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THE

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PEOPLE OF CHINA;  
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OR,

A SUMMARY

OF

CHINESE HISTORY.

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2584  
REVISÉD BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION OF THE  
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,  
NO. 146 CHESTNUT STREET.

1892

MS 709  
P 41

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## P R E F A C E.

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THERE is, perhaps, no quarter of our globe to which the attention of all classes of people has been turned with more interest, within the last few years, than CHINA.

The civil and commercial relations of that country have been, and are still, the subject of much controversy and anxiety among other nations; and the result of the late negotiations with the British government is yet to be seen.

But when the eyes of CHRISTIANS turn to China, their minds are filled with higher and better thoughts than those which govern the policy of the world. They see there a large proportion of the whole population of the earth sunk in the degradation and folly of heathenism; and they watch, with deep interest, all the events of providence that seem to open the way for their salvation. They seize every opportunity to introduce the blessings of civil and religious liberty among

those who are led captive by Satan at his will. And whenever a Chinese Bible, or religious book or tract, or a printing-press, or a teacher or missionary can gain admission there, they wish to be ready to avail themselves of the favourable moment.

The present volume, though prepared for a sister-institution in Great Britain, has been carefully revised for the society's press. It has been examined by several persons whose residence in or near the Chinese empire give them the means of judging of the correctness of the statements, and we are very happy to present our readers with so succinct and yet so full and authentic an account of the country and its inhabitants.

This "Summary of Chinese History" may be regarded as the introduction to an original work now preparing for the society, which will more fully exhibit the *religious* aspect of Chinese society and the facilities and obstacles for introducing Christianity.

1844.

THE  
PEOPLE OF CHINA.

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CHAPTER I.

A SUMMARY OF CHINESE HISTORY.

THE history of all nations, except the Jews, commences with fabulous traditions. This is true of the annals of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, whose sun of power has long since sunk below the horizon, never more to shine with its ancient splendour; and, it may be added with peculiar emphasis of China, that national vanity, and the love of the marvellous, have induced them to assign to their country such a high degree of antiquity as exceeds the bounds of belief. Even one of their own writers remarks—"It is impossible to credit the accounts of these remote ages."

The fabulous part of Chinese history commences with Puon-koo, who is said to have been followed by a number of persons with fanciful names, who reigned for thousands of years. Among these were Fo-hy, to whom the invention of the arts of music, numbers, etc., is ascribed; Shin-noong, who instructed his people in agriculture; and Hoang-ty, who divided all the lands into groups of nine equal squares, and invented the mode of noting the cycle of sixty years, which is the foundation of the Chinese system of chronology.

In the Chinese annals, Fo-hy, Shin-noong, and Hoang-ty, are denominated the "Three Emperors;" and they are the reputed inventors of all the arts and accommodations of life.

To the "Three Emperors" succeeded the "Five Sovereigns," of whom Yaou and Shun were the last and the most celebrated of all Chinese rulers. It was from the reign of Yaou, who is described as living at about the period of the deluge, that the pages of Chinese history begin to assume somewhat of the appearance of probability, although to the age of Confucius, B. C. 550, they are still sullied with fable and uncertainty.

Yaou is represented as a model of perfection, virtue, and wisdom; his reign as a state of innocence; and the country which he governed as a perfect paradise. The aged and the young, the rich and the poor, alike hailed him as their benefactor, and delighted to recount his praises.

In the "Shoo-king" of Confucius, there is an account of an extensive flood which took place in the reign of Yaou,\* and which appears to be derived from a tradition concerning the Mosaic deluge. It reads thus:—"The emperor Yaou said, 'Vast and destructive are the accumulating waters. They have overflowed their banks, covered the hills, over-topped the loftiest mountains, and are co-extensive with the spacious concave of heaven. Who shall save the people from the calamity?'"

Although it is evident that a flood so vast must have destroyed "all flesh," yet the Chinese histo-

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\* According to Chinese chronology, this took place B. C. 2291, which is only fifty-seven years later than the generally received date of the deluge described by Moses.

rians, having only tradition for their guide, represent Yaou, and his successors, Shun and Yu, as being employed in drawing off the waters of the great inundation. According to their testimony it was effected by Yu; for which reason he was chosen by Shun to be his partner on the throne, and finally his successor. Yu is more celebrated for being the founder of the period, or the dynasty called Hea, which commenced, according to the erroneous chronology of the Chinese, B. C. 2207.

#### FROM THE HEA TO THE HAN DYNASTY.

When Yu assumed the reins of empire, he was ninety-three years of age. He is said to have reigned seven years; and, according to Confucius, with consummate wisdom. With him, indeed, he represents the perfection of princes to have ended. After the reign of Yu, the monarchy became hereditary; and fourteen princes, descended from one Ta-yu, sat upon the throne during four centuries, concerning whom nothing is recorded worthy of note. During that period, it is represented that China was divided amongst a number of feudal chiefs, who either acknowledged the emperor's power, or set him at defiance, according as he was in a condition to exercise authority. There was constant strife between them; and philosophy vainly endeavoured to unite the whole empire under one head. The reign of the Hea, therefore, was inglorious; and it closed with the vicious Keë, who was dethroned by Ching-tang, who became the founder of the Shang dynasty, B. C. 1766.

#### THE SHANG DYNASTY.

Ching-tang justified his usurpation by a solemn appeal to Shang-te, the Supreme Emperor, or Su-

preme Being, whence it became, in the sight of the Chinese, the will of Heaven; and he was permitted to sit upon the throne by universal consent. Nor do his after-actions exhibit unfitness for empire. He was anxious to recall the age of Yaou, Shun, and Yu, and he laboured diligently to improve the condition and the manners of his people.

It is related, that Ching-tang, on ascending the throne, laid up a large store of grain; and that a famine, occasioned by drought, happening soon afterwards, he was enabled thereby to act in a bountiful manner towards his subjects.\* On this account, he is said to have charged himself with the sins which had occasioned the calamity, and by humble confession so to have propitiated the Deity, that plentiful showers fell upon the parched soil, and the wrath of Heaven was appeased. By this conduct, Ching-tang established himself on the throne; and Chinese emperors, from that day to this, have not failed to follow his example. They affect a show of piety, to insure the obedience of their subjects.

The records of the Shang dynasty are very meager. Twenty-seven princes of the same family seem successively to have occupied the throne within the space of 643 years, but their lives are, for the most part, a mere blank.

#### THE CHOW DYNASTY.

The period of authentic Chinese history may be considered as dating from the race of Chow, that is, about 1000 years B. C. Before that time the Chinese had no existing records. While this race sat

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\* A probable allusion to the history of Joseph in Egypt, who lived 1700 years before Christ.



Upon the throne, however, Confucius appeared, and he it was, together with his disciples, who bequeathed to the world various books which relate the early traditions of the country and the annals of their own times. This fact will prove the truth of a previous statement; namely, that before the age of Confucius, the annals of China are fabulous and uncertain. To an attentive observer, indeed, it appears evident that what Confucius related of the Chinese, in remote ages, had reference for the most part to a distinct people. Thus Yaou, Shun and Yu, seem to have been nearly contemporaneous with the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and the points of resemblance in their characters afford evidence that they were one and the self-same persons. Thus, also, Fo-hy is to be identified with Noah. Tradition had handed down its uncertain memorials of these Scripture worthies; and Confucius, whose design was to draw a pattern for the imitation of princes, placed them on the throne of China, and described them as Chinese patriarchs. How prone the Chinese are to imitation, may be seen from the fact that they fabricated a counterpart of Alexander the Great in the person of Tsin-che-hwang-te. But notwithstanding all this, it is clear that the Chinese are, as a nation, the most ancient people in existence, the Jews excepted. Their civilization was coeval with that of the Egyptians; their literature with that of Greece; and the extension of the empire with that of Persia. Confucius himself was nearly contemporary with Herodotus, the father of Grecian history, to whom he is neither inferior in talent nor morality. He was one of those extraordinary men whom the Almighty has in mercy raised up at divers times to alleviate the miseries

of mankind, by teaching them that to be happy, they must be virtuous.

According to the testimony of Confucius, the emperor Woo-wong, first of the new dynasty, which signifies, literally, "the martial king," was without spot or blemish, and a father to his people. His wisdom, however, does not appear to have equalled his goodness. Many feudal states already existed in the country, and he added others, by apportioning territories to the well-deserving statesmen and princes who had lost their patrimony. This act, though emanating from a spirit of kindness, increased the evils which had long been productive of much bloodshed in the empire. For, although the recipients of his bounty may generally have been attached to the cause of the emperor, yet their descendants, possessed of power, exhibited a spirit of insubordination.

After a succession of various rulers, Chaou-seang, prince of Tsin, stripped the last emperor of the Chow race of his imperial dignity, and usurped the throne, B. C. 249.

#### THE TSIN DYNASTY.

When the Tsin state became supreme in power, a reign of terror commenced in China. Chaou-seang and his successors all ruled with an iron rod. The latter monarch, puffed up with inordinate vanity, abolished the humble title of Wang, or "king," which the preceding dynasty had adopted, and called himself Tsin-che-hwang-te, or "The first great emperor." He also proclaimed himself a compeer of Yaou, Shun, and Yu. It was this emperor whom the Chinese annals have extolled as a counterpart to Alexander. According to them, during his reign the renown of Chi-

nese valour became as terrible in Asia as that of the Romans in the western world. This is, doubtless, hyperbole; yet it would appear that he made some foreign conquests or incursions, since most of the Asiatic tribes date their knowledge of China from his era. The Huns and Tartar tribes also appear to have been completely subdued by him. He chased them into their deserts, and, to protect the country against their future inroads, erected, or at least completed, the famous great wall of China, which has now stood for 2,000 years.

The emperor died B. C. 207, and was succeeded by his son, Urh-she-hwang-te, who was deposed by Lew-pang, the captain of a band of robbers, who usurped the throne, and founded a new dynasty, about B. C. 201.

