

STUDENT AND EXECUTIONER.

Two Chinese Institutions Vividly Described—A Rigid Examination—Horror of the Canton Execution Ground.

Rev. Selah Brown, in his travels through China, thus describes in a letter to the *Troy Times*, two places of interest in Canton. On the eastern side of Canton is "Examination Hall," a place of extraordinary interest and excitement. Here an enclosure of about twelve acres, entirely surrounded by a high wall, is set apart for a triennial competitive examination in the Chinese classics. Every third year about 10,000 students, young and old, who have already passed a first examination, assemble here to pass the rigid ordeal of a second trial. So great is the excitement that sometimes students are crazed, some even commit suicide, and others die from sheer nervous exhaustion. When one dies in his cell a hole is cut through the wall and the corpse put outside, as it is considered unlucky and unlawful to carry the corpse through the door. On these grounds are large buildings for the examiners, and nearly 10,000 little brick cells only three feet wide and five feet long, for the students. No furniture is allowed in the cells except a rough board seat, and a rough board shelf on which to write. Each student has one of the cells, in which he is guarded as though a prisoner. He is searched as he enters, lest he have some papers to help him in his assigned task, then he is closely watched, day and night, by policemen, and the policemen are watched by other guards.

During the two or three days and nights in which the student is confined he must write an essay on which depends his promotion. The subject is given after the competitor has entered the cell. Each student is provided with pen, ink and paper, and a little food and bedding, but is not permitted to have any books or helps of any kind. His memory must be his only dependence. No friends or servants are allowed to accompany him, and he must not even speak to his fellow-students. The student who passes a successful examination meets with great congratulation, and splendid ovations, for he is on the highway to fortune and honor, both for himself and his friends. Only about 100 in 10,000 succeed in getting the "degree;" the other 9,900 must wait three years, then try again. Even the successful ones must pass a third examination at Peking, the capital. In this competition there are three examinations, and three degrees given. The first examination is in the district college. The second in the provincial college. The third is in the imperial university at Peking. The first degree is B. A., which does not mean, as in America, bachelor of arts, but beautiful ability. The second degree is A. M., not master of arts, but advanced men. The third degree, LL. D., can only be had at the capital of the empire. The few who pass a successful three-fold examination, and gain the three-fold degrees, stand very high in the estimation of the emperor and the government, and from their number all appointments for public office are made. So great is the honor of success that men will try from youth to old age, failing and trying again a score of times. Sometimes a father, son and grandson are found at the same examination. This system has been observed for many centuries in China, and has a very important place in the social and political economy of the empire.

From Examination Hall we went to that terrible acclama, the "execution ground," in the southeast corner of the city. One can hardly look without a shudder on the spot where so many thousands have been beheaded. In a little open space not more than twenty feet wide and 100 feet long more human blood has flowed than on any other place of the same size round the world. From ten to fifty are generally executed at a time. Sometimes the executions amount to several hundred annually. During war times 500,000 have been beheaded on this Golgotha in a single year. One missionary said he had seen 200 headless bodies lying here at once. The victims are ordered to kneel down, the heads are stretched forward, then one blow of the short, heavy, sharp sword of the executioner cleaves the neck, and the guilty wretches lay weltering in their blood. The bodies are given to friends, the government keeping the heads, which are sometimes exposed in public places, but generally they are put in stone jars, sprinkled with quicklime, then sealed up with plaster. On going up to a row of these jars, a Chinaman ventured to open one for our inspection. One glance at the ghastly gory heads within was enough. From among the human bones that lay around I picked up and brought away a complete lower jaw, which plainly shows the gash of the sharp sword of the executioner. Leaning against the wall of the execution ground were several rude crosses, on which criminals of great enormity

are tied, naked, while their bodies are cut to pieces with sharp swords or knives. A slice is taken from each arm, then from each leg, and from the breast; finally a mortal stab is given to the heart.

Hibernating Animals.

