

Miscellaneous.

THE POPULATION OF CHINA:
LIFE ON THE WATERS.

The population of the Empire of China, according to official accounts which are considered credible by Sir John Bowring, her Majesty's Plenipotentiary to that Court, is upwards of three hundred and sixty millions of human beings, or at least one-third of the whole population of the globe. In 1655, it was reckoned about sixty millions, according to the history of this country, written by a Roman Catholic priest, Father Alvarez Semedo; so that, if this be true, the population has increased six fold in two hundred years. The support of this enormous population is a very serious consideration for the Imperial Government. Hence, as Sir John Bowring observes, "there is abundant evidence of the redundant population pressing more and more heavily upon that government, and suffering more and more severely from an inadequate supply of food. Though there are periods when extraordinary harvests enable the Chinese to transport rice (the principal food of the people), from one province to another, and sometimes even to foreign countries, yet of late the importations from foreign countries have been enormous, and China has drawn largely on the Straits, the Philippines, Siam, and other places to fill up a vast deficiency in supply. Famine has, notwithstanding, committed dreadful ravages, and the provisions of the Imperial granaries have been wholly inadequate to provide for the public wants. It is true that cultivation has been greatly interfered with by intestine disorders, and there has been much destruction by inundations, incendiarism, and other accidental or transitory causes; but without reference to these, I am disposed to believe that there is a greater increase in the population than in the home production of food for their use. It must be remembered, too, that while the race is augmenting, the causes which lead to the destruction of food—such as the overflow of rivers, fires, ravages of locusts, bad seasons, and other calamities—are, to a great extent, beyond the control of human exertion. It would be difficult to show what new element could be introduced which would raise up the native supply of food beyond its present productiveness, considering that hand husbandry has given to cultivation more of a horticultural than an agricultural character.

"The constant flow of emigration from China, contrasted with the complete absence of emigration into China, is striking evidence of the redundancy of the population. They crowd all the islands of the Indian Archipelago. In Java, we know, by a correct census, there are one hundred and thirty-six thousand. Cochin China teems with Chinese. Multitudes go to Australia, to the Philippines, to the Sandwich Islands, to the western coast of Central and Southern America; some have made their way to British India. The emigration to the British West Indies has been considerable—to the Havana, greater still. The annual arrivals in Singapore are estimated at an average of ten thousand, and two thousand is the number that are said annually to return to China.

"There is not only this enormous maritime emigration, but a considerable inland exodus of Chinese toward Manchuria and Tibet; and it may be added, that the large and fertile islands of Formosa and Hainan have been to a great extent won from the aborigines by successive inroads of Chinese settlers. Now, these are all males; there is not a woman to ten thousand men; yet this perpetual outflowing people seems in no respect to diminish the number of those who are left behind. Few Chinamen leave their country without a fixed purpose to return to worship in the ancestral hall—to bring sacrifices to the tombs of their fathers; but it may be doubted if one in ten revisits his native land. The loss of life from disease, from bad arrangements, from shipwreck, and other casualties, amounts to a frightful percentage on those who emigrate.

"The multitudes of persons who live by the fisheries in China afford evidence, not only that the land is cultivated to the greatest possible extent, but that it is insufficient to supply the necessities of the overflowing population; for agriculture is held in high honor in China, and the husbandman stands next in rank to the sage or literary man, in the social hierarchy. It has been supposed that nearly a tenth of the population derive their means of support from fisheries. Hundreds and thousands of boats crowd the whole coast of China, sometimes acting in communities, sometimes independent and isolated. Their is no species of craft by which a fish can be inveigled, which is not practiced with success in China—every variety of net, from vast seines, embracing miles, to the smallest

handnet in the care of a child. Fishing by night, and fishing by day—fishing by moonlight, by torchlight, and in utter darkness—fishing in boats of all sizes—fishing by those who are stationary on the rock by the seaside, and by those who are absent for weeks on the wildest of seas—fishing by cormorants—fishing by divers—fishing by lines, with baskets—and every imaginable decoy and device. There is no river which is not staked to assist the fisherman in his craft. There is no lake no pond, which is not crowded with fish. A piece of water is nearly as valuable as a field of fertile land. At day break every city is crowded with sellers of live fish, who carry their commodity in buckets of water, saving all they do not sell to be returned to the pond, or kept for another day's service. And the lakes and ponds of China, not only supply large provisions of fish, they produce considerable quantities of edible roots and seeds, which are largely consumed by the people. Among these, the esculent arum, the water chestnut (*scirpus tuberosus*), and the lotus (*pelumbum*), are the most remarkable.