#### THE HAN DYNASTY.

One of the most celebrated periods of Chinese history commenced with the race of Han. Its founder, Lew-pang, ascended the throne under the name of Kaou-tsoo, and he kept the empire in complete subjection. He died when his son and heir was still a child, whence his wife became regent. Finally, indeed, she became ruler, for the young prince died before the period of his accession to the throne, and she usurped the empire, and reigned under the name of Leu-how. Her reign was one of terror; but her successor, Wan-te, redressed the grievances of his subjects, so that he gained great celebrity.

Wan-te was the first who gave a distinctive name to his reign, which custom has been followed by all succeeding dynasties. His successors were considered great scholars, and munificent patrons of literature. The empire seems to have

been swayed by philosophy, but it proved vain to defend it from its old enemies. It was at this period that the Tartars, by their predatory warfare, became the source of endless disquiet to the nation, and neither alliances nor tribute could make them lay down their arms. Even the gift of the emperor's daughters in marriage with the ruthless chiefs could not stop their ravages. They came onward still, like a devastating flood.

Among the earlier princes of this race were Woo-te, Seun-te, and Gae-te. All of these appear to have been celebrated for their abilities; and Seun-te was conspicuous for his love of literature. The last year of the reign of Gae-te is described as coeval with our Saviour's birth; yet, to that people, he still remains unknown. The sound of the glad tidings of salvation has yet scarce been heard in that vast empire; but hope points to the day when it will go forth throughout every part. The chain by which the empire has been bound for ages is broken, and, ere long, the disciples of Confucius, Taou, and Budhu, may become the disciples of Christ. The fields of China are opening, and labourers, we trust, will enter them, and gather an abundant harvest.

After the death of Gae-te, (his successor being a minor,) Wang-mang, an ambitious and cruel grandee, dethroned the Han family. Various leaders collected forces to assert the rights of that race, and they were successful. Wang-mang was slain, but one of the victorious generals was raised to the throne, under the name of Kwang-woo, A. D. 25, and the line of the Han princes remained still uninterrupted.

The emperors from Kwang-woo downward are called Tung-han. It is said of Ming-te, his suc-

cessor, that he was prompted, by a dream, to search for the Holy One in the west, as pointed out by Confucius. An embassy was instantly despatched to Hindoostan, and some priests of Budhu accompanied them to China. The tenets which these priests taught found an advocate in the emperor's brother, and Budhuism henceforth spread its baneful influence over the minds of the people, and became even more popular than the state religion. This is a remarkable event in Chinese history. Although averse to every thing foreign, and although they looked upon the Hindoos with great contempt, yet they embraced with ardour their gross and debasing system of idolatry; a proof that the human mind, if unenlightened by Divine revelation, readily submits to the most degrading superstitions. Of what importance, then, is the gospel to such a people? It will rescue them from the greatest evils to which a fallen nature is ever prone, and to which the Chinese seem especially exposed.

Ming-te was succeeded by Chang-te, who is celebrated for his victory over the Tartars, and in whose reign literature greatly flourished. After his death, women, eunuchs, and children held the reins of government during successive reigns. Then came the period of the San-Kuo, or "Three States," into which the country was divided towards the close of the Han dynasty, and which forms a favourite subject of the historical plays and romances of the Chinese. Three states long struggled for dominion, and numerous were the exploits which the respective generals of the three leaders performed; but, at length, How-te, the legitimate emperor, abdicated the throne in favour of the prince of Wei, and the Han dynasty

was no more. It arose in splendour, but it set behind a cloud of misfortune.

The Chinese consider this period as the most glorious in their history, and to this day they call themselves *Han jin*, "Sons, or men of Han;" nor do their opinion and their boast appear to be ill-founded. During the epoch of the Han dynasty, China produced some of its most celebrated generals, writers, statesmen and sages. The empire, also, was extended towards the south and the west, and Chinese civilization was carried to the borders of the Indian Archipelago and the foot of the Imaus. Moreover, the learning of the country spread its influence extensively, being fostered by the state: but civil wars disturbed the order of the government and the prosperity of the ruling race: they fell before them, A. D. 264.

#### THE TSIN DYNASTY.

This dynasty, the second of the name, was founded by Sze-ma-yen, who ruled over the Tsin principality, and who, when the three contending states had exhausted each other, stepped forward at the head of his forces, and secured the prize for which they had been struggling.

The family sat upon the throne for 156 years. During that period fifteen emperors held the reins of government; yet among them all there was not one who attained any celebrity. Their rule was marked by cruelty and usurpations, and war never ceased among the principalities. To increase the misery of the people, the Tartars ranged themselves under the banners of some tributary princes, and partook in the general plunder of the country. At length, however, Lew-yu, prince of Sung, having been ill rewarded by his master for his services

against the Tartars, assassinated him, with nearly the whole of the imperial family, and ascended the throne, A. D. 420.

#### THE SUNG DYNASTY.

The founder of this dynasty, although a man of considerable talent, was wily and cruel. Eight emperors of his family sat upon the throne, but two only were capable of ruling; himself and Wan-te. The rest were debauchees and monsters of cruelty, exhibiting throughout their lives the desperate wickedness of the human heart. Most of them were assassinated, and the last was dethroned by the prince of Tse, who usurped the sovereignty, A. D. 480.

#### THE TSE DYNASTY.

It is proper to mention here, that, on the accession of the Sung dynasty, China became divided into two principal kingdoms. The princes of Wei established a vigorous government in the north, having Honân for their capital; while the Sung family reigned over the south at Nankin. This state of affairs continued until the Suy dynasty, A. D. 589, when the empire was united under one head. It is of the southern dynasty only, however, of which Chinese historians deign to speak in detail; for the princes of Wei, being Tartars, were looked upon as intruding barbarians: but whether barbarians or not, and though they were ignorant of the doctrines of Confucius, the Tartar princes seem to have excelled the Chinese in practical wisdom. Whilst the southern provinces suffered from misrule, they governed the northern with complete success.

On ascending the throne, Seaou-taou-ching, who

assumed the imperial name of Kaou-te, endeavoured to raise the country from its degraded condition. In this he was successful, for he left the state very prosperous; but his son and grandson were incapable of ruling. The latter was dispossessed of the throne by an intriguing statesman, named Seaou-lun, who created himself emperor under the title of Ming-te. His reign was brief. The northern emperor came up against him, and both the usurper and defender of the rightful heir perished in the struggle. After this, Seaou-yen, a celebrated general, exalted Ho-te to the throne, but he soon deposed him, and having adopted the title of Prince of Leang, reigned himself, A. D. 502.

We pass over a succession of dynasties characterized by the same exhibition of violence and fraud which mark the history of all other nations, and prove the universal corruption of man.

It is worthy of remark, that Christianity is said to have been first made known to a few of the natives of China, about A. D. 640. It appears to have been introduced by certain Christians of the Nestorian church; but it does not seem to have been adopted by any great number of the people. The multitude still bowed the knee to idols. Tae-tsung, who became emperor in 619, and his successors, were all weak princes; and they disregarding the voice of truth, their subjects followed their example. Darkness still covered the whole land, and gross darkness the people.

Kublai, the leader of the Mongols, proclaimed himself emperor in the year 1279, after the death of the last of the Southern rulers. His son, the only remaining branch of the imperial family, had taken refuge in the fleet at Canton; but being pursued by the Mongols, a minister of the late mo-



narch embraced the young emperor, and threw himself with him into the sea, where they both perished. He appears to have been one of the greatest rulers China ever possessed; but being a Tartar, and hence deemed a barbarian, Chinese historians have avenged themselves on his memory by passing over his exploits in silence. How great these must have been, is proved by the fact that all the tribes of the Siberian ice-fields, the deserts of Asia, and the country between China and the Caspian, acknowledged his sway. He fitted out a fleet of four thousand vessels in order to subject Japan; but bounds were set to his restless ambition. This fleet was dispersed by a storm, and before he could put another in motion, death ended his schemes, A. D. 1294.

Kublai was succeeded by his grandson, Ching-tsung, who reigned in peace. So also did Woo-tsung, his successor, who exerted himself to render his subjects happy. In his reign foreign trade seems to have been carried on very briskly, for it was deemed necessary that the exportation of gold, silver, grain, and silk should be prohibited. In the days of Jin-tsung, the next emperor, the administration underwent a complete change. All foreigners holding high stations were expelled, and Chinese scholars appointed in their room. Philosophers governed the country; but their rule, being rather of a speculative than a practical nature, proved fatal to the reigning dynasty. Bands of robbers overawed the government; and this state of affairs existed during the reigns of five successive emperors, when, in the midst of wild anarchy, Chuen-yuen-chang, who was originally a robber, appeared as a patriotic leader, and laid the foundation of the Ming dynasty. By him the

last emperor of the Mongol race was chased from the throne, and the Mongols hastily fled to their deserts. Thus this dynasty ceased, and China was again ruled by native emperors, A. D. 1368.

During the reign of Kea-tsing, one of the last rulers of this race, the Portuguese found their way into China. This was in the sixteenth century. A new era seemed then to be approaching; for Popish missionaries penetrated into the empire, and communicated some knowledge both of the religion and the sciences of Europe. But their efforts proved abortive. The religion they taught was a corrupted Christianity, and their work was brought to nought. The pure doctrines of the Bible alone are able to demolish the strongholds of superstition which have for ages existed in China. Even had the Portuguese succeeded, it would have been only setting up one mode of superstition for another; the heart of the worshipper would still have remained unaffected, and the mind unenlightened. For Popery is a religion which appeals to the sight, and not to the inner man. It leaves that grand truth uttered by our Saviour to Nicodemus out of the question: "Ye must be born again;" and substitutes for it superstitious inventions of human device.

#### THE TA-TSING DYNASTY.

The Ming dynasty was subverted by the robber chief, Le, who took possession of the capital of China, and declared himself emperor. He was opposed by an army of Mantchoo Tartars under Tsung-tih, and overthrown. The Tartar chief died, but the grandees entered Peking in triumph, and proclaimed his nephew emperor, under the name of Shun-che.

Shun-che was a minor, and the regency which ruled during his minority did much to conciliate the Chinese. Notwithstanding, the mandarins obstinately opposed his reign. Four princes of the Ming family were successively raised by them to the throne; but they were all defeated by the victorious Tartars. Shun-che still reigned, and at the death of his uncle, Amawang, in 1651, he assumed the reins of government.