The badger, dormouse, porcupine, hamster and many others enter more or less into this strange condition of hibernation, while the cases of partial hibernation are extremely common, bears having been found buried in the snow for weeks, and even sheep have shared the same fate without injury. The dormouse erects its winter home of various grasses four or five feet from the ground, and so skillfully are they interwoven and joined together that the closest discernment is necessary to distinguish the entrance—that, indeed, is only known to the animal itself. Soft mosses line the home, among which the sleepers lie until early spring, often awakening while snow is yet upon the ground. From now until warmer days they merely sleep, awakening from time to time to feed from a store of nuts laid up for the occasion. In southern countries, where the intense heat is as fatal to animal life as the lowering temperature of the far north or south, a similar condition is entered into by many animals, known as aestivation. In cold lecting about Bahia Blanca, in September, Darwin unearthed spiders, lizards, and toads, all in a lethargic condition. A week later they began to appear of their own accord, and three days before the equinox all nature was prepared to greet it. Many alligators and crocodiles pass the dry periods in a similar manner. The mud cases of the marsh crocodile are often found in Ceylon, and have been taken out perfect casts of the animal, telling the story of its hibernation. This habit of the crocodile has been the cause in various countries, especially Ceylon, of ludicrous incidents. In one, an English officer had retired to his tent, which suddenly rose in air, with all its furniture, out of the wreck of which appeared an awakened crocodile that was here hibernating, the fire built without having, perhaps, disturbed its repose, to the astonishment and confusion of campers-out. The yellow snake of Jamaica, that attains a length of twenty feet, excavates a burrow for purposes of partial hibernation, while our snakes of the north are well known to pass the entire winter in the deepest sleep. Among the vertebrate sleepers of the south is found the tanrec of Madagascar, that, burrowed in the sand, sleeps away three months of the year. With hardly an exception, the mollusks of the Mediterranean provinces lie dormant throughout the summer. Many fishes are perfect hibernators, lying in the mud during the cold season, or, in the south, passing the season of drought in sun baked cases, in almost perfect sleep. Not only during one season is this kept up, but several, and, in India, ponds that have been dry for extended periods, when filled, were, as if by magic, populated with the awakened finny sleepers.

Are not our trees in winter sleeping? The sap has ceased to flow, their growth has stopped, and all their functions are at rest. Seeds lie dormant for years. Corn taken from the Aztec tombs has been awakened (?) in the present decade, a process analogous to the awakening of animal life from summer and winter sleep.—*New York Evening Post.*

Sixty Years of Service.

A little old man wearing the postal uniform may be seen daily at the railroad station in Louisville, Ky., busily sorting the mail. His name is Charles C. Green, and he has been in the postal service since 1824. His interest and share in the distribution of the mail began, however, in 1815, when he helped to deliver to his father's neighbors printed slips announcing the battle of New Orleans. "We have all heard," he said the other day to a reporter, "that a battle had been fought but had no particulars. On a certain bright, clear morning, when the snow covered the ground as far as the eye could reach, we awaited the coming of the mail carrier with his pack-horse. Before he came in sight the stillness of the air was broken by cries of 'Good news! Good news!' People were waiting all along the road for the approach of the bearer of the news. There had been printed at the office of the old *Lexington Gazette* a number of slips of paper containing the details of the battle, and the mail carrier was distributing these broadcast. I was commissioned by my father to carry a number of the neighbors living around. I had never worn a pair of shoes then, and I tramped about the neighborhood that day in the snow, my trousers rolled up to the knees, with never a thought of discomfort."

Manila, and the province of which it is the capital, had 25,000 deaths from cholera last fall.

THE LAND OF THE AZTECS.

A Pen Picture of the Mexican Capital—Street Nomenclature, Stores, Etc.

A city of Mexico letter to the *New Orleans Democrat*, says: Nothing can be more beautiful than the situation of this city, which, with its magnificent diadem of mountains, stands crowned the queen of the Western continent. Look on every side and you will see only a different aspect of the same grand panorama, with not one item that is low and commonplace, but all planned on the same gigantic scale. At the end of almost every street there is a vision of mountain and cloud, with sunlight tracing its magic figures upon them, and even in the most squalid parts of the city you have only to look a little beyond and the eye is sure to rest upon some lovely embodiment of nature. The plan of the city is worthy of the great conqueror who laid it out and who seems to have left the impress of his iron character upon its solid edifices. As Prescott says: "The massive grandeur of the few buildings that remain of the primitive period and the general magnificence and symmetry of its plan attest the farsighted policy of its founder, which looked beyond the present to the wants of coming generations." It is built in the form of a square, the principal streets radiating from the Zocalo or Plaza de Armas, and so regularly do they run that the eye can follow their course almost to the extreme limits of the city. There are very few winding ways and narrow, dingy looking alleys, and even the unsightliest quarters are redeemed from ugliness by a certain air of picturesqueness, which is heightened by the romantic and historical associations connected with nearly every spot. The main objection to the streets is the narrowness of the sidewalks; on many of them only two persons can comfortably walk abreast, and in order to avoid the press of the crowd, one is often obliged to step out into the street and trot along with the burras.

