WATCHERS BY THE DEAD.

The walls were papered with an indefinite pattern of wavy blue that, instead of stretching up to the ceiling, seemed to draw towards either corner, increasing the tunnel-like effect of the room. The bare, unpainted floor was worn into ridges and hollows that threatened the stability of table and stove. Some straight-backed chairs lined in ordered rank along the western wall, a chintz-covered couch at the head of the row. Behind them was a window. On the front of the room two other windows opened, these overlooking the orchard and the short cut the islanders made in coming from the wharf. It was night and curtains covered the narrow panes, grotesquely shadowing a man and a woman.

They two sat—quietly for the most part—on either side of the open door that led to the L kitchen. The woman, who was short, snug-featured and plump of body knitted spasmodically, drooping her work to vent a perfunctory sigh or wipe a doubtful tear. The man was tall and strongly built betraying in his movements a lumbering unconsciousness, which stopped short of awkwardness because it was unconscious. He had leaned forward in his chair, elbows on knees, staring at the floor, rousing at five-minute intervals to look at the clock. When the hour struck, he rose slowly, as though pulling together his joints. He stretched his arms above his head and yawned; then, tip-toeing noisily to the table that centred the room, lifted the sheet, and stood gazing at the white and silent shape.

The woman fidgeted after him. When he laid down the covering she straightened it, draping the edges with fussy exactitude. "He makes a pooty corpse," she said in mournful undertone, as they reached their chairs again.

"He looks nat'ral," the man amended. There came no rejoinder, and he sat speechless for some minutes pursuing a reluctant memory. When, at length, he spoke, apropos of nothing, it was in his every-day manner. The deep, sonorous bass woke uncanny echoes in the quiet room. His companion started, glanced around and hitched her chair a little closer.

"Terrible hand to chaw tebacker, Uncle Ike use' to be," the watcher said. "I rec'llect one time we wuz comin' round from Cape Ann in the old 'Lizy Jane 'n' it come on to snow—why, 'twuz your Dave t'wuz with us, come to think on it! 's I wuz a sayin', 't shot in thick, 'n long 'fore dark ye couldn't see y'r hand afore ye. Uncle Ike he had the tiller; but sho! he couldn't do nothin' but keep her a movin', 'n' strain his eyes 'n' spit. 'Long towards mornin' it kind o' hild up, 'n' ez luck'd hev it we wuz down abreast o' the Cape lights—Cape Eliz'beth, ye know. I recollect when he see 'em Uncle Ike kind o' shook himself, 'n' then he turns to your Dave, 'n' says he, Gi' me a chaw, will ye, Dave?

"N' then Dave laughed, 'n' says he, 'How much o' my tebacker s'pose ye've chawed sence we left Gloucester?'

"I d know, Uncle Ike says.

"'Three plugs, by hokey!' says Dave.

The woman smiled constrainedly, and after an indecent interval. "Dave—that's my husband—never used tebacker," she said, a suggested victory in her voice. "I d' know who the boys take a'ter. They wuz al'ays a-chewin' 'r smokin'.'

"I s'pose it's kind o' comfortin'," the man decided. He laid an ungainly leg over the arm of his chair, in a vain attempt at ease. "Speakin' o' your Dave, Sophrony," he began, "how's the boy makin' out farmin'?"

"Just like he did." She nodded towards the sheeted figure. "That air farm Dave swapped f'r's the moral o' this one: all the dressin' ye put on was right down be the beach!"

"Sho!" The intonation proved real concern. "I wish 't he'd been up here with me, flounderin', last fall. I did pooty well."

"Almiry said ye did.

"Yes," he nodded; "I made four hundred dollars, pooty nigh."

"My sakes alive!" The woman looked wondering, envious. "Well," she commented, "some folks hez luck!"

The pride and satisfaction faded out of the man's face while he cast about for a reply. "'T wa'n't all luck," he said, slowly; "the' wuz knowin' where the flounders be, that's one thing; 'n' tendin' the traps, that's another thing. 'N' I cal'late the boys I hed to help me's good 's robbed me o' two hundred more. 'F I'd had your Dave to kind o' spell me with the traps, 'r some man 't c'd be depended on, we might 'a' made a good season's work."