Shun-che was instructed in the art of government by a German Jesuit, to whose suggestions perhaps he mainly owed his success. After the death of his uncle, he ruled, for the most part, in peace, having only one antagonist to encounter, namely, a Fo-keën man, whose father had fallen a victim to the treachery of the Mantchoos, and who, incited by revenge, braved the whole imperial forces, by ruling over the Chinese seas. Shun-che reigned solely eleven years, and he was succeeded by his heir, the renowned Kang-he.

Notwithstanding much had been done during the reign of Shun-che towards the establishment of the Mantchoo Tartars in China, such a consummation was doubtless fully brought to pass by the master mind of Kang-he. He it was, who, by his vigour and his skill, laid a firm foundation for the throne of his dynasty, which is still in existence. For not only did he by his personal character win the hearts of the Chinese, but by his prowess he subdued his foreign foes. The Mongols and Kalmucks were humbled by him; and he even prescribed a treaty to the Russians, who had pushed their settlement to the river Amour.

Having thus proved victorious over all his enemies, Kang-he applied himself to the reformation of the government, in which he was equally suc-

cessful. He endeavoured to introduce arts and sciences, and to destroy the system of slavish adherence to antiquated custom, which is the characteristic feature of the Chinese. But in this he failed. What the Chinese were before and were then, they still remain. Notwithstanding, he gave a fresh impulse to literature by the expulsion of all those doctors from Han-lin college who could not give proof of their qualifications, and by having a national dictionary compiled. Under his direction, also, the whole country was surveyed by the Jesuits; and he so far triumphed over national prejudices, as to adorn his palace by European arts.

Kang-he ruled sixty years over the empire of China. He died in 1723; and was succeeded by Yung-chin, who obtained the imperial dignity by stratagem. His brother, who had been nominated heir of the crown, being absent in Tartary, he usurped the throne, and sent all his nearest relations into exile, (one brother excepted, to whom he was tenderly attached,) lest they should prove rivals.

One of the first measures of Yung-chin was to banish the Jesuit missionaries to Canton, because of their disposition to intrigue, and the influence they had gained thereby at court. To their conduct at this period, as well as the jealous eye with which the Chinese ever look upon "barbarians," may be attributed the entire expulsion of the missionaries from the interior of China. They saw that while the Jesuits professedly served God, they sought with eagerness after mammon; and looking upon other missionaries as similar characters, have hence denied them that free intercourse by which alone the people of China can be fully instructed in the ways of righteousness.

Yung-chin was succeeded by Keën-lung, who, like his great predecessor, Kang-he, reigned during the long period of sixty years. Keën-lung was no unworthy inheritor of the fame and dominion of his grandfather. He was a munificent patron of learning, and, under him, the empire was at peace. One expedition only, of any celebrity, was undertaken by him, which was against the Meaou-tse, a race of mountaineers not far from the province of Canton. The emperor boasted that he had subdued them; but there is reason to believe that they still not only retained their independence, but that they were victors. Never yet have they submitted to the Tartar tonsure, which is the only mark of Tartar conquest.

During the reign of Keën-lung, the Dutch, English, and Portuguese sent embassies to China, which were favourably received. He was upon the point of being involved in a war with Russia, but, fortunately for the Chinese empire, matters were amicably arranged. When he had ruled sixty years, which just completes a revolution of the Chinese cycle, he resigned his throne to his son Kea-king, A. D. 1795.

Kea-king was ill calculated to maintain the imperial dignity after such an able ruler as his father. His habits were extremely profligate. After the morning audience, from which no emperor can excuse himself, he generally retired to the company of comedians: he even took them with him when he proceeded to sacrifice at the temples of Heaven and Earth. This conduct gave birth to secret machinations and open rebellion. His life was frequently attempted; and scarcely a year elapsed without a revolution breaking out in some part of the empire. His profligacy brought him

into universal contempt, and his weakness rendered him the object of scorn. The care of the administration was left to others, and he wallowed in pleasures of the grossest nature, in the midst of which he died, leaving the empire to Taou-kwang, A. D. 1821.

Taou-kwang, which signifies "Reason's glory," is the present emperor of China. He was appointed to succeed his father, because he nobly defended him when his palace was stormed by a band of robbers. His personal character is much better than that of his father, though his conduct has been far from realizing the lofty title ascribed to him. The torrent of corruption which broke forth among his subjects during the life of Keaking remains unstemmed, while he lives a life of inglorious ease in the retirement of his palace. In the civil administration he has done nothing requiring particular notice. As he found the laws, so they still remain. The great maxim of his government is to remain passive, and to accommodate himself to circumstances as they occur. Twice only has the emperor's energy been roused to action in the field, and in both cases without honour. When a rebellion occurred in Turkestan, he quelled it by bribes of silver and gold; and when he arrayed his forces against the English in the recent war, they were on all occasions defeated. He has been compelled to purchase peace at a great cost.

Like his immediate predecessor, Taou-kwang has exhibited a determined aversion and hostility to the Roman Catholic religion. The "religion of the western ocean" is to him an abomination; and he has given full proof of this in expelling the last of those European missionaries from Peking,

who had been attached for two hundred years to that tribunal, whose business it is to observe the motions of the heavenly bodies, and to construct the Imperial Calendar. He has also warred against European science. The last traces of it have been nearly obliterated in the capital; and a series of fierce edicts have been successively published to prohibit the Chinese from making themselves acquainted with it again. They have been commanded to have no dealings with barbarians!

And yet the recent successes of the English open a wide door of hope for the true philanthropist. The two people are more closely united than they have ever before been in the annals of history. Twice indeed have the English been *permitted* to send embassies to the court of China, but they were received as unworthy of entering into the "celestial empire." But now it is otherwise. The humanity of the conquerors towards their foes has begotten in the breasts of the Chinese respect for them. Even the haughtiness of the court is subdued by it, and a disposition for a close and friendly alliance is clearly exhibited. From contact with Christians of other nations, it may be hoped that the "hoary-headed nation," China, is approaching a great crisis. If Christians do their duty, they will pour forth the word of truth on the right hand and on the left throughout that vast empire; and thus the long struggle between the two powers will be made subservient to the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. China, out of its superabundant population, shall then present a scene never before witnessed—a people serving and worshipping the one true God. Its idols shall be cast to the moles and the bats; its flimsy webs of

philosophy rent asunder; and its inhabitants shall flock to the temple of the living God as "doves to the windows." And that such a consummation shall one day take place, the sure word of prophecy testifies. Every nation and every kingdom under heaven—the vast and populous empire of China included—shall become "the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ." All shall own his gentle sway!

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE CHINESE COURT.

IF absolute and extended power could impart happiness to the human breast, then the emperor of China might prove the object of envy to all monarchs. He reigns over almost one-third of the human race, and throughout his dominions his will is law. Arrogating to himself the title of "Interpreter of the decrees of Heaven,"\* he issues his edicts as he pleases, and his subjects bow submissively at his feet. However arbitrary, cruel, and unjust they may be, none venture to oppose him. He is even worshipped with divine honours throughout the empire. He professes to worship Heaven, and the people blindly worship him.

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\* This is only one among the numerous titles of the emperor of China. He is also called the Son of Heaven; Imperial Supreme; Holy Lord; Most High; Lord of Ten Thousand Years; King of Kings, etc. One of his most appropriate titles is, King of Ten Thousand Islands, inasmuch as the mainland of China is surrounded by islands in great numbers, which he governs.





The Emperor of China, with Mandarins.

This will be clearly seen from the testimony of an eye-witness to the celebration of the emperor's birth-day at Peking:—

“The first day was consecrated to the purpose of rendering a solemn, sacred, and devout homage to the supreme majesty of the emperor. The princes, tributaries, ambassadors, great officers of state, and principal mandarins, were assembled in a vast hall, and, upon particular notice, were introduced into an inner building, bearing the semblance of a temple. It was chiefly furnished with instruments of music, among which were sets of

cylindrical bells, suspended in a line from ornamented frames of wood, and gradually diminishing in size from one extremity to the other, and also triangular pieces of metal, arranged in the same order as the bells. To the sound of these instruments, a slow and solemn hymn was sung by persons who had such a command over their voices as to resemble the effect of musical glasses at a distance. The performers were directed, in gliding from one tone to another, by the striking of a shrill and sonorous cymbal; and the judges of music among the gentlemen of the embassy were much pleased with their execution. The whole had, indeed, a grand effect. During the performance, and at particular signals, nine times repeated, all the persons present prostrated themselves nine times, except the ambassador and his suite, who made a profound obeisance: but he whom it was meant to honour continued, as if it were in imitation of the Deity, invisible the whole time. The awful impression made upon the minds of men by this apparent worship of a fellow-mortal was not to be effaced by any immediate scenes of gaiety, which were postponed to the following day."

This ceremony is universal and simultaneous through the chief cities of China. All worship the creature in the person of their emperor; and yet it would not appear that the emperor, or his court, think that such honours are rightly due to him. The homage is apparently exacted as a trick of state, for every device is called into action to perpetuate the impression of awe. Thus no person is allowed to pass before the outer gate of the palace, either on horseback or in a vehicle; the vacant throne is worshipped when the empe-

ror does not occupy it; an imperial despatch is received in the provinces with offerings of incense and prostration, looking towards Peking; and there is a paved walk to the principal audience hall on which none may walk but the emperor: to such miserable expedients will man resort to gain power over his fellow-man, and to oppose his Maker. It is in vain that the assertion is made that the emperor has received such authority in order to show compassion, maintain peace, and promote civilization amongst all tribes: actual practice denounces such a declaration as a vile subterfuge, and history confirms the fact. The love of power alone has stimulated the emperors of China to climb to such a giddy height over their subjects.

The sovereign of China has the absolute disposal of the succession. If he pleases, he can name his heir out of his own family, several examples of which are given in the preceding chapter. Generally, however, as is natural, the Chinese emperors have sought to perpetuate their dynasties by the succession of the members of their own family—the eldest son, if deemed worthy; if not, a younger, or some more remote branch of the race.