There is another respect in which the streets might be improved, and that is in regard to their nomenclature. Each block bears a separate name, and as they are all selected at random, to remember them is a task too great for an ordinary memory. For instance, when you have once fixed in your mind that a certain dry goods store in Calle de San Francisco, if you wish to recollect the position of a millinery establishment a few steps further on the next block, you must associate it with the new title of Calle de Plateras, and so on, until it is a miracle if you do not end by forgetting the position of your own dwelling. Speaking of stores reminds us of another peculiarity, which is that the great majority of shops, instead of bearing the names of their owners, are adorned with fancy appellations, some of them more romantic than appropriate. A pulqueria, or pulque shop, for example, rejoices in the title of the "Sun of May," a grocery store bears the announcement that "The Sun Shines for All," while the principal dry goods emporium is known by the double designation of the "Surprise and Spring." Such names as the "Republic," "Progress," "Destiny," etc., are met with on every hand, while you may stumble across a butcher shop devoted to "Providence," a bakery to the "Holy Spirit," or a dulceria to the "Hope of Mary."

We must confess a feeling of disappointment in regard to the general appearance of the stores, for they are exceedingly small and cramped, the largest being but pigmies compared with such mammoth establishments as those of New Orleans. The windows display tempting wares arranged with great skill and taste, particularly in the line of jewelry and silk, but everything seems to be on a diminutive scale, and we have been puzzling our brains to know why the Mexicans should insist upon calling their city the Paris of America, for it must require a vivid imagination or a magnifying glass of great power to detect in the one-storied box-like buildings devoted to merchandise, any resemblance to the magnificent stores in that fashion center of the world.

It is a relief to turn from these haunts of traffic, and to let your eyes rest upon the abodes of men, for Mexican dwellings have a character peculiar to themselves, an individuality that distinguishes them from anything belonging to America or Europe. You could hardly call it beauty, for from the outside you only see flat surfaces, which would be monotonous were it not for the innumerable little balconies that project from beneath each window. And yet like certain faces which, though homely in feature, exercise a kind of fascination from their originality of expression, these long lines of gray stone mansions grow upon you until you are forced to acknowledge that no other style would be so appropriate to the grand type of the place. Sunshine

and shadow seem to struggle in the peculiar color of the stone of which the houses are constructed, and their squareness gives an idea of strength and solidity impossible to describe. Strange to an American are the terraced roofs and the absence of chimneys, that in our own land play so prominent a part in marring the landscape. There are no trees along the streets except on the Paseo, and the want of them is scarcely felt, for you imagine somehow that they would be out of place beside the massive monuments that fasten the attention on all sides.

Success in Life.

Without unremitting labor, success in life, whatever our occupation, is impossible. A fortune is not made without toil, and money unearned comes to few. The habitual loiterer never brings anything to pass. The young men whom you see lounging about waiting for the weather to change before they go to work, break down before they begin—get stuck before they start. Ability and willingness to labor are the two great conditions of success. It is useless to work an electrical machine in a vacuum, but the air may be full of electricity, and still you can draw no spark until you turn the machine. The beautiful statue may exist in the artist's brain, and it may also be said in a certain sense to exist in the marble block that stands before him, but he must bring both his brains and his hands to bear upon the marble, and work hard and long, in order to produce any practical result. Success also depends in a good measure upon the man's promptness to take advantage of the rise of the tide. A great deal of what we call "luck" is nothing more nor less than this: It is the man who keeps his eyes open, and his hands out of his pockets, that succeeds. "I missed my chance," exclaims the disappointed man, when he sees another catch eagerly at the opportunity. But something more than alertness is needed; we must know how to avail ourselves of the emergency. An elastic temperament, which never seems to recognize the fact of defeat, or forgets it at once and begins the work over again, is very likely to ensure success. Many a great orator has made a terrible break-down in his maiden speech. Many a merchant loses one fortune only to build up another and a larger one. Many an inventor fails in his first efforts, and is at last rewarded with a splendid triumph. Some of the most popular novelists wrote very poor stuff in the beginning. They were learning their trade, and could not expect to turn out first-class work until their apprenticeship is over. One great secret of success is not to become discouraged, but always be ready to try again.

A Korean Metropolis.

