

THE EVENING NEWS.

Tuesday, May 3, 1870.

A VISIT TO A CHINESE SILK FACTORY.

A correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial writes from Canton:

I directed my guide to take me into the silk-weaving streets. We soon entered them. I at once dismounted to make a careful observation of their modus operandi for the production of this renowned fabric of Oriental looms. All around me was silk, nothing but silk. In small dark houses, little better than hovels, were seen people, chiefly women, dyeing this delicate textile. Outside, in little filthy yards and pig-sties, over the ground where the family swine were wallowing, were placed bamboo poles, whereon were hanging skeins of colored silk, lust from the dye, and glowing with the most vivid hues, as they hung for drying in the sunshine over the loathsome pools below. I visited several of their weaving shops. They were quite similar in their fixtures and arrangements. I spent some time in examining one of the largest. It was, perhaps, one hundred feet long and about sixteen feet wide. The walls were of coarse clay blocks, sun-dried, unplastered by a single aperture for light or air, save at the front, which was entirely open the whole breadth of the building. The floor was simply of trodden clay, uneven and untidy. An aisle ran down the centre, just wide enough for one person to pass; on either side of this were raised the nearest looms, and standing as close together as they could be placed.

Two or three persons were employed on the work of each loom. The looms are plain, common looking affairs, almost precisely of the same kind, as to appearance and mode of manipulation, as were those upon which our grandmothers in Ohio used to weave the linsey-woolsey for the wear of us Western boys, when even the preacher was almost a stranger to broadcloth. Squatting myself down by one of these friendly looking acquaintances of my boyhood, I leisurely watched the delicate and diligent manipulations of the weaver and his assistants as their shuttles flew to and fro in the mazy mystery of figure and flowers that came gradually out larger and plainer upon the glowing surface of the gorgeous fabric which those skillful workmen were there creating under my eye. So complex were the movements of the men on those simple-looking machines, and so marvelously beautiful were the products resulting therefrom, that I gazed, with unbounded amazement upon this work of silk-weaving as it progressed before me.

The weather being warm and the shop crowded, the workmen were almost naked. My visit interested them manifestly, yet not a loom ceased its clicking, clacking noise, not a man left his employment to gaze, but I detected them giving furtive glances and exchanging mutual smiles among themselves at the curious stranger who had thus unceremoniously squatted himself in their midst, by one of these humble looking looms on a common dirt floor, within homely-clad walls, where, nevertheless, are produced those magnificent fabrics which for ages, and throughout the world, have been the pride of wealth and the envy of beauty, and the admiration and desire of royalty. Far down, and nearly to the extreme limit of this long room, was a plain, broad counter, extending quite across the room. Behind it stood the proprietor of the factory, a smooth-faced richly-clad Chinaman. Directly over him the building was unroofed, thereby affording a spacious skylight. Except this window there was none. Through this skylight, and down upon the counter below, the sunshine fell upon the finished work of this dingy, dirty, squalid looking workshop. The proprietor was busy measuring off and packing up the products of his looms. And as the sunlight streamed full upon the gorgeous colors of those magnificent silks, satins and brocades which the proprietor was tossing about in billowy radiance, it seemed to my eyes, as I stood far up in the feeble light of the centre of the room as though he were tossing and toying with rainbows. From places so humble and surroundings so squalid as this some of the royal fabrics which are to decorate palaces and to adorn the persons of princes and monarchs of the earth.

IRISH MINES.—In the reign of Tighernmas, one of the Milesian monarchs, about nine centuries before the Christian era, according to our old annals, a gold mine was discovered near the river Liffey, and the gold was worked by an artificer skilled in metals, named Uachadan, of the men of Caolan, a territory which comprised the County of Wicklow, with some of the southern part of Dublin. This Uachadan is supposed to have been one of the Tuatha de Danaans, who were famous for their skill in the arts, and after they had been conquered by the Milesians continued to be the chief artificers of the kingdom, as workers in metals, builders, mechanics, etc. In modern times, Wicklow has become celebrated for its gold mines, discovered in the mountain of Croghan Kinshella, near Arklow, by one of the country people, who found a small piece of pure gold in a rivulet running from the mountain, and the fame of this having soon spread, vast numbers of the peasantry assembled to make further searches, and collected in a few months of this alluvial gold washed down by the mountain streams about three thousand ounces, which sold for about £10,000 sterling. Some of the pieces found were very large, and one solid lump of nearly pure gold weighed twenty-three ounces. This native gold was of a beautiful rich yellow, and very fine, being only alloyed with minute portions of silver, copper, or iron. The Government took possession of the mines, and worked them for about two years, but then abandoned them as not sufficiently productive. Moore, in his exquisite song, "Has sorrow thy young days shaded?" compares mistaken love to the gold which shone on the surface of the Wicklow soil, but if in the pursuit of which we went deeper, as fast as the dream of the slumberer, disappeared.

A San Francisco man urges everybody in that city who owns a planchette to leave it, when not in use, with a blank sheet of white paper under it, on a flat surface, so that if an earthquake should come, it could record its direction and force.

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