"Young folks is car'less." The woman sighed "I wish 't Dave'd been here, 's you say. Id' know, though, ez it 'd be any use f'r him to make money; Belindy ain't no hand to manage."

"Sho!"

Again there was silence. The woman kept steadily at her knitting. The man, bending in his chair, studied his nails and rubbed his hands mechanically. The woman broke the hush at last, rising and casting her eyes about the neglected kitchen. "I thought I heerd a cat," she explained.

"Did ye?"

"Cats is cur'is, aint they?" she went on. "When I left home, to-night, the' wa'n't nothin' to do but our old Tom must come, too—'n' yit you never see sech a creatur' to curl up on the lounge 'n' take comfort. I aint so sure but the devil did use to be in cats, in them old witchcraft times!"

"I guess the' aint no doubt they s'picion it ef the's a corpse in the neighborhood."

The door leading from the front hall opened suddenly, and the female watcher's expression of contented horror changed quickly to fear and again to decorous sympathy. She took up her handkerchief, her plaintive snuffle warning her companion to his best behavior. An old woman had entered, barefooted, a fragment of quilt thrown carelessly above her nightgown, disordered wisps of gray hair scattering scantily over all. She glided to the table where the body lay, and, drawing the sheet bent down in dumb abandonment of grief. Smoothing the thin hair at the temples, patting the hands, stroking the hollow cheeks, she sank at last to her knees and flung her arm across the body, moaning. Presently her wordless agony broke, softening into tears. Still kneeling, weeping, she prayed silently. Then, her passion momentarily spent, she left the room as noiselessly as she came.

The female watcher groaned, relieved. "Aunt Ann takes it hard," she said. "I can't he'p thinkin' it'd be more soothing to her 'f Uncle Ike was in a nice, comf'table coffin, 'stead 'o laid out on the table,—but Cap'n John said he didn't hev none ready."

The man had turned away, ostensibly to blow his nose. "It's cu'sed slack of him,—that's what I call it!" he affirmed with needless heat.

"Oh, well, I would n't go so fur's that neither. Cap'n John says he do't hev no place to keep his coffins, so's 't they won't spile; 'n' ef he did make up a lot ahead, the's no knowin' 's they'd fit."

The man said no more. It was evident that the widow's anguish lingered unpleasantly in his thought. But when his companion spoke again he roused himself and turned to listen.

"Aunt Ann'll be all soul alone, won't she? A big fambly the' wuz 'f'em, 'n' now she's th' only one left. Dear! dear! All flesh is vanity, ez the scriptur' says."

"The' don't seem to be nobody to do f'r her," she went on, a moment later. "I come in to help slick up f'r the funeral, 'cause I mistrusted I wuz nearer to her'n anybody on the Island; n' yit I aint very near. Her great-uncle John Chandler married my mother's second cousin, 'Tildy Fletcher; that 'd make no—" She paused perplexedly, scratching her head with her needle, and the relationship went unnamed. "It 'd be awful lonesome f'r her in this big house," she added.

"Things don't never seem the same t' a widder—'t a widderer.' The man said soberly, "I know."

"Oh, well, you're a man. Men c'n be out round, 'n' find things to take up their minds. Women can't I git se sick o' my own com'pny, sometimes, seems uz though I sh'd fly out o' my skin."

Her companion turned, half-angrily, trumpeting his woe against his better judgment; it was a grievance that would not be repressed. "But that aint se bad's gittin' sick o' y'r victuals, I bate ye!" he asserted.

She looked at him aslant. "Sh-h-h!" she said.

He subsided, changing his position a little, with the air of one who feels he may have made a mistake. When she had knitted for some moments, glancing frequently at him, a strange, suggestive smile curving the dimpled corners of her mouth, she herself took up the conversation.

"You rec'llect uncle Ike's fathur 'n' mother, uncle Aaron n'n aunt Beck?" she asked. "They wuz queer, wan't they?"

"Kind o'."

