

of Orange," had set all her fears alive as to the cause of the unlooked-for appearance of Sir Reginald. Florence would rather see the wreck of her own dearest hopes than become disloyal, so the colour fled from her cheeks, and scarcely returning the greeting of Sir Reginald, she met the warm grasp of his hand with the faint pressure of one as cold as marble, and almost mechanically resumed her seat.

"I will speak to you to-morrow, Sir Reginald, about this matter," said Sir Charles, as he refolded the letter; "we will have no business conversation to-night; you are fatigued and weary, and shall partake of such hospitality as the Grange can furnish. Yours must have been dreary travelling for some hours past, and your aged friend looks, too, as if he needed both rest and refreshment."

Weary enough was Benson; but had the poor baronet been cognizant of all that was passing in the mind of his guest, he would have known that it was the evil passions which filled his mind, far more than natural exhaustion, that gave to his countenance that restless, disturbed expression. Notwithstanding, he managed to do full justice to the tempting viands placed before him, and demolished with tolerable rapidity a portion of a cold capon, flanked with ham, and a good allowance of vension pasty, with a quantity of fine old wine, which the hospitable baronet had directed to be placed before his guests.

Vain were the efforts of Sir Reginald to induce Florence to throw off the air of cold restraint that hung over her, and he observed, somewhat uneasily, that it was only when he introduced the subject of the Court at St. Germain that her spirits seemed to recover their wonted tone. For a time it appeared as if she yielded to the indignation she felt, for her eye kindled, and a bright flush suffused her lately pale cheek, when she spoke of Mary Beatrice and the ex-king. Then, words of scorn rose to her lips, which she could not repress, as she spoke contemptuously of those worthless ones who had risen on the wreck of their own father's fortunes; of her deep unswerving love of the Stuart race; of her resolution, if needs be, to give up her life's dearest hopes and affections for them, and to shed her blood, if necessary, in their service, and Sir Reginald felt that she for whom he would have given up all he held dear, save his honour, which was pledged to William and Mary, was, indeed, lost to him; that his own hopes were levelled with the dust; that drawn together by the holiest bonds of affection which had grown up between them from childhood, the hand of the high-souled kinswoman of the great Tyrconnell, the loyal Florence, never would be given in marriage to himself, even did her heart break in the rejection she would most assuredly make of all overtures for the completion of her betrothal. But if St. John was disturbed and uneasy from the cause we have mentioned, not less so was the timorous baronet, who, in the fluctuation of political opinions, had determined to keep himself and his fortune perfectly safe, by maintaining a strictly neutral position. It was in vain that by sundry impatient gestures, and ever and again by an impetuous "pshaw," that he attempted to allay the storm which was rising in the breast of the excitable Florence. In her own heart she ridiculed the timid fears of the old man, though respect for his age and the tie which existed between them, kept her silent where he was concerned. Moreover, Sir Charles had noted what Florence, in her storm of impetuous feeling, had failed to observe, that Benson scarce ever removed his keen, light grey eye from the maiden's countenance; that ever and anon an almost basilisk glance darted from beneath those heavy eyelids, varied by a fierce expression of anger, which seemed as if it could scarce restrain itself. Sir Charles was an acute observer; he had failed in his endeavours to silence the incautious Florence, whose imprudence was thus exposing herself and him to danger, and the baronet resolved to put an end to the conversation, by commanding a domestic to conduct Sir Reginald and Benson to the apartments destined for their use.

THE PEOPLE OF CHINA AND THEIR CUSTOMS.

SOME few weeks since we clipped from the columns of the 'Pilot,' a most interesting letter from its Chinese correspondent. The following is from the pen of the same writer, and will be perused with equal interest:—

HOW THEY STEAL LIQUOR.

The slaves on the West Indian sugar plantations found but a very simple law of hydrostatics which enabled them to remove rum from the casks without diminishing the actual contents, and without detection. The pilferer selected a full cask of spirit, bored two small holes in the head, and poured water gently through one of them. The greater weight of the water carried it to the bottom of the spirit, which rose through the other hole. When enough rum had been extracted, the small holes were easily stopped. This is a valuable discovery, and has, I believe, been extensively utilized by Jack at sea. But ingenious as it is, it pales before a fraud which was long successfully carried on by some Chinese merchants in some of the eastern ports. In these ports a drink which I am sorry to say is extensively patronised, is the world-famed Hennessy's brandy. Corked with starred corks and carefully caulked, it would appear to be difficult of approach by a tamperer. Yet the astute Chinese solved the difficulty in a highly satisfactory manner. Their genius scorned the palpable fraud of drawing and replacing corks. They turned the bottles upside down, and discovered that in the "heel" is a little mound round which runs a minute moat. In this moat, and on opposite sides, they drilled two small holes through the glass, and the trick was done. They could extract as much spirit as they pleased, make up the deficiency with water or an inferior spirit, and solder up the tiny drill holes, leaving the bottle with the same outer appearance as before. I have seen two or three bottles which have been thus tampered with, and until the trick was explained to me they quite defied my inspection.

HOW THEY ADULTERATE MILK.

