

With hands locked close and warm,
 They try the bitter storm
 That threatens them, with smiles to brave in vain.
 This hour they know the last !
 Dead is their lovely past ;
 The future holds but parting, tears, and pain.

Long is the last hand-clasp ;
 And sharp the anguish vast
 Which swells in either grieving, loving heart.
 Pale is each tear-wet cheek,
 White are the lips that meet
 In one long kiss with which for life they part.

VII.

But God is good, indeed !
 Another picture pleads
 For one fond glance from eyes that love it well.
 Again the two have met,
 Young, trusting, hopeful, yet
 Still bound by Love's enchanting, mystic spell.

Eyes glint with perfect joy,
 Whose gold holds no alloy,
 And tell a tale the lips would fain repeat.
 And laughter ripples soft
 From lips that tremble oft ;
 And every moment holds a store of sweets.

VIII.

And next a home-like room !
 The twilight 'purpled gloom
 Dispelled by gleams from glowing open fire.
 And in the radiance warm,
 Again the coupled forms,
 Which make one shadow as the flames leap higher.

Like this there many are ;
 Ranged orderly and far
 Adown fair mem'ry's arched, rose-tinted hall ;
 Each done in colors bright,
 Tints soft and rich and light,
 Love's witching radiance shining o'er them all.

IX.

And then, one picture more !
 A parting at the door,
 A kiss received with scarce a cold return ;
 Averted head and glance,
 Distrust for confidence,
 Seed sown for sharp regret and sorrow stern.

X.

But one which ends the list,
 Redeems the last, I wist !
 'Tis Christmas eve, and sweetly chime the bells ;
 The maiden bends above
 A gift from him she loves,
 And which each vestige of distrust dispels.

It speaks so sweetly strong
 Of what she doubted long—
 Continued love, remembrance fond and kind,

Deep 'neath oblivion's dust,
 She hides the late distrust,
 True confidence and love fill heart and mind.

In mem'ry's chamber bright,
 I've lingered long to-night ;
 Each picture stamped anew upon my heart,
 Which fills with longing pain
 To see thy face again,
 Before we meet above, no more to part.

How sad and dark is life !
 With how much sorrow rife,
 To those whom fate holds far apart, for aye ;
 Who watch, with dimming eyes,
 The star of love arise,
 To only pale as fades the golden day.

Sad, sad the loving hearts,
 And many—kept apart
 By circumstance, and barriers none may leap ;
 To whom love's joys are known
 In mem'ry's halls alone,
 Where hang the pictures Retrospection keeps.

A Doleful Subject.

THE Chinese, by way of making themselves agreeable to their aged relatives, sometimes present them on their birthday with a coffin. That these venerable almond-eyed celestials receive the gift joyfully, is somewhat doubtful ; such reminders not being calculated to raise the spirits even of an aged Chinaman.

The Egyptians had an unpleasant way of keeping their dead about them for as long a time as a year, before they buried them. After they were returned from the embalmer's, a room was set apart for them, and they were placed against the wall. Sometimes they were even carried to the table. They tried to make their tombs as agreeable as circumstances would allow, by ornamenting them with paintings and sculpture ; but they gave them the discouraging name of "eternal habitations."

The Turks are buried without a coffin, and are carried to the grave on the shoulders of bearers. They are buried at the hour of prayer, either morning or evening. Friday, the Moslem Sabbath, is the women's day of mourning, when they plant the jasmine or rose, in small saucers, on the graves. Frequently a stone turban is placed on the tomb.

At one period, even in England, persons were not buried in coffins. It was not until the reign of Henry III. that they came into general use ; previous to this date, they were confined to persons of rank. Royal coffins were generally lined with lead.

Shrouds, as we understand them, were not in use. The body was wrapped in a waxed cloth, called a cere-cloth. When Philip, Duke of Burgundy, died, he was wrapped in thirty-two ells of cere-cloth. The body of Edward I. was wrapped so closely in cere-cloth, that when his grave was opened his features were found impressed on the cloth. Thomas Graham, apothecary to George II., furnished "fine double cere-cloth" in which to wrap the king. An act, passed in the reign of Charles II., prohibited shrouds to be made of anything but woolen. An affidavit had to be taken that the deceased "was buried in woolen, and nothing but woolen."

Some people have shown very singular ideas about their burial, and a resolution to have things their own way to the

very last. A Mr. Thompson, who died in 1784, in England, was buried by his own request, as follows: His coffin was without ornamentation; he was attired in a flannel shirt two yards long; a strip of the same was wound around his neck, and after he was placed in his coffin, two yards of plaid flannel was thrown over him. Around the middle of the coffin three iron hoops were placed, and the same at the head and feet; in each hoop an iron ring was inserted to put the ropes in by which the coffin was to be lowered into the grave.

A man who was not afraid of his own coffin, was John Oliver, who died in England, in 1710. He erected his tomb thirty years before he needed it, and kept his coffin, which was painted white, under his bed. The body was borne to the grave by eight men dressed in white; a girl eight years old read the burial service, and afterward a sermon was delivered from the tomb.