As in most oriental countries, the imperial sanction to all public acts is conveyed by the impression of a seal. Any remarks or directions made by the emperor himself are written in red, commonly styled “the vermilion pencil.” The whole appears to be dictated by him, for he neither proposes questions, nor asks advice of his ministers. They remain mute while he promulgates his will as the “Son of Heaven.” It is probable, however, that in secret he frequently has confidential counsellors. In public he acts alone, in order to maintain his self-importance. The history of the

Chinese shows that but few emperors among them have been sufficiently sage to rule without counsel.

All edicts of a special nature, after being addressed to the proper tribunal, are promulgated in the Peking Gazette. This paper contains nothing but what relates to the government, and it is death to falsify any article inserted therein. The articles consist of edicts, proclamations, rescripts, orders in council, promotions, etc., which bear different names according to their contents. The most striking amongst them are those in which the emperor exhorts and admonishes the world to become virtuous, and turn to righteousness. These articles are very long, and contain many maxims drawn from the writings of Chinese moralists, which are well worth the attention of the reader; for if they are not calculated to affect the heart, they convey much instruction to the mind.

As high priest of the empire, the emperor of China alone, with his representatives, offers sacrifices in the government temples. These sacrifices are composed of victims and incense, and the mode of offering them is precisely the same as among the nations of antiquity. The sacrificial duties of the emperor are far more numerous and burdensome than any others laid upon his shoulders. They comprehend a tedious ceremonial, and a number of vain rites, none of which he may neglect. These cannot be laid before the reader, but the following description of an imperial procession to the temple dedicated to Teën may give some idea of the scene within:—"This imperial procession was headed by twenty-four drummers, and as many trumpeters: next to them were an equal number of men armed with red varnished

staves, seven or eight feet long, and adorned with golden foliage. Then followed one hundred soldiers carrying halberds, ending in a crescent and gilded at the end; then four hundred great lanterns finely adorned, and four hundred torches made of wood, which burn for a long time, and yield a great light; two hundred spears, some set off with flowing silk of various colours, others with tails of panthers, foxes, and other animals; twenty-four banners, painted with the signs of the zodiac; fifty-six banners, exhibiting the fifty-six constellations into which all the stars are divided; two hundred fans, supported by long gilded sticks, painted with figures of dragons, birds, and animals; twenty-four umbrellas, richly adorned; and a beaufet, carried by officers of the kitchen, and furnished with gold utensils, such as basins, ewers, etc. The emperor followed on horseback, with a grave majestic air, pompously dressed; on each side of him was carried a rich umbrella, large enough to shade both him and his horse. He was surrounded with ten white horses, led, whose saddles and bridles were enriched with gold and precious stones; one hundred spear-men, and the pages of the bed-chamber. After this appeared, in the same order, the princes of the blood, the kings, the principal mandarins, and the lords of his court, in their habits of ceremony; five hundred young gentlemen belonging to the palace; one thousand footmen in red gowns, embroidered with flowers, and stars of gold and silver. Then thirty-six men carried an open chair, followed by another that was close and much larger, supported by one hundred chairmen. Lastly, came four large chariots, two drawn by elephants, and two by horses, covered with embroidered housings;

each chair and chariot had one hundred and fifty men following it for its guard. The procession was closed by two thousand civilians, and as many military mandarins, in magnificent habits of ceremony." That such an imposing procession as this should leave an impression of awe upon the minds of the subjects of the emperor of heathen China, can form no matter of wonder.

Another reason for the superstitious reverence which the Chinese pay to their emperor may be found in the fact, that he is represented as forming the link between God and man; as having at all times access to the heavenly powers, of whom he can not only request, but demand blessings; as possessing power over the whole material and immaterial world; and as superintending the course of nature. These blasphemous assertions weigh with the multitude, and insure their ready veneration. So also do their professions of paternal love for their subjects, which are always contained in their edicts. These are well calculated to take the heart captive, and especially when it is considered that one of the leading characteristics of the Chinese nation is ignorant simplicity.

It is the custom of the Chinese emperor to give, from time to time, an account of his conduct to the nation. When he does this, after some public calamity, his expressions are those of the deepest humility. They are, however, only to be considered as the language of the lips, and not of the heart. The sentiments which such edicts contain are chosen from the best models of his predecessors, and the paper is drawn up for his use by a member of the Han-lin College. The form of a petition addressed to the "azure heavens" for rain is subjoined, as it will not only illustrate the pre-

sent but preceding paragraphs. It was promulgated by the present emperor, and it reads thus:—

“Kneeling, a memorial is presented to cause affairs to be heard. Alas, imperial Heaven! were not the world afflicted by extraordinary changes, I would not dare to present extraordinary services; but this year the drought is unusual. The summer is past, and no rain has fallen. Agriculture and human beings feel the dire calamity, and beasts, insects, herbs, and trees almost cease to live.

“I, the minister of Heaven, am placed over mankind, and am responsible for keeping the world in order and tranquillizing the people. Although it is impossible for me to sleep or eat with composure; although I am scorched with grief, and palsied with anxiety, still no genial showers are vouchsafed. Some days ago, I fasted, and offered rich sacrifices on the altars of the gods of the land and the grain, and had to be thankful for gathering clouds and light showers, but not sufficient to cause gladness. Looking up, I consider that Heaven’s heart is benevolence and love. The sole cause is my daily sins, and my little sincerity and devotion: hence I have been unable to move Heaven’s heart, and bring down abundant blessings.

“Having searched the records,\* I find that in the twenty-fourth year of Keén-lung, my imperial grandfather, the high, honourable, and pure emperor reverently performed a great snow service. I feel impelled, by ten thousand considerations, to

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\* This will serve to remind the reader of that incident in the book of Esther, in which it is related that Ahasuerus, when he could not sleep, commanded the records to be brought and read before him, that he might discover whether he had left any duty unfulfilled. Such is still the oriental custom.

look up and imitate the usage ; and with trembling anxiety assail Heaven, examine myself, and consider my errors, looking up and hoping that I may obtain pardon. I ask myself whether I have been irreverent in sacrifice? Whether pride and prodigality have had a place unobserved in my heart? Whether I have uttered irreverent words, and deserved reprehension? Whether rewards have been conferred or punishments inflicted in strict equity?"

After this, the edict goes on to hint at the emperor's probable faults, which are here passed over, and it thus concludes:—

“Prostrate, I beg imperial Heaven to pardon my ignorance and stupidity, and to grant me renovation, for myriads of innocent people are involved by me, who am but a single man. My sins are so numerous that it is difficult to escape from them. Summer is past, and autumn arrived; to wait longer is impossible. Beating my head on the ground I pray imperial Heaven to hasten and confer a gracious deliverance, a speedy and divinely beneficial rain, and to save the people's lives, and in some degree redeem my iniquities. Alas, imperial Heaven! observe these things. Alas, imperial Heaven! be gracious. I am grieved, alarmed, and frightened.

“This memorial is presented reverently, 12th year of Taou-kwang, 28th day, 6th month”—  
(July 25, 1832.)

These edicts relative to the emperor's conduct are not confined to seasons of calamity. When the country is in a flourishing state he issues those of a different character, in which he praises himself, and thanks Heaven that he is so perfect a man as to insure such blessings. And it is



worthy of remark, that this has been the policy of *all* Chinese emperors, whether natives or foreigners. However different their manners may have been before, so soon as they have seated themselves in the "divine utensil," or the throne, they set themselves up as the mediators between Heaven and their subjects. Even the rude and fierce Mantchoo Tartar made no scruples in adopting for his title "The Son of Heaven," when the fortunes of war placed the sceptre of the empire in his hands. Policy taught him to rule as though he was a genuine descendant of "the black-haired race."

As might be reasonably supposed of so exalted a mortal, the installation of a Chinese emperor is a very imposing ceremony. An eye-witness of that of Kang-he thus describes the ceremony:—"All the mandarins were ranged on both sides, dressed in silk, flowered with gold in the form of roses. There were fifty men who held great umbrellas of gold brocade and silk, with their staves gilt, divided into two rows. On the side of them were fifty other officers, having large fans of silk, embroidered with gold; and near these were twenty-eight large standards, embroidered with golden stars, and the figures of the moon in all its changes. In order to represent its twenty-eight mansions in the heavens, and its different conjunctions and oppositions with the sun, as they appear in the intersection of the circles, which the astronomers call nodes; these things were delineated with considerable accuracy. A hundred standards followed these, and the rest of the mandarins carried maces, axes, hammers, and other instruments of war or court ceremony, with heads of strange monsters and other animals." Such is the para-

phernalia of the occasion when a mortal is self-constituted "The Son of Heaven!"

Concerning the private life of the emperor of China, scarcely any thing is known among Europeans. He appears very little in public, regarding it as the safest policy to withdraw from the gaze of his subjects, in order to inspire them with the greatest awe. Frequent intercourse with them is deemed unsafe, as it would greatly diminish their reverence for his "sacred person." As for the charms which constitute the pleasures of civilized life, they are little known to such a despotic monarch. His time, for the most part, is spent in the harem, where a veil is gathered over his proceedings which cannot be drawn aside. The imperial palace is forbidden ground to all except those of his own household, unless when he gives an audience. What it is on these occasions may be seen from the following description, given by some Papal missionaries:—

"The palace, which shines with carving, varnish, gilding, and painting, stands upon a kind of platform, paved with large square pieces of a beautiful green marble, polished like glass, and laid so close together, that one cannot distinguish the joinings. At the entrance of the great hall there is a door, which opens into a large square room, paved with marble, where the emperor was sitting on an estrade, after the Tartar fashion. The beams of the roof were supported by wooden columns, varnished with red, and fixed in such a manner in the wall that they were even with its surface. We performed the usual ceremonies; that is, we ranged ourselves in a line facing the emperor, and fell on our knees three times, bowing every time to the ground. In receiving these

marks of our respect, he did us great favour; for when the mandarins of the six sovereign courts come every fifth day, on the first day of the year, and on the emperor's birth-day, to perform this ceremony, he is scarcely ever present; he is even at some distance from the palace when they pay him this homage. After we had performed this duty, we approached his person, kneeling on one side, and in a line. He asked us our names, ages, and country, and entertained us with a sweetness and affability which would be surprising in any prince, but was much more so in the emperor of China."

