skeletons, and fled in dismay, their superstitious fears being proof, even, against the almighty dollar.

Human bones have from time to time been uncovered by others, and in all probability the green mound already referred to is an immense grave. Whether the great mortality was a result of continued and deadly hostilities with the aborigines, or the effect of some pestilence, must be left to conjecture.

It is worthy of note that a plant grows on the hill which has the curious faculty of causing blindness in buffaloes eating it. Those animals are therefore carefully kept away from the place. None of the natives could pick out the particular plant, and the writer is no botanist; perhaps some reader of the *China Review* will elucidate the matter. The pepper plant is also found here, although unknown in the surrounding districts.

It was at the bottom of this hill that the Japanese expeditionary force was encamped. The site is covered with broken beer bottles, which may perhaps have been imported for target purposes, with a view to developing that fine aim so necessary for bush fighting.

A large extent of the great Liang Kian plain was under cultivation by the aborigines before the advent of Chinese. Only barley was the cereal grown, not rice. The interesting question presents itself: why in those days the creek did not fill up as at present. The most plausible explanation would be, that although a certain filling up did take place in the dry months, the force of water during the rainy season was sufficient to clear out the silt, while the numerous dams and other impediments raised by the Chinese in connection with the system of irrigation necessary for rice cultivation, obstructs and diverts that direct rush of water which in former days swept uninterruptedly through the valley.

G. Taylor.

Population of China.—In the abstract of the Peking Gazette, of 23 February, 1887, (see *N. C. Daily News*, of 16th March) the Governor of Chêkiang reports the population of that province at 11,691,255 men, women, and children. This is an enormous decrease as compared with the population of 1812 which is put down at 26,256,784. (Williams, Middle Kingdom. Vol. I. pag. 208, Old edition). According to the Census return of that year, Chêkiang, though the smallest province, was one of the most densely populated, only two others, Ngan-wei and Kiang-su, showing a higher average per square mile. If the inhabitants of other provinces have increased proportionately, the population of China must be very much under what it is generally supposed to be.

H. K.

Short Stories.—A young tiger met an old one and said, 'I got hold of a man to-day whose upper parts were so tasteless and his nether parts so sour, that, hungry as I was, I left him in disgust. I wonder what sort of man this could be?' 'A student who has had to buy his degree,' was the reply.

The Lord of Hades considered a certain spirit to have been a great sinner indeed, so he adjudged that he should re-enter the world to become a poor scholar with five children. 'Is not that a rather light punishment,' remonstrated an angel. 'No,' said His Eminence. 'The five hungry children will soon drive him mad.'

Chang and Chung mutually agreed to start a brewery. Said Chang to Chung, 'You supply the rice and I will furnish the water.' 'But,' queried Chung, 'if the profits are divided according to the capital embarked, I am afraid it will be difficult to apportion your share.' 'Oh I'm not afraid,' said Chang; 'when the brew is over, give me the water, you can have the remainder.'

A man was seized by a tiger. The victim's son took his bow and pursued. 'Hit him in the leg,' cried the father, 'else you'll spoil the market value of the skin.'