"I know one time 'long 't last of 'em, I run in one day when uncle Aaron 'd gone out to the barn'r somewheres. This chair I got wuz his chair, ye know—used al'ays to set over there by the stove h'a'th. Well, I didn't think o' nothin' 'n' I took it. Pooty soon in comes uncle Aaron. He looked at me, 'n' he walked 'round a minute 'r two, lookin' at me, 'n' when I didn't make no move to git up he sot right down on the floor. Aunt Ann told me a'terwards he sot there more'n two hours 'fore they c'd coax him to take his chair ag'in."

"Oh, I s'pose ef the' wuz odd streaks in uncle Ike he come by 'em honest enough. 'N' yit he wuz a good ev'rige man fur's I' c'n make out."

"I wuz a tellin' Aunt Ann that she'd ought te feel te bow te the dispensations o' Providence," the woman proceeded piously, "Uncle Ike wuz falin'. No knowin' but he might a' turned out deef 'n' blind 'n loony, like Uncle Aaron wuz."

Her companion opened his mouth to reply. The striking of the clock dispersed his painfully gathered ideas, but gave him a new one in their room. He stared at the mantel a moment, then lugging a mighty watch from his waistcoat pocket, compared one timepiece with the other. "Just on the dot!" he announced happily. "Seems like a long night don't it?"

"Well, I declare 'f didn't clean fergit!" The woman rose briskly and, laying down her work, bustled into the pantry her smooth appealing speech stirring strange vibrations of sound. "I come over yist'day 'n' cooked up s'm things f'r Aunt Ann, 'n' I want ye te try a piece o' my pound cake. Settin' up all night anybody feels a kind 'f a goneness. I al'ays do. Seems to break up the time, somehow—shorten it, ye know to git a bit 'bout twelve 'r one o'clock."

She fetched a plateful of cake. The man accepted a slice, heavy with color and odor and munched it in measureless content. Between bites, he closed his eyes, as though perfect appreciation demanded the use of every sense. He looked forlornly at the last mouthful; but his face lifted and lightened again when the woman laid a second slice in his empty hand.

"I do admire to see anybody enj'y thar victuals!" she said with a chuckle of pure delight. "'N' you're like my Dave, I cal'late fond o' sweet stuffs. He'd 'most make a meal off a plate o' cookies, Dave would.

"Dave was a lucky feller!" said the male watcher, solemnly at the back of a long stare.

"Oh, now!" the widow simpered. She took up her neglected handkerchief and wiped a possible tear. "He wuz a good pervider," she said behind the screen; "the wa'n't a mean bone in his body. 'N' yit he wa'n't spendthrift, no more 'n I wuz; I got three hundred dollars in Portland Savin's Bank——"

"Sho!"

"Left a'ter his doctor's bill 'n' funeral was paid—'n' thirty-two dollars f'r the stone.—You know that stone o' his with the baby on top? Th'aint a pootier one in the buryin'-ground!"

The man did not reply. He laid his head in his hand and, elbow on knee, gave himself to reflection. The woman scrutinized him swiftly from time to time, though her needles clicked on without intermission. Once her eyes wandered to the shape beneath the sheet, and she followed its outlines with placid interest. There was a wrinkle in the end that covered the feet. She rose and set it smooth, standing over the body, her head on one side, an eye to further improvement.

While she looked and meditated, the door opened. The mistress of the house appeared once more. The watcher moved imperceptibly back to her chair. The mourner, dry-eyed now, her wan face almost terrible in its rigid composure, walked to the table and, lifting the sheets, looked for the merest instant at her dead. The next moment she was gone. The man's eyes followed, fascinated, to the door; when it closed behind her, he turned to his companion as though doubting that they had seen.

"Pore creatur'!" she said eventually,

The man sighed, shook himself and cleared his throat. He glanced around, seeking somewhat to change the current of his thoughts, and his eyes rested upon certain stray crumbs of the pound cake. He swept them carefully together and entombed them in his capacious mouth. "I tell ye," he said, feelingly, "victuals makes a good deal o' diff'runce!"