The table of a Chinese emperor is supplied with but few dainties. The wine he drinks is made from sour mare's-milk, and would be very unpalatable to those accustomed to the juice of the grape. Sometimes he gives a public repast at his palace, to which a certain class of persons are invited, as the aged, whom the emperor himself waits upon; and the learned, who partake of his bounties under the sound of music.

The emperor of China participates in various diversions, the most remarkable of which is hunting, in the season of autumn. It more resembles a campaign than a hunt, on account of the large number of soldiers who follow in his train. The custom was, indeed, introduced in order to inure the soldiers to fatigue, and to maintain in them a spirit worthy of the sons of the desert. But the means could hardly have answered the end, for the prey was easily taken at all times, it being the custom to surround, and not pursue it in a straight line, or through whatever course fear might prompt it to take. At present the custom seems to be falling into disuse, owing, perhaps, to the fact, that

the death of Kea-king, the father of the present monarch, was caused by an accident he met with in hunting on the mountain of Kwan-jin.

In former days, as in the reign of Kang-he, it was customary for the emperor to make extensive tours in the provinces, in order to take cognisance of the state of the country. Now he is seldom heard of beyond Peking and Jehol. When he does leave the palace, he is carried in a sedan-chair, and is preceded by the princes and nobility on horseback; the prime ministers and presidents of the six boards, hereafter described, marching before him. These are followed by three companies of twenty men each, bearing yellow flags, embroidered with dragons, umbrellas of the same colour, and fans. After these come the life-guards, clothed in yellow, wearing a kind of helmet, and armed with a javelin or halberd, gilt and adorned with the figure of the sun, or moon, or of some animal. The emperor is carried by twelve men in yellow, and is surrounded with musicians.

On the occasion of the pilgrimage to the imperial tombs, the emperor of China is surrounded with great pomp. All his grandees accompany him, and his expedition resembles more the march of an army going out to battle than a procession of pilgrims. When he has arrived at the land of his birth, he and his grandees pay their devotion at the graves of his ancestors. But here the idea of a pilgrimage ends. Regardless of the lesson which a sight of the tomb is calculated to impart, the emperor divests himself of all care, and abandons himself to rural sports, as though he was anxious to forget that, like the departed great, he also was mortal. But although he arrogates to himself titles which convey an idea of his

immortality, death, the mighty leveller of the human race, pays no more regard to the emperor of China, than he does to the beggar on a dunghill.

The manner of mourning, on the demise of an emperor of China, may be seen in the following rules, laid down in an edict issued at the death of Kea-king.

“When any one of the immaculate sages of the family is numbered with those gone before, the succeeding emperor shall be the chief mourner. He shall take the fringes from his cap, and wail and stamp his feet for sorrow. The empress, and all the ladies of inferior rank in the palace or harem, shall put away their ear-rings, and every ornament of their head-dress. A table shall be spread out before the coffin, and there the kings, princes, and nobles shall pour out libations. The empress, concubines, and imperial children, and grandchildren, shall all assemble there, to weep and stamp their feet, as an expression of grief. After the first burst of sorrow is over, they shall retire. Then the imperial successor shall put on mourning, cut off the riband with which his tail is plaited, and take up his abode in a hovel with the corpse. The princes, imperial grandchildren, the kings, nobles, and great officers of the household, and all the kindred, shall likewise cut off their tails; and the empress, concubines, and ladies of the harem shall shave their heads.

“The emperor shall mourn for three years, and, during the first hundred days, shall cause all imperial edicts to be written with blue ink. During as many days, the Chinese shall desist from shaving their heads. The officers of the government at Peking shall not give their sons and daughters in marriage for the space of one year. The Mongol

kings and nobles, as well as ambassadors from Corea, who may be at Peking, shall wear mourning and fringeless caps. Ladies, also; who may accompany them, shall not wear any ornaments in their head-dresses."

The honours paid to a deceased empress are nearly as great as those paid to the emperor himself. Of this there can be no wonder; for during life her power is second only to that of her royal spouse. In some cases, indeed, as at the present day, the empress rules, notwithstanding the Chinese constitution forbids her to meddle in state affairs. Love of ease and pleasure have frequently induced the emperor to part at least with a moiety of his power, and sometimes he has appeared but a cipher in the state.

By the Chinese nation, the empress is supposed to represent mother earth, whilst the emperor personifies heaven. In this high capacity, she is considered to influence nature, and to possess a transforming power. In particular, she is charged with the homage due to the god of the silk-worm; and it is her duty to rear this insect, for the encouragement of her sex. Under her inspection, also, silk stuffs are woven by the ladies of the harem, and annually brought as offerings to the gods. Her sway, unless she usurps the authority of the emperor, is confined to the palace, and to acts of benevolence. In the former, she is absolute monarch; and there are many instances on record of their exertions on behalf of suffering humanity, which display the tender compassion of a woman's heart. Whole districts have been rescued from annihilation, by the timely relief of food and clothing which they have afforded. Notwithstanding the glitter and pomp by which they were surround-

ed, and which, too often, stifle the emotions of pity, they have shown themselves to be women still.

The manner in which the empress of China is chosen, illustrates and receives illustration from the records of Persian manners, in the book of Esther. They are raised to that rank from the imperial harem, which is periodically supplied with a number of young females, mostly the daughters of noblemen. Frequently, as in the case of Esther, she is chosen for her beauty; but the choice is sometimes determined by the birth and connections of the individual. From the moment the emperor has fixed his choice, the empress assumes the government of the harem; and the females therein lavish the same ceremonies and homage upon her as upon the emperor.

Among the persons always dangerous to the safety of the reigning dynasty are the Lama priests. In the days of Kang-he and Keën-lung, an establishment was granted these priests in the palace; and they likewise possess temples in the neighbourhood of the imperial pleasure-houses. Thus situated, and possessing great influence over the weak and superstitious, they are ever seeking to enrich themselves, and to usurp authority. On several occasions, they have obtruded themselves into the harem, and there fomented disturbances; and yet they still maintain their position in the palace. To eject them by force, indeed, would probably be fatal to the interest of the existing dynasty; for the minds of both the Mantchoo Tartars and Chinese who form the court, are led captive by the gross absurdities taught by the Lamas. Hence, any restrictions now laid upon them, would call the latent sparks of rebellion into action.

The females and officers who are constantly about the court, are so numerous that the interior palace is made to resemble a city with many thousand inhabitants. These officers may in truth be considered as part of the household of the emperor; and in order to represent the court of China as it really is, it is necessary to describe them as they exist according to their rank.

#### THE IMPERIAL CLASS.

The imperial family is so numerous that all the principal stations of government might be filled with its members. But this is not the policy in China at the present day. Taught by the experience of former ages, they are carefully excluded from all authority, and even from all opportunities of acquiring power. The life of a private gentleman is, indeed, far more enviable than theirs; for while they have no respectable establishment, their liberty, also, is confined within narrow limits. A high-sounding title is the only portion they enjoy; and that is not secure, for by misdeeds it may be, as it frequently is, forfeited. Nor is it by misdeeds alone that they are degraded. A superior genius is sufficient to insure its possessor imprisonment or exile. At the present day several of the descendants of imperial majesty live like porters at Peking, and hide their birth in order to cover their shame. Those who live without occupation frequently indulge in a life of vicious ease; and it is not uncommon, in such cases, for them to be transported to the deserts of Mantchouria, that they may learn to inure themselves to a hardy life.

In order to keep the princes of the blood in awe, they are placed under the control of the



Tsung-jin-foo, a tribunal which consists of six individuals, all of them bearing high titles, and possessing the entire confidence of the emperor. It is the duty of this tribunal to keep an exact register of the births, marriages, deaths and relations of the princes. This they do, and they divide their genealogical tables into yellow and red; the former including the imperial kindred, and the latter the collateral branches. These lists are submitted once in ten years to the emperor, when he confers on each their titles, as well as at other times, upon the recommendation of the Tsung-jin-foo.

These titles are conferred under four considerations: as hereditary; as an imperial favour; on account of having rendered some prominent service to the state; and by right of having passed the examinations. These last consist in the proficiency of military exercises, as bow-shooting, riding, and gymnastics: they take place every quarter, and a due report thereof is made to the emperor. He himself is often present, to superintend the drill, when he rewards the ablest among them, not by wealth or honours, but by a favourable glance of his eye!

The princes are obliged to study Mantchoo and Chinese literature; but it would appear that their education, except in the military art, is very lax. To assist in their studies, and to superintend their domestic habits, a number of inferior officers are appointed; but these, like the governors of the Greek youth, in the days of antiquity, frequently corrupt rather than improve their manners.

Among the titles which the emperor of China bestows on the imperial family, as well as others of his remote descendants who have gained his favour, is that of king: but a Chinese king is a

very different personage from those who bear the title in Europe. He is merely the highest nobleman in the empire, with as many subjects as the emperor condescends to grant; and who are frequently mere attendants, honoured with the name of slaves. And the title is merely nominal; for when they attend upon the emperor, they are considered only servants. As for their power, it is a mere shadow; it does not extend beyond their household, and even within those limits they are not allowed to inflict capital punishment. And then, too, their incomes are contemptible, compared with their titles: these are subject to the emperor's bounty, and they are never sufficient to enable them to exhibit regal pageantry. The guard of honour allowed them, in truth, consists only of twenty persons!

These kings, as well as the higher ranks of nobility, follow in the train of the emperor on all solemn occasions: at sacrifices they are always present; and when the emperor gives audience to great multitudes, they crouch before him. They likewise perform the sacrificial rites, as proxies of the emperor, as well as the duties of sentinels at the palace. He surrounds himself with them, in order to insure their fidelity, and, consequently, his own safety: deeming the ties of blood his best safeguard.