Those of my readers who are dwellers in large towns may have

had occasion, at some times more or less frequent, to remark that their milk was not milk. The same idea struck some Western housewives in Hong Kong. Determining not to be defrauded, they ordered the milkman to bring his cow round and milk from the very under the maternal quantity of the door. Certainly! John Chinaman is a most docile and obedient creature. To hear with him is to obey. The cow was brought to the door, but, alas! the quality of the milk did not improve. What American milkman would have thought of adulterating the milk inside the animal! Yet this bold idea was successfully conceived and developed in the Chinese brain. The guileless milkman rose an hour earlier than his wont, and entered the sleeping apartment of his cows. Seizing one he made her protrude her tongue, and proceeded for the space of twenty minutes to rub that deceitful member with a slab of rock salt. He then allowed her the full run of the water-trough, with what result the reader can imagine. The experiment was eminently successful. The udder became plethoric. Since that eventful morning milch cows and goats, too, have been subjected to this process, to the great gain of the milk vendor. Ladies who have the cows and goats milked at their doors, right into their own vessels, cannot comprehend why there should be so little substance in the milk. When I first exposed this ingenious swindle in a Hong Kong paper the idea was ridiculed. A little investigation, however, proved my charge against Chinese milkmen of having made the hidden mysteries of nature subserve their nefarious purposes, which is certainly a greater achievement than to apply even high art to a system of fraud—a thing which civilisation may witness every day.

STYLES OF DRESSING HAIR.

The fashions adopted by the women differ materially from those of the men. Unmarried girls wear the hair in a pigtail, but do not shave the front of the head, so that the tail contains a large quantity of hair. Children often wear two tails just like the modern German fashion, so that perhaps the latter is derived from the Chinese! The married women wear three styles, two of which foreigners generally nickname the "teapot" and "jughandle" styles. The third so closely resembles the "waterfall"—I hope I am right in the name—that inquiring philosophers cannot help supposing that that deformity—I beg pardon, but you know I am speaking as a philosopher—is really derived not from fashionable France but from grotesque China! I should fancy that every lady would be willing to give up a custom derived from those nasty Chinese; but fashion, I suppose, gilds the pill. The two former styles to which I allude, and named from the likeness they bear to a teapot and jughandle respectively, are elaborate piles made to retain their shape by some gummy substance with which they are dressed. Respectable people dress their hair about once a week, and very fine and glossy does the mass look when thus prepared! It has, however, the trifling disadvantage of being easily knocked out of shape. In fact, to lie down upon it would ruin it. "But," you will say, "how do they manage to go to bed?" The solution is easy: the females all use a little billet of wood made to fit the hollow of the neck and poll so that when lying down the head-dress projects beyond it. Practice has made this comfortable to the Chinese ladies—at least, I suppose so—but a trial of it is sure to result in a stiff neck to a foreigner—a fact of which any lady here can convince herself at an expense of twenty-five cents for a bit of wood.

CHINESE ORNAMENTS.

Through the hair are run silver, copper, or gilt pins, closely resembling meat skewers, in the South, but more highly ornamented in the North. These, together with earrings, bracelets, and hair ornaments, such as flowers and butterflies made of feathers and enamel, are to be bought at the stall of the itinerant jewellers who abound in every Chinese city. A friend of mine once made a collection of Chinese earrings and got together 62 sorts, while the whole lot (exclusive of one or two gold pairs) only cost him some 9 dollars.

STRANGE MODE OF WEARING BRACELETS.

The bracelets are generally of either solid silver or jade-stone being merely plain, or, if silver, twisted hoops. They are made whole, so that they have to be put on while the hand is small enough to pass through them, and they then remain on the wrists for life, the hand then reminding one of those wonderful cucumbers put into a bottle while still young and connected with the plant, and allowed to grow until they exceed the size of the neck. Jade, as I dare say you have heard, is the most esteemed stone in China, and one of these bracelets if of the right colour, a sickly green—will fetch as much as \$150. During the piratical seizure of the *Spark* steamer last fall on the Pearl river, the ruffians, who murdered the captain, and only left one European survivor, and him so severely wounded as to be all but dead, we a very much captivated by the jade bangles on the arms of a Chinese lady among the passengers. One wretch finding that he could not get the rings off the wrists threatened the woman to cut her hands off. In vain she remonstrated. Her hands would certainly have been sacrificed, had not a humane passenger and companion in misfortune brought water by the aid of which, and with much pain, the hands were forced through the ring, or the rings were drawn over the hands.

ONLY ONE COLOUR AND FASHION OF DRESS.

The ordinary dress of the male Chinese, as I daresay, familiar to most of your readers. It consists in general terms of an inner garment, a long or short coat called respectively a *chang shan* and a *ma kua* and a pair of voluminous pants. These latter are in the north worn loose, over the sock, as with us. But in southern China the sock is drawn up outside the pants forming a sort of legging. The sock itself is not worn but made of cloth sewn together by tailors. So great is the distinction of dress in this respect that residents can tell at a glance whether a man is a northern or southern Chinese. The material for the dress commonly worn is a blue cotton cloth of coarse texture, and which is produced so cheaply by the native manufacturers, that foreign traders find it impossible to compete with them in this article. It may safely be said that 95 out of every hundred men and women met in the streets have on blue coats or dresses. What would our western ladies do if they were thus restricted to one colour, one material, and one fashion! We—I mean of course all the