The woman nodded, comprehending. "Your Polly wuz a first-rate cook," she said. "I felt reel bad f'r ye when she died—hevin' to come down te anybody else's grub. I'd know though, where ye d find a better housekeeper 'n Aunt Ruth is—'r use' to be. Course I s'pose she's failed ez she growed old; but she could cook."

"She's failed," the man coincided, dismally.

"Well, pore creatur', she means well!"

"Oh, I knows she means well," he agreed. "But, consarn it! that don't keep her snuff out o' the apple sarce!"

The needles clicked a little faster. "I'm sorry for ye, Joel," the woman said, after a moment. "I know ye done well by Polly—she's told me, many's the time, what a good man ye wuz round the house—'n' it does seem's though ye'd ought to be rewarded e'r it 'n' take some comfort. You're a young man, yit, 'n' yit when a man gits to be your age he needs to be kind o' cossetted. I know by myself. I can't stan' it te bang round 'n' put up with anything, same's I could twenty years ago: 'n' I ain't a old woman, nuther!"

"My shirts is damp fr'm the washtub when I hev te put 'em on!" complained the man, with deep self-pity.

"Oh, well, I don't blame ye f'r findin' fault with that. 'Taint right?" She nodded her head reassuringly, and he, watching, moistened his lips to speak. "Say, Sophrony—" he began; then, thinking better of it, was silent.

Presently from the barn was heard a cock crow. The sound taken up at the neighboring farms and prolonged, shrilled resoundingly through the room. The heavy atmosphere seemed visibly to lighten to the dawn of a new day. The lamp on the mantel burned lower. The woman, rising, with an exclamation, blew it out.

"'Most daylight," she announced, peering through the curtain. "The night's gone real quick, Joel. I'm glad you wuz here. Settin' up with a corpse's a solemn thing, 'n' some folks makes it solemner. But, land sakes! when I rec'llect how you 'n' me 'n' Dave 'n' Polly used to play to-gether when we wuz young ones, it don't seem 's if I'd ever git lonesome with ye,"

The man was silent—grasped and held by an idea.

"Guess I won't knit no more," his companion went on. She pinned her work with the needles and rolled it in a fragment of newspaper. "Such light 's this 's bad for the eyes—nuther one thing n'r t'ther. Awf'l kind o' gloomy here, ain't it? 'N' now I look at ye, Joel," she stopped suddenly in front of him, "This hez wore on ye. Come home with me bymeby 'n' git s'm warm breakfast to chirk ye up."

He threw one leg across the other, in the fashion of a determined man, and, knotting his hands tightly, looked into her eyes. "Say, Sophrony!" he demanded explosively, "don't ye think your house—'r mine—'d ought to be big enough f'r both on us?"

"Well, there, Joel!" She caught up her apron and twisted the edge through her fingers, simpering, attempting surprise. "There, Joel!" she repeated, "I d' know what te say te ye. I s'pose they'd call us a couple 'f old fools!"

"Sho! Let 'em."

She tiptoed across the room, her eyes on a vacant chair that had somehow wandered from the line of duty. "Well," she said as she set it straight, he embodying close attention, "Well, I cal'late ye do want te be took care of—'n' me too! I'd know but we might do wuss, Joel!"

His face and fingers relaxed from rigidity to placid peace. "Obleeged te ye, Sophrony!" he murmured, hushing his powerful voice to a note of gentle contentment "We can't do it none too soon, nuther," he added, after a little. To-morror's Sat'day—'n' sence I've tasted your cookin' Id' know 's I c'n stomach te eat any more 'f Aunt Ruth's beans 'n' brown bread!"

She smiled, sympathizing, as she lifted and tied the curtain. The glimmer of dawn was deepening now into steady light, and the bird-chorus from the orchard freshened and came clearer. An early ray of sunshine shot across the room, resting like a caress upon the sheeted figure at her back. She shaded her eyes to look along the road.

"There comes Cap'n John with the coffin," she proclaimed blithely.

Set the Wrong Leg.