The treatment which these kings receive occasionally, sufficiently shows their degraded state. If they commit any crime, they are bastinadoed, loaded with chains like common criminals, fined and disgraced. Sometimes, indeed, their names are changed into ignominious epithets, their property confiscated, and they are sent into banishment, where mortification and incessant grief not

unfrequently bring them down to the grave. All this is done by the law; and however unjust their condemnation may be, there is no appeal. Hence, to escape such punishment, many among the descendants of "Heaven's son" feign stupidity and carelessness, as Brutus did, in the times of the corrupted Roman commonwealth.

The princesses of the blood are still less favoured than the princes. The only education they receive is in the harem, where they become versed in all the intrigues of the officers of the household. A small pittance only is allowed them; and when they are married, the emperor bestows upon them a dowry, consisting of a few pieces of silk, and some hundred taëls.\* Frequently, without any regard to their feelings, their hand is bestowed upon Mongol chiefs, by which means the Chinese court either is, or hopes to be, made acquainted with the affairs of that hostile race. A strong bulwark is thereby formed against Mongol invasion. And yet, notwithstanding the Chinese emperor expects his daughters still to show filial duty towards his "sacred person," he pays no regard to their affection. When they are once sent to the desert, severe laws prevent their return to the capital, lest they should occasion expense, and leave their duties of espionage unfulfilled. Such are the unhallowed fruits of paganism.

#### THE NOBILITY.

Nominally, the Chinese constitution maintains the following privileged classes: the privilege of imperial blood; of long service; of illustrious

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\* The value of a taël in our money is about one dollar and a third.

actions ; of talent and wisdom ; of great abilities ; of zeal and assiduity ; of nobility ; and of birth. The privilege of the first of these classes belongs to those who are descended from the same ancestor as the emperor ; those who are of the emperor's mother and grandmother, within four degrees ; those who are relations of the empress within three degrees ; and those who are relations of the consort of the heir apparent, within two degrees. The second and third classes are intended for faithful servants of the state, both civil and military ; the fourth, fifth, and sixth classes for civilians, and the literati, including those mandarins who excel in administration ; the seventh comprehends the nobility ; and the eighth, the sons of meritorious officers.

By this the reader will learn in what light the Chinese view nobility. Merit, for the most part, takes the precedence of birth ; and if this were carried out, the arrangement would be excellent. Unfortunately, however, this arrangement of nobility by the Chinese constitution is but theoretical ; for it happens that the vicious are frequently exalted, while merit goes unrewarded. The payment of a sum of money is made to pass for an illustrious action, and the basest intrigue for consummate wisdom. Hence the rule laid down by law regarding nobility becomes a dead letter. It makes out its patent excellently well, but the dispensers of the law (some cases excepted) put it into the hands of the wrong person. At the same time, the mere idea of merit being rewarded is sufficient to excite emulation in the breasts of those orders of people who are open to rewards, and sometimes they gain the prize.

There is an hereditary nobility existing in China

far more ancient than that of any other nation. Some date their titles back as far as the fabulous ages of Yaou and Shun; while others, more correctly, derive theirs from Confucius and other Chinese worthies. The emperors, in whose time they lived, foreseeing the benefits arising to the country from the doctrines taught by these sages, assigned to them hereditary offices, which have ever since been held by their posterity. When it is considered that this homage has been paid to genius and worth by the varied dynasties which have swayed the empire, whether natives or barbarians, we cannot but express our admiration.

By this it will be seen that the Chinese, in their predilection for honours, carry their taste to the extreme point of absurdity. The emperor ennobles, or pretends to enoble, even those persons who have long departed. Thus, if an officer has deserved well of his country, he makes out a patent of nobility extending to the second, third, or fourth generation of his ancestors! Various titles are also conferred upon meritorious officers who have left the world. They are created governors, presidents, overseers, etc. But this must be looked upon as a trick of state to obtain money. The wealthy and deluded Chinese, anxious for the welfare and honour of their deceased relatives, frequently come forward and purchase what may be termed their canonization. They buy the various ranks which the emperor pretends to have at his disposal; and as soon as the patent is put into their hands, they rest satisfied that their ancestors are ennobled. This is one of the strangest delusions unfolded in the page of history: it may, indeed, be looked upon as a counterpart to that delusion which the Papal church palms upon

Christendom concerning souls in purgatory. The one asks money for the honour of the dead, the other for their happiness !

The imperial favour extends beyond the confines of China. Those titles which he bestows upon princes of the blood are also bestowed upon Mongol princes and chieftains ; and to those who have married a princess of the imperial house, he has the power of granting two other titles, denoting the highest rank ; namely, Khan, and Ta-poo-nang, of which there are four degrees. Among the Turkomans, also, he confers the title of Begs, and Akim Begs ;\* and in Thibet, the national titles of Tae-fun, Te-pa, and Kan-poo.

The nations which thus submit to the emperor of China, by placing their ancient and national honours in his hands, are virtually united to the empire. Alike with the mandarins, their nobility pay court to him, and receive his orders in the same haughty tone. This is the natural effect of his assumption. Setting aside the idea of his power, the very fact of his possessing the right of bestowing honours, which he does with a lavish hand, is sufficient to ensure their willing obedience. Hence it is that so many barbarian chieftains, as well as the mass of the native Chinese, bow submissively at the foot of his throne. The distribution of imperial favours being so abundant, all are led to look up to the proud ruler of China with affection and reverence, which even haughty airs and rough usage cannot diminish. It is so deep-rooted in their hearts, that it partakes of the nature of slavish servility.

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\* This was a native honorary appellation ; but it is not now acknowledged, unless conferred by the Chinese emperor.

## THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD ESTABLISHMENT.

This division of the emperor of China's court consists of his body-guard, which is quartered within the precincts of the imperial city, and at other places; of a pastoral establishment, called King-fung-sze, placed in luxurious meadows beyond the great wall of China, where immense droves of large and small cattle are fed, partly for his own use, and partly for sacrificial purposes; of an arsenal, where his armour and weapons are kept, with all the tents and baggage necessary for a campaign; of a board charged with the care of the imperial steeds; of a treasury, where all the riches designed for the emperor's particular use are preserved under a court of officers; of an office charged with the repair of the buildings, maintaining numerous artisans, and providing the coals and fuel requisite for the kitchen; of a board of officers who have the care of the gardens and parks of the emperor; also an office which regulates his domestic establishment; another for the punishment of the inmates of the inner palace, for trifling derelictions of duty; of a medical establishment, for the benefit of the ladies in the harem; of a court which keeps the travelling equipages in order, and one which provides the necessary horses and camels for the emperor when he proceeds on his hunting excursions.

The number of individuals employed in these various departments of the emperor of China's household establishment is immense. The officers employed in them are of various ranks, from the nobleman downward. The superior officers are frequently the personal friends of the emperor; and though their salary may be trifling, an

office in the imperial household establishment is a sure step to higher preferments in other departments. Most of the governors-general, and presidents of the supreme boards, have indeed passed through them to their present position. While serving in the palace they learned to court the favour of their master, and thus insured their further exaltation.

Apart from the various offices described in the imperial household establishment, there exists a corps of five hundred and seventy men, instituted for the protection of the emperor. This corps is divided into four classes, and is placed under the command of a great minister of the interior; and the soldiers of which it is composed are the descendants of the bravest Mantchoos who subverted the throne of China. The commanders of the corps are relations of the emperor, and are on terms of great intimacy with him. But this is, perhaps, chiefly owing to their proximity to his person; for they, with those under them, not only stand sentinel at his apartment, but also take care of his household. Probably, no class of persons in China are more open to preferment than these Mantchoo defenders of the throne. Several of them hold the ranks of general and lieutenant-general, while others have been sent abroad into the provinces as civilians; and many are even ministers of the cabinet.

#### SACRIFICIAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

The religion of the state in China consists of mere ceremonies, and ecclesiastical establishments are instituted solely for their observance. These are, 1. The Tae-chang-sze, the members of which have to announce to the emperor that on such a



day a festival is to take place, and to prepare the sacrificial animals, as well as to receive the emperor, or his proxy, on the day of ceremony. 2. The Hung-loo-sze, the members of which attend as masters of ceremony on court days, as well as at sacrifices, and give the word of command, "Kneel!" "Prostrate!" "Rise!" 3. The Kwang-luh-sze, who are charged with the cooking of the flesh of the sacrifices, and arranging the imperial banquet given to the Mongol princes and foreign ambassadors.

The worship of the emperor consists in a recitation of a form of prayer, written upon a board, and read with a loud voice by a member of the Tae-chang-sze. The subjoined is a specimen:—

"The rightful successor of Heaven's son, your minister, dares to announce to illustrious Heaven, the Supreme Ruler, that he has received the imperial decree of nourishing the people in this sublunary sphere. He thinks profoundly upon the country's welfare. Sowing and harvest are subject to difficulties, and upon them the sustenance of the people depends: he therefore hopes that Heaven will grant rain in due season. Availing himself of this lucky day, he spreads out his sacrifice in public. Whilst the dragon's eyes are upon him, he utters his annual prayer. May the August and Supreme Ruler behold this repast, which is sincerely presented. May he grant tranquillity to the millions of people, bestow splendid gifts upon all, and vouchsafe the five winds and ten rains, that there may be millet and corn, as well as the five kinds of grain. Thus these three kinds of agriculture will flourish."

The sacrifice which the emperor of China spreads before the altar is very costly. The sa-

crificial animals amount annually to two hundred and forty cows, four hundred and thirty-nine sheep and goats, three hundred and thirty-nine pigs, four hundred and five stags, and four hundred and forty-nine hares.

Divers soups and dishes are also prepared and presented to the idols, and gold and silver paper is burned before them in great abundance. It has been calculated, indeed, that the institutions for the service of the one true God in other countries do not cost more than one-eighth part of the sum which the emperor of China pays for idolatry! This is an humbling consideration for the Christian world.

#### LITERARY ESTABLISHMENTS.

It is maintained by the Chinese, that their nation is the only civilized nation on earth, and that it is destined to transform the whole world. Looking at this vaunt, one might expect to find literary institutions in every nook of the empire, and to learn that its emperors were the constant and munificent patrons of learning. The history of many emperors declares, indeed, that they sedulously cultivated literature; but the actual condition of learning in China proves such a declaration to be a mere oriental hyperbole.