"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—show to what an extent the land is crowded, and how inadequate it is to maintain the number of the soil. In the city of Canton alone, it is estimated that three hundred thousand persons (equal to about three fourths of the whole population of Philadelphia) dwell upon the surface of the river; and the boats, sometimes twenty or thirty deep, cover some miles, and have their wants supplied by ambulatory salesmen, who wend their way through every accessible passage. Of this vast population, some dwell in decorated river boats used for every purpose of life and festivity—for theatres—for concerts—for feasts—for gambling—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 laborers 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 inadequately 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 a hundred rowers, convey, with extraordinary rapidity, the more valuable cargoes from the inner warehouses 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 constructions of the remotest ages, to the fragile planks upon which the 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.

"Not only are land and water crowded with Chinese, but many dwell on artificial islands which float upon the lakes—lands with gardens and houses raised upon the rafters which the occupiers have bound together, and on which they cultivate what is needful for the supply of life's daily wants. They have their poultry and the vegetables for use, their flowers and their scrolls for ornament, their household gods for protection and worship. In all parts of China to which we have access, we find not only that every foot of ground is cultivated—which is capable of producing anything, but that from the value of land and the surplus of labor, cultivation is rather that of gardeners than husbandmen. The sides of hills, their natural declivity often unavailable, are by a succession of artificial terraces turned to a profitable account. Every little bit of soil, though it be only a few feet in length and breadth, is turned to account; and not only is the surface of the land thus cared for, but every device is employed for the gathering together of every article that can serve for manure. Scavengers are constantly clearing the streets of the stercoraceous filth, the cloacae are formed by speculators in human ordures, the most populous places are often offensive by the means taken to prevent the precious deposits from being lost. The fields in China have almost always large earthenware vessels for the reception of the contributions of the peasant or the traveller. You cannot enter any of their great cities without meeting multitudes of men, women, and children conveying liquid manure into the fields and gardens around. The stimulants to production are applied with most untiring industry. In this colony of Hong Kong

I scarcely ever ride out without finding some little bit of ground either newly cultivated or clearing for cultivation. Attention to the soil—not only to make it productive, but as much productive as possible—is inculcated as a political and social duty. One of the most admired sages of China (Yung-chin) says:—"Let there be no uncultivated spot in the country—no unemployed person in the city;" and the fourth maxim of the sacred edict of Kang-hi, which is required to be read through the empire on the 1st and 15th day of every moon, in the presence of all the officers of State, is to the following effect:—"Let husbandry occupy the principal place, and the culture of the mulberry tree, so that there may be a sufficient supply of food and clothing." Shin Nung, the name of one of the most ancient and honored of the Chinese Emperors, means 'the Divine Husbandman.'

MY FIRST STOVEPIPE.

I was seventeen years of age—that age of "betweenness" in which we are neither boys nor men,—when, with a boyish appearance and mien, the youthful aspirant to manhood assumes, or rather apes, a manly demeanor and a manly dress, and earnestly watches for the first dawn of a moustache. I say I was at this uncertain period of my existence when I first became acquainted with Eloise Lucy. She was at a boarding-school in the city in which I live, to which my sister also went. I was staying with my uncle, and learning the first principles of business in his office.

It was at my uncle's house that I first met Eloise. I cannot describe the thrill which passed through me, when I went home one evening from the office and found her sitting with my sister in the parlor. It was the first time I had ever seen her. But when I was introduced, and fancied I saw a slight flash of pleasure in her beautiful face, I at once felt that I was in love with her. We were evidently intended for each other.

I will not relate how very attentive I was thereafter; how very particular I became in my dress (much to my uncle's disgust); how I accidentally appeared round some corner whenever she took a walk, ready to escort her, and how confident I was that she was as much in love with me as I was with her. In fact, I made up my mind, before the second month of our acquaintance was over, to tell her so on the first opportunity; when it occurred to me that a young man of my age, contemplating an avowal of love, ought now to throw away the boyish cap, and take to the more manly hat. The thought no sooner struck me than I carried it into execution. I went immediately to a hatter's.—There was every description of style: the low crown with the broad brim; the crown running up straight, or with a graceful wave; the rim turned down behind and in front, and up at the sides, or down at the sides and straight elsewhere. I was perfectly bewildered and unable to choose. I had never thought beavers were capable of such a variety of shapes. At length the hatter produced from the window a hat, in the band of which stuck a card, which bore in flaming characters the words, "Young Gent's Style." It fitted to a T; it was the very thing. I determined to wear it home, and kept it on my head, directing the man to send my old cap to my uncle's. He went to the other end of the shop for a piece of paper to take down the address. I was impatient, and could not await his tardy movements; so, leaving him to trust to his memory for the address, I hurried out of the shop. I was no sooner in the street than it was evident that I was producing a sensation. The gentlemen stopped to look, and intensely examine the shape; the ladies smiled and looked askance—I flattered myself it was very becoming. I had not gone far when I perceived, in front of me, Eloise Lucy, walking alone. My heart beat high as I stepped up and, for the first time, lifted the shining beaver (rather awkwardly, I imagine,) from my head.—Eloise colored, but at the same time there appeared to be a quizzical smile on her face which I did not like. Every now and then, as we walked along, I detected her looking at my new head-piece; and there was a twitching in the corners of her pretty mouth, and a twinkling in her blue eye, which smacked of ridicule. I saw her to the school door, and, leaving her, bent my steps towards home. At the corner were several little urchins playing with marbles. As I approached they stopped their play, and leaned with their backs against the wall to watch me pass.

