

THE EVENING NEWS.

Friday, May 20, 1870.

CHINESE CUSTOMS AND CONTRADICTIONS.

I am writing by the light of a Chinese candle, which is a curiosity in its way. It is not over six inches long, thicker than ours, and for wick has a straw wrapped with paper. The candlestick instead of being a tube in which the candle is stuck, is a stand with a sharp nail sticking up, on which the candle is skewered. On taking the candle off, I can blow up through the straw and lighten the flame as a blowpipe would. It is like a small Argand lamp, but they learn its value by spiking the straw tube. As the candle is a specimen of the contrivances of Chinese customs and things to our, I will mention some others. The multitudes continually hear say "Gee" to their heads to turn them to the left, and "Ho" or "Hoh" to turn to the right. To start them forward and to stop them, too, they are always saying "Ho!" When they meet each other on the road, they keep to the left, instead of the right as we do, and in mounting a horse, get up on the right side, instead of the left as we do. While I am writing, Mr. M— is close by me studying a book of Chinese phrases, composed by a Chinese scholar as simple sentences. The one he is at work upon now says: "When people are two young to have beards, their faces have to be shaved with a razor." The writer's Chinese teacher being requested to write his first name Edward tried to pronounce it, but after several attempts, gives it up in despair, saying, "My belly has no such sound in it," the usual Chinese way of saying, "I cannot pronounce it." Yesterday, one of our assistants was sending off a letter, and, as their envelopes have no gum attached, he deliberately scraped his teeth with his finger nail, and used the tartar he collected as so much mucilage! As these natives generally use no tooth brushes, he carries a supply with him. I learn that this is their usual way of sealing letters. Dentists are known among the people, and the mouths I most you meet tell the story of their destitution.—Letter from China.

VOLTAIRE'S LAST HOURS.—In spite of all the faded philosophers who flocked around Voltaire in the last days of his illness, he gave signs of this wishing to return to that God whom he had so often blasphemed. He called for a priest. He afterwards made a written declaration, in which he renounced infidelity, signed by himself and two witnesses. He refused to see his infidel friends; and called upon the Lord Jesus. At one time he was discovered trying to pray. He had fallen from his bed in convulsive agonies, and lay foaming with impotent despair on the floor, exclaiming, "Will not this God, whom I have deified, save me too? Cannot in fluids mercy be extended to me?" His physician, called to administer relief, retired, declaring the death of the impious man to be terrible, indeed. The Marshal of Richelieu flew from his bedside, declaring that the sight of such a death-bed was appalling. He offered the doctor half he possessed, if he would prolong his life for six months. When the doctor told him he would not live six weeks; "Then," said he, "I will go to hell, and you will go with me." Soon after he expired. Such was the horror of mind in which the archangel quitted the world. A letter to all who believed him, a warning to all who are inclined to follow his steps.

FARMERS.—Adam was a farmer while yet in Paradise, and, after his fall, commanded to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Job, the honest, upright and patient, was a farmer, and his endurance has passed into a proverb. Socrates was a farmer, and yet wedded to his calling the glory of his immortal philosophy.

St. Luke was a farmer, and divides with Prometheus the honor of subjecting the ox for the use of man. Cicero was a farmer, and the noblest Roman of them all. Burns was a farmer, and the Muse found him at the plow and filled his soul with poetry. Washington was a farmer, and retired from the highest earthly station to enjoy the quiet rural life and present to the world a spectacle of human greatness.

To these names may be added a host of others who sought peace and repose in the cultivation of their mother earth; the enthusiastic Lafayette, the steadfast Pickens, the scholastic Jefferson, the fiery Randolph, all found an Eden of consolation from life's cares in verdant lawns that surrounded their homesteads.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.—"Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire, conscience," was one of a series of maxims which Washington framed or copied for his own use when a boy. His rigid adherence to principle, his steadfast discharge of duty, his utter abandonment of self, his unreserved devotion to whatever interests were committed to his care attest the vigilance with which he obeyed that maxim. He kept alive that spark. He made it shine before men. He kindled it into a flame which illumined his whole life. No occasion was so momentous, no circumstance so minute, as to absolve him from following his guiding ray. The marginal explanation in his account-book, in regard to the expenses of his wife's annual visit to the camp during the revolutionary war, with his passing allusion to the "self-denial" which the exigencies of his country had cost him, furnishes a charming illustration of his habitual exactness. The fact that every barrel of flour which bore the brand "George Washington, Mount Vernon," was exempted from the otherwise uniform inspection in the West India ports—that name being regarded as an ample guarantee of the quality and quantity of any article to which it was affixed—supplies a not less striking proof that his exactness was everywhere understood.

The pen with which President Grant signed the fifteenth amendment proclamation was asked for and obtained by a member of the press before the ink upon it had dried, and, what is most noticeable, the possessor of the prize refused, with a disregard for lucre remarkable in his class, an offer of \$50 for it.

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