

in the homes.

From a boat the scenes along the canal banks were quite picturesque but to walk there was another thing. A woman could be seen seated beside a rock at the edge of the water carefully folding and refolding a number of garments, immersing them and then pounding the mass with a stick. In the same water vegetables and rice were washed for cooking. Utensils and household equipment including commodes were scoured at the same time. Water was drawn out for brewing tea and washing faces and hands. This takes away all romance from the canal.

Through the various contacts we made in the city, sometimes invitations would come to visit the homes behind the high forbidding walls. Houses of the well-to-do if possible face the south with the back toward the street, and a wall around the entire lot. The house is usually built on three sides of a courtyard. The building is constructed of stone, brick, tile, or adobe but almost never of wood. Wood is expensive and scarce.

Drafty halls lead into the large reception room which is different from one in the West. The first impression that an Occidental gets is the scarcity of floor covering and the stiff and formal richly carved blackwood chairs and marble topped stools. Long paper scrolls with inscriptions hang on the walls together with pen and ink sketches. Curios and a vase with one or two sprays of flowering shrub is about all that is seen. There is no fireplace or other kind of heat, neither is there a reading lamp nor a comfortable sofa or easy arm chair in sight.

The garden which is to the front of the house symbolizes