When I first started out in the practice of my profession, said an old physician, I used all the arts usually employed by young and unsuccessful practitioners. I had my horse brought round every morning, and I galloped about as though there was a pestilence in every section of the county and nobody could get well until I got there. I had a boy regularly employed to call me out of church in the middle of the services, and I used to go out with a rush that would break up a camp meeting. None of these things seemed to work well. I gained no patients. To add to my discomfiture, the balance of the doctors in town seemed to have leagued against me and to be working against my interests. Finally, however, my chance came. There was a medical convention one day in the next county, and all the doctors of the town except myself went over to attend it. That afternoon an Irish laborer fell and broke his leg. I was the only doctor left in town, and I got the case. I fixed that Irishman up in the best shape you ever saw. I put more splints on him than would be needed for the fractured leg of an elephant. I went around in the morning expecting to find him calm and composed, and I found him in hot rage. What was the matter? Well, I don't want anything more than is necessary said about it, but, to tell the whole truth, I had set the wrong leg.

The Etiquette of Cues.

In China the men take as much pride in their hair as women, and the "pigtail" is a thing of no little moment. In making the cue the whole head is shaved except a circular patch upon the crown. The hair from this is braided, and strands of silk are added, which end in a tassel reaching to the heels. In full mourning the black strands are replaced by white ones, and in second mourning by light blue or green.

It is an unpardonable breach of etiquette for an inferior to enter the presence of a superior with his cue wound round his neck or head, as it is frequently disposed of during work, and the greatest insult one man can offer another is to pull his cue. It seems very odd to see sailors and soldiers on ship or in barracks combing each other's long tresses, or coolies at the street corners performing the same friendly office. Custom forbids a man to wear a beard and moustache until he becomes a grandfather.

PAWN AND TOBACCO IN INDIA.

Pawn (properly *pan*) is a luxury much esteemed by the natives of India. It consists of the fresh leaf of the betel-vine (Piper Betel), in which is placed a little red catechu, betel-nut, and quick-lime; spices are also often added, and sometimes a piece of dry tobacco. Cloves and a piece of the root of the betel-vine are sometimes added medicinally, for colds and coughs, for pawn is also regarded as a stimulant. If a native of India be an opium eater, he adds some of his favourite narcotic. When these several additions have been made, the leaf is folded in a particular way and eaten with its contents. The betel-leaf is obtained from a creeper extensively cultivated by the Hindus, who regard it as very sacred; and it is with the greatest difficulty that any one who is a follower of another religion can obtain admittance into a plantation of betel-vines. The betel-nut is obtained from the areca palm, and is so called simply because it is eaten with the betel-leaf.

The visible effect of eating pawn is that the teeth, tongue, and lips all become red, and the two latter much swollen, so much so, that after a long course of pawn-chewing, the utterance becomes thick and indistinct, and the teeth black. The expectoration is also much increased, and is coloured a deep red from the same cause.

To our English taste, pawn is very offensive; but the natives of India relish it, and regard it as a necessity. It is much eaten by Mohammedans of both sexes, and by the natives of Bengal. The Hindus of Northern India do not indulge in it so freely. Eurasians and others of mixed races frequently chew it; and some are in the habit of continually taking it; but it would be quite accurate to say that no person of pure English parentage is in the habit of eating pawn.

When a native calls upon a fellow-countryman the master of the house immediately calls for pawn; and when it is prepared, all present begin to chew it, carrying on conversation meanwhile. When the called-upon thinks that it is time for his friend to leave, he gives some gentle hint, such as, that he hopes his friend will call again soon; and the caller rises to depart; but before he leaves the house, he is presented with more pawn, so that he may not leave with his mouth empty.

Bengali baboos (native gentlemen) when leaving home for business habitually supply themselves with pawn; and any day they may be seen going along the streets with lips and tongues swollen and red. It is not considered etiquette by the natives of India to eat pawn or anything else in the presence of social superiors or employers.