Compared with the various courts for the maintenance of rites and ceremonies, the learned institutions of China sink into insignificance. Those connected with the court resolve themselves into three only; namely, the national institute, the astronomical board, and the medical board; and even these are miserably deficient in sound learning.

The national institute is an establishment for

the education of the sons of officers and noble Mantchoos. They are educated at the public expense, and are instructed in the Chinese, Mongol, and Mantchoo languages. Beyond this they learn very little; and when they have passed the requisite examinations, they are either sent to the high tribunals, or to the provinces, to serve as clerks, till they receive further promotion. This is the general rule; but some pupils, who exhibit great aptitude for learning, are educated for the astronomical board, and learn the elements of mathematics.

The astronomical board belonging to the court of China has been greatly celebrated by the Jesuits, who were admitted members of it, and who raised it to its present state. In it there are employed, one great minister, 190 mandarins, with a host of pupils and clerks. Their principal duties are, to notify to the emperor the day, hour, and part of the heavens in which an eclipse is to happen, and to prepare a calendar. Of late years, they have been enabled to do this with tolerable accuracy; but only a few are engaged in astronomical labours, or understand the science. Most of them are employed in astrological observations, and foretelling future events; or, in other words, in imposing in various ways upon the credulity of the emperor and his court.

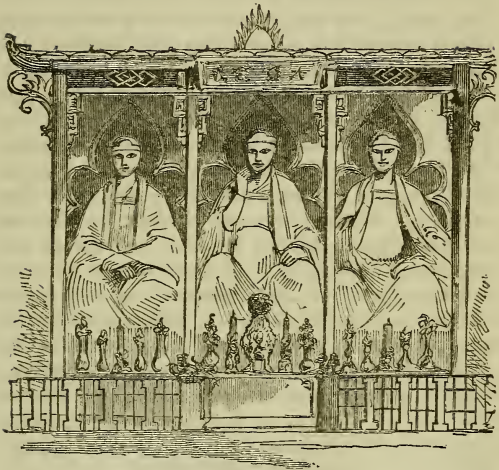
The medical board consists of three presidents, fifteen imperial physicians, thirty assistants, forty secondary doctors, with several pupils and apothecaries. The duties of these are self-evident. They are supported for the service of the imperial palace; but it frequently happens that some of the physicians are sent to Mongolia, in order to visit a sick princess. The skill which they display in

the healing art is of a questionable nature ; or, if they possess such, it is scarcely made available. The law forbids them to follow their own judgment in preparing medicines. Whatever may be the nature and stage of the complaint, they must prescribe and prepare the drugs according to established rules. This, perhaps, is one of the strongest proofs that could be adduced of the unchanging manners of oriental nations. What they were of old, that they are now, and are likely to be in future years.

Such is the emperor, and such the court of China. To a Christian, the picture affords a sad theme of contemplation. In it he beholds one man proudly lording it over millions of subjects with a high hand ; and that not only as regards their bodies, but their souls. In the crouching form of the one, the debasing condition of the other is seen. All the best faculties are prostrated beneath his withering sway. In vain are edicts issued breathing paternal love for them. "All is false and hollow." Like the priests of the oracles of antiquity, who secretly laughed at the credulous multitude bowing at their shrines, the emperor of China, doubtless, sits in his imperial palace, and laughs at the credulity of his subjects, who bow before him as a god. He knows and feels his own mortality ; and when he issues his assumptive dogmas, he cannot but ask himself this question, "Is there not a lie in my right hand ?" But the time is hastening onward, when the flimsy web he has woven, all covered as it is with the dust of antiquity, shall be removed !

## CHAPTER III.

## THE RELIGION OF THE CHINESE.



The Triad of Budha.

THE tendency of man to idolatry is shown by the history of all nations. The most intelligent of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, alike bowed the knee to idols made of wood and stone. Nor is there any occasion to revert to the nations of antiquity for a confirmation of this appalling fact. India and China exhibit millions of human beings, who, having no knowledge of the God that made them, and the Saviour who died on the cross for the salvation of sinners, make them

graven images, and falling down before them, pray unto them, and say, individually, "Deliver me, for thou art my god!"

There are facts in the history of China which prove that the Chinese did not arrive at this state of utter degradation all at once. Like the nations of antiquity, they only reached it by slow degrees. Its first inhabitants imparted to their children, and their posterity through them, for several ages, some proper sentiments concerning the Supreme Being. They taught them to fear and honour Him as the Sovereign Lord of the universe. Traces of this are discerned in the five canonical works called King, of each of which Confucius was either the author or compiler, and which the Chinese look upon as the source of all their science and morality. Thus, in one of these works, Tien, or the Deity, is called the Father of the people, independent, almighty; and a Being who knows the most hidden things, even the secrets of the heart. He is also there represented as watching over the government of the universe, so that no event can happen but by his command; as holy; as pleased with human virtues; as superlatively just; and as punishing wickedness in the most signal manner, and even in kings, whom he deposes, setting up others in their room, according to his pleasure. It is likewise there said that he dispenses public calamities, as warnings for repentance, and that repentance is followed by acts of mercy and goodness.

The remote ancestors of the Chinese derived some information from the immediate descendants of Noah; but the influence of knowledge thus obtained was vague and transitory. Hence, like the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Phenicians, Greeks,

and many other ancient nations, the Chinese, in the lapse of time, forsook the worship of the Deity, and bowed in homage to the visible material heaven. Sun, moon, and stars, were worshipped by them, instead of Him whose hand had created them, and whose will appointed their destined courses. This was the first great step in their downward path of moral turpitude, and, having taken it, it led to another still more fatal in its results. They next worshipped inferior spirits, whom they supposed to depend on a Supreme Being, and who presided over cities, rivers, mountains, kingdoms, provinces, and particular persons, and nearly answered to the demons and genii of the Greeks and Romans. Having gone thus far, they were unable to retrace their steps, or to halt in their downward career. Step after step was taken, until they reached that depth of degrading superstition in which they have now for ages been sunk.

The religion of China, as it exists, and has for a long time existed, is three-fold; first, there is the religion of the state; secondly, Taouism; and thirdly, Budhuism.

#### SECTION I.—THE RELIGION OF THE STATE.\*

Ancient Chinese legislators appear to have thought, that, unless they had power over the minds of men, they could not control their bodies. For this purpose, they invented a religious system which delegated to their rulers all power upon earth; a system which raised them to the rank of mediators between Heaven and their subjects, and which identified them with ideal spirits, de-

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[\* This account of the court religion is not to be received with entire confidence, though it is authentic and more probable than any other we have seen.—*Ed.*]

mons, gods, and invisible powers. By it, indeed, they were made the representatives of the people, for whom it was asserted they could draw down blessings from on high.

This system, as might be supposed, was not promulgated or imposed upon the credulity of the people suddenly. It was gradually unfolded, lest common sense should be shocked, and it should thereby meet with such opposition as would have prevented its establishment. The designing usually work slowly and secretly, and thus these Chinese legislators proceeded. Hence they were successful in palming this religious system upon the multitude, and thereby triumphed over all obstacles. And the religious rites they established exist, notwithstanding a change of opinion has taken place in the minds of the higher classes, through the exertions of philosophers, from the period of the Sung dynasty downwards. In vain does their skepticism strike at the root of superstition; the mass of the people still sit under its wide-spread branches. Even the very philosophers themselves, and their warmest adherents, who know the frivolity of existing creeds in China, when sickness and sufferings come upon them, sometimes have recourse to a despised priest of Budhu, and follow the most ridiculous directions, in order to appease a guilty conscience. They would destroy superstition, but having no better creed to substitute, they are yet compelled to submit to its directions. Alike with the priests of China, therefore, they are blind leaders of the blind; and it cannot but follow that all are engulfed in the vortex of error.

The religious rites established by Chinese legislators are watched over by the Le-poo, or tri-



lunal of rites, with an eye as jealous as that of a papal inquisitor. All innovations are violently resisted.

The catalogue of the canonical objects of adoration amongst the Chinese rulers is truly appalling. Among them may be enumerated heaven; earth; the ancestors of the existing dynasty; the sun and moon; the gods of the land; Confucius; the inventor of agriculture; the inventor of silk; the spirits of heaven; the gods of the earth; the god of the passing year; the worthies of antiquity; the stars, clouds, wind, rain; the ocean, rivers, hills, streams; five mountains upon which the ancients sacrificed; flags; roads; gods of the cannon, gate and soil; the north pole; the north star; the gods of some hills; with a great variety of others. Every year objects of worship are increased, so that the deities of China will bear a comparison with those of Greece, of whom no one, in the end, could undertake to say, "how many there were not."

The regulation of the order of deities rests with the emperor of China. He it is who exalts or degrades, canonizes or excommunicates, according to the merits or demerits of the parties. He himself ranks high among them, for only heaven, earth, and his deceased ancestors are deemed his superiors. The rest are more or less inferior to the monarch, and he can strike off of the catalogue of divinities whom he pleases. The proper rank of idols is strictly observed in every temple: for if a mandarin lodges in a temple where there are images below his rank, he may order them to be removed; but they consider that a mandarin has no power to confer divine honours; that rests solely with the emperor.

By this it will be seen, that the state-religion in China enjoins the worship of numberless imposing visible objects, thereby confounding the universe with the supreme God. It also fills all parts of the world with genii, demons, spirits, or deceased mortals, to whom the control of some part of the world is assigned. But these are not exactly deities; they are looked upon only as rulers and governors of the universe, under the sway of the emperor, who can dictate laws to them, and punish them if they do not obey.

A prominent feature in the religion of the Chinese, whether of the state or individuals, is the worship of the dead. The emperor and the peasant alike bow down before the shades of their ancestors. Such are idols of the first order; and whatever duty may be forgotten, this is surely remembered. To neglect it would be to gain a character for impiety, which neither personal virtues nor time could obliterate.