Abraham Simmonds, who died in 1828, in England, desired that his body should be wrapped in a blanket, and that he should be buried in the garden or orchard attached to his house. He also wished that when his favorite dog died it should be buried in the grave with him.

Mrs. Margaret Thompson, of England, who was addicted to the use of snuff, could imagine nothing more delightful than to be in an atmosphere of this pungent powder when carried to her grave. She left in her will that all her unwashed handkerchiefs should be placed in her coffin, and that the best Scotch snuff should be sprinkled over her body, as the perfume of snuff was more refreshing than that of flowers. Six men, known to be great snuff-takers, were to bear her to the grave, wearing snuff-colored hats, which were to be given to them. Six maidens were to bear her pall, each bearing a box of snuff, which they were to "take for their refreshment" as they went along. The minister was to accompany the funeral procession, and refresh himself also by taking snuff, but he was not to exceed a pound. Should he comply with this request, she bequeathed him five guineas. Sarah Stuart, her old servant, was to walk ahead of the corpse and strew on the ground every twenty yards a handful of snuff, and two bushels of "this grand cordial of nature," as she called it, were to be scattered before the door of her house. That there was more sneezing than weeping at this funeral can very well be imagined.

An iron founder, John Wilkinson, of England, seemed, as Shakespeare says, to find it "metal most attractive," for he had an immense iron tombstone, designed by himself, the weight of which was twenty tons. He took much pleasure in exhibiting his iron coffin to his friends, and when disposed to be liberal to them, his liberality took the shape of an iron coffin for their own use.

Mr. Yates, of Chatham, North Carolina, was buried in 1879, according to his own desire, after the following fashion: In his coffin was placed a feather bed and pillow, on which the corpse was laid, dressed in a suit of jeans; at his feet (not on them) were placed his boots; his hat rested on his hands, which were crossed on his breast, holding a pair of gloves. After his burial, a dinner was served to all who had attended his funeral.

Chinese Schools.

THE Chinese set great store by education, there being very few among them who cannot read and write. The writings of Confucius and Mencius are carefully committed by children to memory, though it is not until they reach maturity that they have a conception of the meaning. They have a singular way of reciting with their back to the book which the teacher holds in his hand. This is called

"backing the book." They are not taught in classes, but singly, which while more troublesome to the teacher, is a decided gain to the pupil.

There are several collegiate institutions in Pekin, where more advanced studies are pursued, some of these colleges being under the care of the provincial governor, who appoints the teachers. All the students who wish to compete for entrance to the highest college, have a theme placed in their hands to be written out the same day, and when the compositions are finished they are handed to the governor for inspection. He selects those he thinks the best and places them in the hands of the teacher for criticism, and in this way the candidates are selected, out of the thousands who present themselves not more than two hundred and fifty being selected.

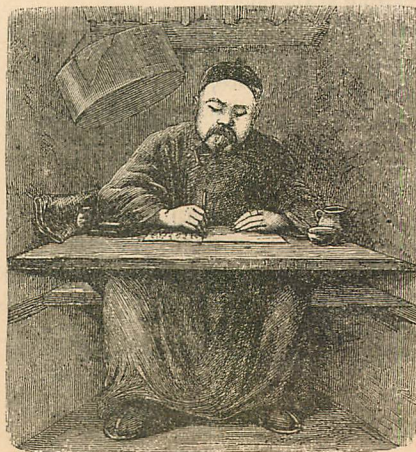
Students who have passed the first degree and desire the second, assemble once in every three years in Pekin. In the north-eastern quarter of the city are numerous cells, arranged in rows, each row covered with a tiled roof, and having no doors, where the applicants are, for several days, lodged. The furniture is of the scantiest kind, a few boards serving for a bed, table, and seat. In these miserable cells, small and bare of all comfort, even the wealthiest students must lodge. Near by, are comfortable quarters for the examiners. A strict watch is kept over the students to prevent them communicating with their friends outside. A measure of rice and a half a pound of meat a day are furnished by the government to each competitor, but, as a general thing they prefer supplying their own wants. As no one can bring his servant, he must either provide himself with a portable furnace for cooking, and prepare his own meals, or he must submit to being waited upon by the servants provided by the government.

Four themes for essays and a poem are selected from the Chinese classic known as the "Four Books," and the student prepares to write them out. When they are finished they are handed to the examiner. Those incorrectly done, are stuck on the wall of some public place; the others being given to persons appointed by the government, who copy them in red ink. These copies pass from one examiner to the other before an ultimate decision is arrived at, and when this is made known the successful candidates emerge from their cells to the sound of music.

Of so much importance is the event considered, that a feast is given by the family of the successful student. A red card, in an envelope of the same color, bears an invitation to the feast, and this is sent to the friends, who on arriving at the house, present a gift of money, known as congratulating politeness." The student is invested with a

long, red silk scarf, which, in case he is married, is tied on him by his mother-in-law, and if he is single, his own mother performs the ceremony.

Some ambitious students pass many years in striving to attain a degree, and even become old men



A GRAY HEAD IN THE EXAMINATION CELL, PEKIN.