Another thing in which the natives of India indulge just as much as in pawn is tobacco. The substitute for the English pipe which is used in India is the hookah. The base of the hookah is a brass vessel containing water; this serves as a pedestal, and into it are fitted side by side two tubes about an inch in diameter. One of these tubes is about two feet in height, and has at top a little round earthen vessel called a chillum. This chillum is a cup about four inches in height, and the same in width; at the bottom it has a hole just large enough to be fitted on to the tube. A little earth is put loosely into the hole, to prevent the contents falling down the tube; then some tobacco is put in, and over this some live charcoal. Those who are addicted to the use of opium frequently place some of the drug in the chillum along with the tobacco. The second tube runs up parallel with the first for some distance, and then branches out sideways for two feet or more: to the end of this tube the smoker applies his mouth and—enjoys himself. The smoke being drawn through the water in the pedestal makes the peculiar sound which causes the hookah to be called the "hubble-bubble."

This description of hookah is most commonly used among the better classes; but there are many varieties. The poorer classes make a cocoanut shell serve the purpose of the brass water-vessel. The chillum is fixed on to a tube which is put into a hole at the end of the shell; a second impromptu tube is formed with the hand and applied to a side-hole, through which the smoke is drawn.

It is not, as among the English, that only some men smoke tobacco; but, with rare exceptions, all natives, men and women, indulge in this weed in some form or other. The hookah is smoked as a refreshment and sign of fellowship by the natives of India, and not merely as a luxury. When a group of natives are seated together, and, as is the custom, the hookah is passed round to each in turn, it is considered very bad manners for any one to decline to have a few puffs. If the hookah is thus refused in a friend's house, or while one is the guest of another, it is regarded as an insult. If, for any reason, a native is put out of caste, the fact is strictly marked by his former caste-fellows' refusal to smoke with him; and any one who eats, drinks, or smokes with an out-caste, is himself out-casted.

It is curious how, while the Englishman speaks of "smoking" tobacco, the Chinaman and native of Bengal speak of "eating" it, and the native of Northern India speaks of "Drinking" tobacco, thus indicating that they regard it as one of the necessaries of life. Tobacco grows freely in India, which may account for its cheapness and universal use.

Trade and Industry.

On an average 2,000 immigrants land in the United States every twenty-four hours.

It is reported that many mines are being closed at present in the Michigan iron region.

In England one person in every thirty-nine is a pauper, in America the rate is one person in every 680.

The boss cooper and manufaturers of staves and other coopers' supplies of Illinois, Indiana and Michigan have combined to fight against the manufacture of barrels by convict labor.

The minimum age of employment on the continent is generally twelve, or from twelve to fourteen. But then English children only work 28 hours per week, while in France and Germany the hours are 36, in Italy and Germany 48, in Holland 66, and in Belgium 73.

Raw silk is imported at a lower rate than was ever known, consequently the spool silk used for shoe fitting costs from $2 to $3 less per pound than it did a few years ago. A box containing twelve one ounce spools of the best quality sells at $5.50, and large quantities can be had for something less. In proportion to its bulk silk is the most expensive article used in the shoe manufacture.

LAWLESSNESS IN TONQUIN.

French Officials Held for Ransom by Bands of Chinese Pirates.

Mail advices from Tonquin bear out the assertions cabled from Paris recently that the situation in the Oriental province of France was never so bad as now; that even high French officials dared not venture outside the big ports without a strong guard, and that the Anam mandarins were stirring up a general revolt against foreigners. Letters received in Shanghai and Hong Kong from Tonquin up to July 29 give many interesting details of the growing lawlessness. Bands of pirates infest all the northern part of the country. They come up boldly to Lang-son, the present terminus of the railroad, and in several encounters with militia they have routed the troops, having better arms than the French Government furnishes. Last year one of the pirate chiefs captured a wealthy merchant of Hanoi, who was on a tour of his branch houses up the river, and did not restore him to liberty until he had paid a ransom of fifty thousand francs. The captive was led blindfolded to the place of meeting, and was also warned by the pirate that if he gave any information that resulted in loss of life or pecuniary damage to the outlaws they would have his life. No effort was made by the Government to punish this highhanded outrage, and the result has been numerous imitations of this kidnapping.

