

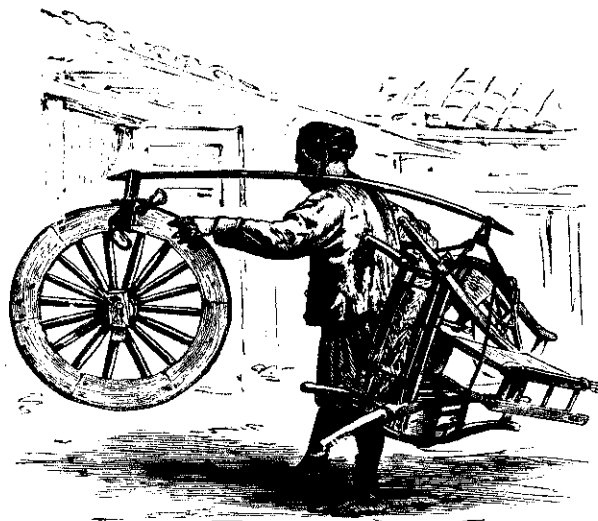
THE CURIOUS CHINESE.

THE war between China and Japan is assuming decidedly exciting features, and once more attention is being drawn to this 'peculiar people,' who are not so well known as they deserve to be. Our illustrations, which are from a collection of private photographs, especially taken a short time since, give us an insight into the everyday life of the Chinese. With regard to the funeral procession, we may mention that white is the mourning colour among the Chinese, the chief mourner being clad from head to foot in white garments. Soon after death the corpse is placed in a coffin on a layer of lime. All the chinks are then stopped with mortar and the coffin varnished. If the premises are extensive enough, several coffins may be kept for years, incense being burned before them periodically. This is, of course, the case only in rich families. On the day of burial, after many ceremonies, the procession is formed, the ancestral tablet of the deceased being borne in a sedan by itself. In front a man scatters imitation silver ingots made of paper, so that intrusive demons in their scrambles after the money may forget the funeral. The procession, with its attendant band of music, etc., often extends to a very great length. When the corpse has been interred amid much wailing and cracker explosion, the mourners disperse and the family return to a feast. Bridal processions are very gorgeous affairs. There are, according to the means of the parties, more or less showy sedans, a rich feast, a band of music, and countless boxes containing the bride's wardrobe. The family tablets, lanterns, and various official insignia, with red umbrellas, etc., are carried in state, the bride herself coming, as a *bonne bouche*, last of all. The demon is as greatly feared at these rejoicings as at the death scene—for it is the custom in some places to have the wedding procession preceded by a man carrying a baked hog in order to divert the attention of any sly demons who might be disposed to become guests. But the custom is not a universal one.

into simple burdens avoid the additional impost. The notion is not a bad one, combining as it does simplicity with ingenuity, and is especially to be commended as a novel means of evading an unpopular tax. Our picture of plough-

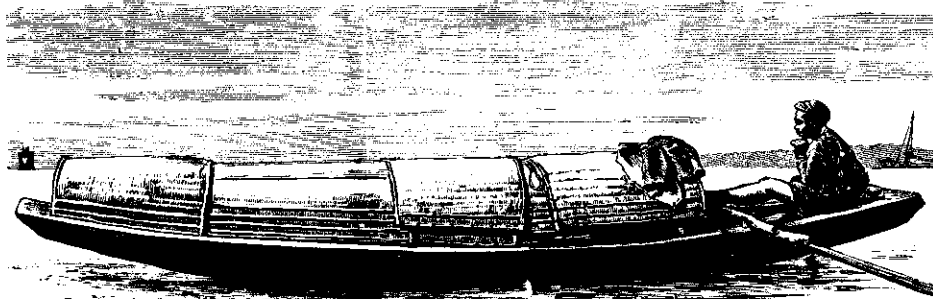
sent day, they are content, as in the time of Diodorus, to 'trace slight furrows with a light plough on the surface of the land.'

A familiar means of locomotion on water—an important matter in certain parts of this extensive Empire—is the dispatch boat. In appearance it is the veriest cockle-shell. But it will live where a stout foreign gig would inevitably be swamped, and as it is the only mode of progression for short water trips open to incidental passengers who cannot command the services of foreign boats, the Shanghai sampan is an absolute necessity. It is propelled by a large flat-bladed scull, which works on the principle of the screw propeller. The accommodation is not very luxurious, and there are certain objections to be taken to the cabin on a wet day when fresh air is shut out altogether with the rain by mats, and especially at the hour when the 'captain' or 'engineer,' or whatever he may most fitly be called who navigates the vessel, is in the act of cooking his dinner. The dispatch boats, which are long, narrow, and shallow, are employed by persons whose business is of so much importance that comfort must yield to celerity. They are also used for conveying dispatches and letters, and are the ordinary 'mail boats' kept by the native post offices. The man in charge sits in the stern and works an oar with his foot, while with his hand he works another on the opposite side, and at the same time steers. When the wind is favourable he uses the hand oar only when it is required to alter the course, and having rigged a slender bamboo mast and mat sail, he controls the sheet with the unoccupied hand.



AN INGENIOUS DEVICE

jug almost speaks for itself. Both plough and barrow are of very simple construction. The 'share' consists of a simple block of wood, sometimes tipped with iron, and sometimes not. As may be imagined, it merely scratches the ground,



A DESPATCH BOAT.

CLAY.

'We are but clay,' the preacher saith;
'The heart is clay, and clay the brain,
And soon or late there cometh death
To blend us with the earth again.'

Well, let the preacher have it so,
And clay we are, and clay shall be—
Well, so be it! for this I know,
That clay does very well for me.

When clay has such red mouths to kiss,
Strong hands to grasp it is enough:
How can I take it aught amiss
We are not made of rarer stuff?

And if one tempt you to believe
His choice would be immortal gold,
Question him, can you then conceive
A warmer heart than clay can hold,

Or richer joys than clay can feel?
And when perforce he falters Nay,
Bid him renounce his wish and kneel,
In thanks for this same common clay.

does full justice to the ingenuity of the Celestial mind. The toll for a wheelbarrow going over a bridge is eighteen cash about three farthings, while a coolie carrying a burden passes for four cash; barrow drivers on arriving at the gate take their barrows to pieces and thus transforming them

and is not very effective. But, fortunately, the rich loam of the Yangtze Valley requires very little to stimulate its productiveness. In this it resembles the country below Memphis, where, as Herodotus relates, the people obtained the fruits of the field without needing to break up the ground to any considerable extent, and where, at the pre-



A FUNERAL PROCESSION