in the House of Commons, or "Folkething," to the peasants exclusively; while later a differently-organized Upper House, or "Landsting," with a majority of the higher and middle classes, was in sharp opposition to the "Folkething," and without the conciliatory provisions of the Swedish constitution in its provision for common preparatory committees and a joint vote in matters which, like those of the budget, must be decided. The present situation is a sufficient demonstration of the absolute necessity for trying a Parliamentary Government—a Government through the leaders of the majorities in the Chambers, and not simply through a Cabinet formed from one side of the Upper House. The recent attempt of a Copenhagen compositor to shoot Mr. Estrup is an isolated, unfortunate happening, not in the usual line of Danish character; but there undoubtedly exists such an increasing bitterness within the parties that it does not leave any other solution possible than a change of persons in the Government. The very fact that men originally liberal and popular can arrive at the present deadlock and arbitrary oppressive method of government, shows the necessity of recurring to the popular means: that of Parliamentary Government. There can be no doubt about the progress of democracy in the Scandinavian countries, but it is questionable whether the progress will be entirely salutary. The Norwegian democracy has not yet proven itself the most intelligent part of the nation. There is a general absence in all the countries of true, liberal ideas and practical common sense. Prominent authors continue to write in an impractical, pessimistic strain. Nothing would be more healthy in practice or in an intellectual way than a lively connection with the Anglo-Saxon nations, with all their individualism and practical freedom.—*Scandinavia.*