"Bills!" cried one, "look at stovepipe Jim."

"By Joe, yes! he's a advertise' for a hatter."

A thought flashed across me in an instant. I tore the beaver from my head—the sensation in the street, the hidden laughter of Eloise, was explained. On the front of the hat was a card in horrid distinctness—the words "Young Gent's Style." I crushed the accursed thing under my arm, and, regardless of the laughter of the boys, rushed home.

My mortification was without bounds. I threw the innocent cause of my anger to the other end of the room. I vowed I would never wear it again. When I became cooler, however, I took the common-sense view of the occurrence. It was an accident beyond my own control, and I was sure Eloise would not think the less of me after it. I straightened the hat out again.

The next day was Sunday. After having slept over it, I thought no more of the occurrence; I should see Eloise at church, and would then explain it to her. I was longer than usual in making my toilet this morning, and the other members of the family went without me.

I arrived at church during the singing, when all were standing up. The pew in which my uncle sat was directly in front of the one occupied by the boarding-school. I walked in, put my beaver carefully on the seat, and joined in the hymn. The singing was over, and I sat down—horrors! I came on something which yielded to my weight and cracked like pasteboard—my hat! I had forgotten that was on the seat. I pulled it from under me, but it was as flat as a pancake! A sound of smothered laughter came from behind; and then—yes, Eloise was almost dying with attempts to conceal her laughter. It was enough. I caught up the pancake of pasteboard, and hurried from the church.

THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T PAY HIS FARE.—The authenticity of the following "river item" is vouched for by a gentleman who was an eye-witness to it. It appears that a new second clerk had just been engaged by the steamer in question, who was anxious to please, and accordingly determined to distinguish himself by a rigid discharge of his duties on his first trip. When he entered the engine-room on his collecting tour, he found seated a number of men, all apparently belonging to the troublesome class of "dockers." Approaching one of them who was arrayed in a check shirt and an old white hat, the clerk demanded his fare. The fellow appeared somewhat confused, but finally very seriously proceeded to inform the clerk he had no money. The latter, naturally indignant at this palpable attempt to practice on his innocence, demanded how he expected to travel on a steamboat without money. The man answered imploringly, "Sure and mebbe yer honor would be kind enough to let a poor man ride a few miles for nothing." His honor, however, was not to be blarneyed. He was convinced that the fellow had money, and persisted in his demands, the other repeating his protestations and entreaties. After affairs had been in this posture for some minutes, the refractory passenger picked up a stick and touched the cock of the boiler. "Stop that!" thundered the clerk, "the engineer will throw you overboard if he catches you at that!" The fellow desisted, with great seeming contrition, and the clerk, determining to waste no more words on him, collared him and led him forward to the captain. "Captain," said he, "I wish you'd land and put this fellow ashore! He has no money; or, if he has, he won't pay." To his amazement, the only reply was a vociferous peal of laughter. He loosened his hold and looked at the captain for an explanation of this novel mode of treating such a communication. "Why," said the latter, about dying with laughter, "he's the engineer."—*Missouri Democrat.*

WIDOWS' WEEDS.—A friend tells us that, some dozen or fifteen years ago, when he had the "melancholy duty" to stand behind the counter in a country shop, dealing out the "best-selected stock west of the Alleghanies," he was once brought very suddenly to a state of unutterable wonderment. A youthful and pretty woman, robed in deep black, approached him, and asked to look at his "Glean of Comfort."

"At what, madame?" said he, puzzled, confounded and confused at what appeared to him a singular request.

"Glean of Comfort, young man; haven't you it, or don't you know what it is?" said the lady.

"Yes, madame, most likely we have it. What is it like—is it dry goods or groceries?"

"Dry goods or groceries!" echoed the lady, looking at our friend in a way that made him feel decidedly uncomfortable. "Sir, it is a mourning calliope of the second grade, for widows of three weeks. It is well known, sir, with us in the city. I am astonished at your ignorance."

The frightened young man could only stammer out, "they hadn't any of that particular kind."

Intelligent conversation is the great charm of man, the finest solace of intellectual labors, and the simplest yet most effectual and delightful mode of at once resting and invigorating the mind, whether tired by study or depressed by struggles with fortune.

Beef steak of the best quality is selling in Boston at 25 cents per pound.