The latest case is the capture of M. Vezin, the contractor of the railroad which runs fram Lang-son to Phulang-Thuong. Vezin is a rich man and President of the Hoi-Phong Chamber of Commerce. He insisted upon superintending the railway work in person, but when he went to Brahic, the advance post on the road, he took a guard of twenty-five trailleurs. They were of no service, for when he was inspecting the newly constructed road a gang of twenty pirates, well armed with rifles, swooped down on him. His guard took to their heels, and Vezin, before he knew what had happened, was stripped of his clothes, dressed in Chinese garb, and hurried across the country. His captors were seen last going in the direction of Buo-lao, where they are, doubtless, holding him for ransom. The pirates surprised and carried off M. Roque, another wealthy merchant in June. He is now engaged in negotiating for his release, the pirates demanding a larger ransom than M. Roque seems to think is in good taste.

There is no question that the great majority of the pirates are Chinese from Yunnan, the most southerly province of the middle kingdom, and that their lawlessness is winked at by the Chinese Government and the Armanese chiefs. It's almost impossible to capture the freebooters, because they retire rapidly into China with their plunder, and pursuit is hopeless in a country where every man's hand is against the foreigner. The Chinese are much better fighters than the natives of Tonquin, so that, although the French have spent much money in equipping native soldiery, these fellows never hold their own in a square fight with the pirates. They run generally, for they know that if wounded or captured their heads will be lopped off by the victors. The latest news from the interior of Tonquin came by courier to the sea. The courier had a heavy escort, but the pirates along the river were deceived by the appearance of the boat, and a gang of fifty Chinese attacked it. Twelve were killed at the first fire and the rest fled. Near Chingnai the pirates became so great a pest that on July 2 a strong force of militia was sent out. The stronghold of one pirate band was surrounded, but though there were forty men corralled, they fought so desperately that all except two escaped.

The financial reports from Tonquin are not encouraging. The French Government, under the stimulus of M. Bert's energy, began many enterprises, but none of these has proved successful. Trade is poor, agriculture is carried on under too many difficulties, and instead of an increase of revenue, every year sees a growing deficit.

The Eyes of Deep-sea Fish.

Fish that live in deep water have no eyes at all or very large ones.

As we go down in the water we find at each depth that the effects produced upon the eyes of fish are steadily progressive in one direction or the other.

Species that live at a depth of eighty fathoms have the eye already a good deal bigger than their nearest representatives that live at or near the surface. Down to the depth of two hundred fathoms daylight disappears, and the eyes get constantly bigger and bigger. Beyond that depth small-eyed forms set in, with long feelers developed to supplement the eyes. Sight, in fact, is here beginning to atrophy.

In the greatest abysses the fish are mostly blind, feeling their way about entirely by their sensitive bodies over the naked surface of rock at the bottom. Some of them have still external relics of functionless eyes, in others, the eldest and most confirmed abysmal species, the eye has altogether disappeared externally, though its last representatives may still be discovered imbedded deep in the tissues of the head.

There are two ways of getting around the ocean's gloomy abyss—by delicate touch organs or by sight that collects the few rays of light due to phosphorescence or other accidental sources.

How Tea is Sorted.

Tea sorting is one of the common occupations of young girls in tea-farming districts of Japan. They carefully pick out all the seed, weeds, bits of bark and other rubbish that unavoidably fall into the baskets during the picking.

The sorting is done after the tea-leaves have been fired—that is, dried by being placed in a tray, with a stout paper bottom and shaken over a charcoal fire for a time, and then placed on the top of an oven built for that purpose, when the drying operatives twist the leaves by hand.

The pickers, beside taking out the rubbish, in many cases sort the leaves into different grades, the better qualities being taken out and sold at very remunerative prices. The Japanese teas are divided into eight grades, but unfortunately the best of them are not sent to Great Britain.

After the tea has been dried and is ready for picking, it is carefully sifted, and then packed in lead-lined chests and in caddies. The dust from the sifting is saved, and large quantities of it are sent to America every year. It is sold much cheaper than the perfect tea. The dust only costs from about sixpence a pound wholesale, and by careful admixture with good tea can be made to retail at two-and-sixpence.