Describing Wonsan, a leading city of Korea, a British officer says: One main street, of some ten or twelve feet in width, winds through it from end to end, and into this opens numerous narrow and crooked alleys. The Koreans dislike our entering these lanes; no doubt, because in passing along them one is apt to surprise their woman whose delicacy is shocked by the near approach of a foreigner. In only two or three shops were there any European goods exposed for sale. Road-making at Wonsan consists in filling up the hollows with soft earth, and there seem to be no arrangements whatever for cleaning the streets. There are numerous pig-styes in front of the houses in the main street, and the passenger is constantly in danger of stumbling over their occupants. Almost the only pleasant thing to look at is the luxuriant growth of melon and pumpkin with gray fruit and white orange blossoms, showing amid a mass of green leaves, which cover many of the houses. The clothing and personal appearance of the inhabitants contrast favorably with the aspects of the towns. Nearly every one is decently dressed, and a really well-dressed Korean, in his broad hat and white robes, has an eminently respectable, well-to-do appearance. The Japanese settlement of Wonsan is on the western side of the bay, opposite to the island of Changdodo, and about a mile from the western end of the native town of Wonsan. The settlement is infested with Korean thieves, who rob the godowns of the Japanese by picking the locks or removing the foundation stones, and the markets at Wonsan are also said to swarm with them. Tigers abound in the neighboring mountains, and last year two Koreans were carried off by these animals from the immediate neighborhood of the settlement.

Chicago, with sixty square miles of territory and 600,000 people, has only 444 policemen, about 250 being available for night service.

Forty-nine electric light companies, with \$81,390,000 capital, were set agoing in Great Britain last year.

TOPICS OF THE DAY.

He heapeth up riches and another man shall gather them. The youngest bank president in New York, worth \$2,000,000, recently died at the age of thirty; and a man named John Day, who set up a drinking saloon along a Colorado road of fifty miles, which previously had none, soon filled a big tin box with gold; but the other morning he was found with half-a-dozen ounces of lead in his head and his gold all gone.

An association has been formed in New York city for the purpose of promoting by legislative and other measures the restoration and improvement of the scenery of Niagra Falls in accordance with the plan which was approved by the State assembly in 1850, but failed in the senate. It is proposed to have the State purchase enough land about the Fall to preserve the natural scenery, and to co-operate with Canada for that purpose.

There is a soldier in England who has been able to observe nearly all the fighting in which his nation has been engaged since the present century came in. He is General George McDonald, still in the service as colonel of the Bedfordshire regiment, and has just passed his ninety-eighth birthday. In the year of Trafalgar, 1805, he was an ensign, and 1812 saw him at the siege of Tarragona, in Spain. Two years later he was in Canada, but got back to Europe for Waterloo, where he took three wounds. During the peace that followed he filled civil offices in the colonies, and in the recent campaign he has taken the lively interest of the veteran who can tell "how fields are won."

Philadelphia has a co-operative store with a present capital of \$66,650 and real estate worth \$20,000. It pays an annual dividend to its shareholders of six per cent, and returns quarterly to customers from four to nine per cent, on their purchases. The manager says that the whole secret of success in co-operation is to start on a small scale and extend the business slowly. To this rule he attributes the success of the venture. It was begun eight years ago by several men who worked in a factory, and thought it would be a good idea to cheapen provisions by buying in lots and then dividing. They formed a little society, and kept their stock in a room of a member's residence. Next they hired a small store, and from that the business has grown to annual sales aggregating \$250,000.

When Mr. Hitt, American secretary of legation at Paris, introduced Governor Hendricks to Gambetta as his good friend, the French orator and statesman was greatly puzzled. "Why," said he, "you belong to different parties?" "Yes," said Mr. Hendricks, "some of my warmest personal friendships are among my political opponents." "And that is common in your country?" asked Gambetta. "Nothing more so," remarked Governor Hendricks. "There," said Gambetta, "is the ideal republic." Gambetta's appreciation of a political state of affairs in which political opponents can express their differences without shooting one another's head off or running swords through one another's body, betrayed itself in his own growing moderation of tone and his good sense in subduing the passionate radicalism of his party.

