coat or two of varnish. In order to take off a varnish, wash it with the above mentioned ley, then with water, and then lift it off the ſubstance on which it was with any iron instrument.—We ſhall finish this article with a deſcription of the famous Chineſe varnish.

The Chineſe varnish is not a composition, but a resin which exudes from a tree called in China *tsi-chu,* “ varnish tree.” This tree grows in ſeveral provinces of the southern parts of China. The Chineſe take the following method of propagating this tree : In spring they choose a vigorous shoot about a foot in length, which proceeds immediately from the trunk ; and coat over the lower part, by which it adheres to the tree, with a kind of yellow earth, at least three inches in thickneſs. This coat is carefully covered with a mat, to defend it from rain and the injuries of the air. Towards the autumnal equinox they detach a little of the earth, to obſerve in what condition the ſmall roots are, which begin to ſpring forth from the shoot. If they find that the filaments which compoſe them are of a reddiſh colour, they judge it is time to make an amputation ; but they defer it if the roots are white, becauſe this colour shows that they are yet too tender : they then cloſe up the coat again, and wait till the ſpring following. When the shoot is ſeparated from the trunk of the tree, it is put into the earth ; but in whatever ſeaſon it is planted, whether in ſpring or autumn, great care must be taken to put plenty of cinders into the hole prepared for it ; without this precau­tion the ants would destroy the yet tender roots, or at least deprive them of all their moisture, and cauſe them to de­cay.

The Chineſe do not procure varnish from the tſi-chu un­til its trunk is nearly five inches in diameter, which size it ſeldom attains to before ſeven or eight years. Varnish extrac­ted from a tree ſmaller or of leſs age would not have the same body and splendor. This liquor distils only in the night-time, and during the ſummer ſeaſon. To cauſe the gum to flow, they make ſeveral rows of incisions round the trunk, the number of which is proportioned to the vigour of the tree. The first row is ſeven inches from the earth, and the rest are at the same distance one from the other, and continue to the top of the trunk, and even ſometimes on the boughs which are of a ſufficient strength and size. The Chineſe uſe a crooked iron for making theſe incitions, which must run a little obliquely, and be equal in depth to the thickneſs of the bark ; they make them with one hand, and with the other hold a shell, the edges of which they insert into the opening, where it remains without any ſupport. Theſe incisions are made towards evening, and next morn­ing they collect the varnish which has fallen into the shells ; the following evening they are again inſerted, and this ope­ration is continued until the end of ſummer. A thousand trees yield almost in one night 20 pounds of varnish.

While the varnish distils, it exhales a malignant vapour, the bad effects of which can only be prevented by preſervatives and great precaution. The merchant who employs the workmen is obliged to keep by him a large vaſe fill­ed with rape-oil, in which a certain quantity of thoſe fleſhy filaments have been boiled that are found in hog’s lard, and which do not melt. When the workmen are going to fix the shells to the trees, they carry ſome of this oil along with them, and rub their face and hands with it, which they do with greater care when they collect in the morning the var­nish that has distilled during night. After eating, they waſh their whole bodies with warm water, in which the bark of the cheſnut-tree, fir-wood, cryftalliſed saltpetre, and ſome other drugs, have been boiled. When they are at work near the trees, they put upon their heads a ſmall doth bag in which there are two holes, and cover the fore-part of their bodies with a kind of apron made of doe-skin, which is ſuſpended from their necks with firings, and tied round them with a girdle. They alſo wear boots, and have co­verings on their arms, made of the same kind of skin. The labourer who ſhould attempt to collect varniſh without using this precaution, would ſoon be puniſhed for his rashneſs, and the most dreadful effects would enſue. The diſorder shows itſelf by tetters, which become of a bright red colour, and ſpread in a very ſhort time ; the body afterwards ſwells, and the ſkin bursts and appears covered with an univerſal leproſy. The unhappy wretch could not long endure the ex­cruciating pains which he feels, did he not find a ſpeedy remedy in thoſe preſervatives which are uſed against the malignant and noxious exhalations of the varniih,

The ſeaſon of collecting varnish being ended, the mer­chant puts it into ſmall casks cloſely stopped. A pound of it newly made costs him about one ſhilling and eight pence Sterling ; but he gains *cent. per cent.* upon it, and ſometimes more, according to the distance of the place to which he tranſports it.

Besides the lustre and beauty which that varnish gives to many of the Chineſe manufactures, it has also the property of preſerving the wood upon which it is said, eſpecially if no other matter be mixed with it. It prevents it from being hurt either by dampneſs or worms.

Every workman has a particular art and method of using the varnish. This work requires not only much ſkill and dexterity, but alſo great attention, to obſerve the proper de­gree of fluidity which the gum ought to have, as it must be neither too thick nor too liquid when it is laid on. Patience above all is neceſſary in thoſe who wish to ſucceed. To be properly varnished, a work must be done at leiſure ; and a whole ſummer is ſcarcely ſufficient to bring it to perfec­tion. It is therefore rare to see any of thoſe cabinets which are imported to us from Canton ſo beautiful and durable as thoſe manufactured in Japan, Tong-king, and Nang king, the capital of the province of Kiang-nan : not that the artists do not employ the same varniſh ; but as they work for Europeans, who are more easily pleaſed, they do not take the trouble of giving the pieces which come from their hands all the polish they are capable of receiving.

There are two methods of laying on the varnish ; the ſimplest is, when it is immediately laid on the wood. The work is first poliſhed, and then daubed over with a kind of oil which the Chineſe call *tong-yeou.* When this oil is dry, it receives two or three coats of varnish ; which remain ſo tranſparent, that all the shades and veins of the wood may be ſeen through them. If the artift is desirous of entirely concealing the ſubstance on which they are laid, nothing is necessary but to add a few more coats ; theſe give the work a shining ſurface, the ſmoothneſs of which equals that of the moſt beautiful ice. When the work is dry, various figures are painted upon it in gold and filver, ſuch as flow­ers, birds, trees, temples, dragons, &c. A new coat of var­nish is then ſometimes laid over theſe figures, which preſerves them, and adds much to their ſplendor. The second method requires more preparation. The Chineſe workmen fix to tire wood by means of glue a kind of paſteboard, compoſed of paper, hemp, lime, and other ingredients, well beaten, that the varnish may incorporate with them. Of this they make a ground perfectly ſmooth and ſolid, over which the varnish is laid in thin coats, that are left to dry one after the other.

It often happens, that the lustre of varnished tables and other pieces of furniture is inſensibly destroyed by tea and warm liquors. “ The ſecret of restoring to varnish its shi-