Mr. Gunderson, vice-consul for Sweden and Norway, at Bordeaux, France, has hit upon a novel way of sending messages from the sea. The ancient bottle is always liable to broakage, and the recent pretty inventions of tin ships or buoys are found too expensive and troublesome in practice. Mr. Gunderson employs the small colored balloons made for children, which cost only a shilling a dozen and can be carried empty. He puts the message inside, and throws the inflated balloon overboard. It travels rapidly before the wind, keeps the message perfectly dry, and is a striking object at some distance—a great advantage as regards the chance of being picked up. One was recently tried, with a letter inside, off Dover, where one of the inventor's ships was aground, and two hours afterward the letter was posted in Dover by an unknown hand.

Two locally famous dogs died a short time since. One was an English pointer that caught in its mouth a canary on the fly (out of its cage) by leaping four feet into the air, but without hurting the bird or ruffling a feather. The other was a Philadelphia watch-dog that attacked every policeman he saw, once damaging one very seriously by taking a big piece out of him, and chewing his calf. He was owned in Disston's saw factory, and if he found the men loading around outside of their workshops he would drive them back. He knew the steel melters

from the other workmen, and had a special grudge against them. He caught two of them in the warehouses one day, chased them on to the counters and kept them there. He got a bite out of two men who leaped the fence to see the factory when it caught fire; went for the cashier of the establishment when he came down stairs after hours one evening; the cashier fought him with a chair until there was only one round left in his hands whereas the dog was good for several rounds more, but was very luckily, driven off by the watchman; while a countryman who came into the warehouse one day when no one was there, and dropped his hat, had to walk backward the whole length of the store, kicking his hat as he went, the dog refusing to permit him to stoop and pick him up.

The frequent earthquake shocks which have occurred so far this year, both in America and Europe, leads the *New York Sun* to say: "These disturbances of the earth's crust, occurring in rapid succession, attract attention to the theory that earthquakes are sometimes, at least, the result of causes affecting a large portion of the earth, or perhaps the whole globe. Various so-called earthquake cycles have been pointed out, but it cannot be said that any one of them has been satisfactorily established. It is impossible to predict earthquakes, and the utmost that careful observation has so far proved is that there are certain periods when earthquakes are unusually numerous. All sorts of theories have been invented to account for these periodic disturbances of the earth. Some have ascribed earthquakes to the influence of comets, although the idea is about as well founded as that of the astrologers that comets foretell wars and famines. Others have thought that earthquakes may result from the varying force of attraction of the sun, the moon, and the other planets upon the earth. There is, at least, some appearance of plausibility in this theory, but the whole question is yet open, and a great deal more information is needed before it can be in any degree settled. There is, perhaps, no other display of natural forces, not even excepting volcanic eruptions, so frightful as a great earthquake. Earthquakes have destroyed many thousands of human beings and laid waste whole cities and provinces. They are entirely beyond human control, and experience has shown that they are just as likely to occur now as they were centuries ago. The questions what causes them, and is there any means of foreseeing their visitations, are therefore of great interest, and we have reason to be thankful that in this part of the world the solid ground is not often shaken, and that when an earthquake shock is felt it does little damage."

Men's Brains.

The human brain is absolutely bigger and heavier than that of any animal except the elephant and the larger whales, but in no other animal is there so great variation in brain weights of different individuals as in man, and it is perhaps a curious fact that the higher the civilization the wider the variation. That is to say, the brain weight in savage races is more nearly uniform than in enlightened nations. While in a general way the average weight of the brain is greater in civilized races, it does not at all follow that the size of the brain is an indication of the degree of intelligence. The average weight of the adult European male brain is forty-nine to fifty ounces. That of the female is forty-four to forty-five ounces, the difference being fully ten per cent. Statistics for America very nearly coincide with this result. There are examples of men of remarkable intellectual attainments whose brains have largely exceeded the average, as Currier, sixty-four and a half ounces, and Dr. Abercrombie, sixty-three ounces. Daniel Webster also had a very large brain. That of Agassiz weighed fifty-three and a half ounces, not very much above the average. On the other hand, high brain weights have also been found where there was no evidence of superior intellectual capacity. In an English insane asylum nearly ten per cent. of the cases examined showed a brain weight of over fifty-five ounces. An excessively small brain indicates feeble intellect, and an abnormally large one may indicate the same. Between the extremes there is a wide range, in which it is evident that intellectual power is more dependent on quality than quantity of brain matter. But it is estimated by several competent authorities that in an adult male of anything approaching average size, a brain less than thirty-seven ounces is usually associated with imbecility. In other words, a brain of less than that weight will not confer the reasoning faculty in the civilized Caucasian, though in uncivilized man a rude intelligence may spring from a brain of thirty ounces.—*St. Louis Re-publican.*