The various deities of China are variously represented. Some are recognised by altars in a series of steps, like the tower of Babel; and others by temples, images and pictures. The images are in general made of clay, and gilt; those of brass being in disrepute. The country abounds with temples, which either belong to the government, or to the Taou and Budhu sects. Those in Pekin appear to be the most celebrated, but there is a great uniformity in their construction throughout the empire. The largest consist of a row of buildings with intervening court-yards. All of them have one large hall, to which a few steps lead; and when that is gained the visitor beholds an idol placed upon an altar, resembling a table, walls daubed with historical paintings, and a roof adorned

with dragons and griffins, after the manner of the mystic cells of Egypt.

This feature of the Chinese temples will also serve to remind the reader of the "chambers of imagery," described by the prophet Ezekiel, as chambers wherein "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were portrayed upon the wall round about."\* The "chambers of imagery" erected by the idolatrous Hebrews were evidently formed from a model supplied by the Egyptians; and it may be a question, whether the Chinese derived their ideas of the paintings which adorn the interior of their temples from the same source, or from their own corrupt imagination. But, however that may be, the fact exhibits the universality of the corruption of the human heart in the most glowing colours. It testifies of the truth which the psalmist uttered, in holy indignation, when contemplating the apostasy of man in the aggregate:—

"They are all gone aside,  
They are all together become filthy :  
There is none that doeth good, no, not one."  
PSA. xiv. 3.

The splendour of some of the temples in China is said to be very striking. This is more especially the case with the Teën-tân, or celestial altar, which is a mound of earth built in terraces, and made to represent the firmament. Similar monuments are erected in honour of "mother earth;" but they do not vie in splendour with the Teën-tân, and none are equal to the gorgeousness of the palaces. When the object of worship is presumed to be like a man, the oblations which the Chinese offer

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\* Ezek. viii. 7—12.

at their shrines consist of various kinds of edibles. These are presented amidst the fumes of incense, the effulgence of tapers, or the lighted tinsel, and the sound of the gong; all which they suppose to be essential in order to propitiate their deities. The model after which all altars are made, is a large censer in the middle of a table, with an urn on each side. These vessels are, for the most part, made of pewter, and somewhat resemble European ornaments on chimney-pieces. Incense sticks are stuck into the censer, and as they waste they deposit their ashes around in the hollow of the censer.

In the state-religion all sacrifices are either offered by the emperor himself or by his deputies, who are either ministers of state or members of the Le-poo. When the ceremony takes place every one appears in his state robes, which differ in colour according to the object of worship. For instance, when the imperial heaven is worshipped, the robes are azure; when the earth, yellow; the sun, red; and the moon, a pale white. Their very altars are also shaped according to the notion which the Chinese have of their object of worship. Thus, the earth being considered by them as having right angles, the altar dedicated to the earth is made square likewise. Every thing, indeed, belonging to the Chinese temples is fabricated according to rule. The dimensions are given, and they must be strictly executed according to the pattern.

It has been seen, in the article on the Chinese Court, that various officers are maintained for the purpose of feeding the sacred animals, and preparing the offerings. These offerings consist of three kinds, according to the rank or sanctity of the idol. They are prepared the day before, and are presented with a variety of fruits and cakes,

which are publicly exhibited for a while, and are then consumed by the assistants.

It would be tedious to dwell on the numberless festivals observed by the Chinese state. At every new moon, and the change of the season, they take place; and they are generally seasons of mirth and merriment. One example must suffice,—that of the emperor's ploughing the sacred field.

This festival takes place when the sun enters the fifteenth degree of Aquarius. It is not, however, performed till the astrologers have consulted the stars, and discovered a propitious day. This done, the ceremonial is forwarded to the emperor, who, after nominally fasting for three days, informs his ancestors, by proxy, what he is going to do, and solicits their approbation. This is granted as a matter of course—for the dead cannot oppose the proceedings of the living; and then the emperor sets out, accompanied by the highest officers of state, for the altar erected in honour of "mother earth." Here he offers sacrifices, and reads the formula of prayer; and then he proceeds to the sacred field, which lies to the south of Peking, where he grasps the plough, and turns up a few furrows. The princes of the blood then follow his example; and the emperor next sows the different kinds of grains—rice, wheat, pulse, and millet; after which he partakes of a repast under tents erected for his reception.

On the following day, about eighty peasants are deputed to finish the ploughing of the sacred field, and in due time the governor of Peking repairs to the spot, and reports on the success of their mutual labours. If he can discover any extraordinary ear, or luxuriant blade, he reports this to the em-

peror, and predicts a good harvest throughout the empire. When the harvest is gathered in, the grain of the sacred field is carefully stored in a separate granary, and used only for sacrifices.

A similar ceremony takes place throughout the provinces under the direction of the various governors, who act as so many proxies of the emperor. To neglect it would be to incur general censure; for the success of agriculture is supposed to depend upon its strict performance.

The body of the people take very little part in this or any other festival, except that of the New-Year's day, which may be deemed a day of national, civil, and religious rejoicing. Then the Chinese generally, who have toiled throughout the year without cessation, having no Sabbath or appointed day of rest, eschew all labour, and give themselves up to feasting and revelry. In the palace, the villa, and the cottage, alike, after their inmates have been to the temples to inquire their fate for the coming year, excess in eating and drinking takes place; whilst jugglers, play-actors, and the representatives of the great dragon, amuse the populace with their soul-degrading tricks.

Besides the above festivals, there are others of almost equal celebrity. Among them are the following: one which takes place at the commencement of the spring, and continues for ten days; the festival of the lanterns; the feast of the tombs, which, it is said, is now falling into disuse; a festival in honour of the ascension of the god of the north; the festivals of the births of the god of the sea and the goddess of mercy; and the festivals of the queen of heaven and goddess of the sea; of holy mother; of the god of the central mount; of the king of medicine; of the god of the south

pole; of the god of thunder, with others; as well as minor festivals: amongst which, the anniversary of the builder of cities, and the birthdays of the heavenly spirits, hold the first rank.

The birthdays of the emperor and empress, as well as the anniversaries of their deaths, are celebrated exclusively by mandarins. On the anniversary of the birthday of the empress, a proclamation is circulated throughout the empire, and sometimes posted up in all public places. This proclamation contains an account of the imperial favours which the emperor intends to bestow on the natal day of the empress; of the blessings which her reign has bestowed upon the empire, and of the virtues which she possesses. The section relating to her virtues, which was issued in the proclamation on the occasion of the empress-mother attaining her sixtieth year, in 1825, is subjoined:—

“ Her majesty, the great empress, benign and dignified, universally beneficent, perfectly serene, extensively benevolent, composed and placid, thoroughly virtuous, tranquil and self-collected, in favours unbounded—who in virtue is the equal of the exalted and expansive heavens, and in goodness of the vast and solid earth—has within her perfumed palaces aided the renovating endeavours of his late majesty, rendering the seasons ever harmonious, and in her maternal court has afforded a bright rule of government. She has planted for herself a glorious name in all the palace, which she will leave to her descendants; and has imparted her sustaining favours to the empire, making her tender affection universally conspicuous. Hence genial influence abides within the palace of everlasting delight and joy, and

congratulation meets in the halls of eternal spring."

The force of oriental hyperbole could go no further than this, for it reaches the very height of blasphemy. Not satisfied with divine honours himself, the emperor enjoins them to be paid to his relations,\* for he associates them with him in the great work of renovating nature. How deep-rooted must the superstition of that people be! The mind can form, indeed, but a faint idea of the superstition which pervades all classes in China, from the emperor down to the meanest peasant. Although rational in mutual intercourse, the populace are subject to the wildest imaginations and folly. Though they deem themselves superior to demons and spirits, yet they are constantly engaged in wars with imps and elves, by whom they suppose themselves to be surrounded and persecuted. All their actions are supposed to be controlled by an unalterable fate. The revolving universe, say they, brings every thing to an issue; and man, who is but a particle of the whole, cannot escape its iron decrees. Here, indeed, superstition deceives millions, and plunges them in imperishable wretchedness.

This latter sentence will receive illustration by an examination of the classical or sacred works written by Confucius and his disciples, and which constitute at this day the standard of Chinese orthodoxy. These works consist, in all, of nine; that is, the "Four Books," and the "Five Canonical Works."

The Four Books are entitled, the Ta-heo, the

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[\* It is doubtful whether this custom is understood literally in the sense here ascribed to it.—*Ed.*]



Choong-yoong, the Lun-yu, and the Book of Mencius.

*The Ta-heo.*—The Ta-heo has been translated by the Jesuits “The School of Adults,” meaning literally, “the study of grown persons.” The first section of it is ascribed to Confucius, and the remaining ten to his principal disciple. Its end and aim are evidently political; and morals are represented as the foundation of politics. How to attain morality, however, seems to have been unknown to the philosophers. Thus, for instance, “the beauty of virtue” is inculcated somewhat in the manner of the stoics of old, and its practice recommended as a species of enjoyment. The philosophers saw that virtue was preferable to vice, even in this world, but they could not teach mankind how to walk in its paths. This book, however, contains many wise remarks and rules for individual improvement, the regulation of a family, the government of a state, and the rule of an empire.

*The Choong-yoong.*—The title of this book signifies the “Infallible Medium.” In it man is taught to be always moderate in whatever vicissitudes he is called upon to undergo: never to be haughty if rich and great, nor base if poor. Generally, it serves to expound the ideas of the Chinese philosophers respecting the nature of human virtue, which ideas are crude and unsatisfactory. Contrary to all human experience, and in opposition to the doctrines of the Bible, which teach that the heart of man is only evil from his youth, they consider that the nature of man is originally pure, and that it becomes vitiated only by the force of example, and by being soiled with “the dust of the world.”

The Chinese usually divide man into three great classes, thus :—Those who are wise or virtuous independently of instruction ; those who become moral by the aid of study and application ; and those who, in spite of all instruction, are vicious or worthless. Such a triplicate classification of mankind, however, does not seem to belong exclusively to the Chinese, for the traces of it are distinctly discovered in the works of the poet Horace. He says :

“ Far does that man all other men excel,  
 Who, from his wisdom, thinks in all things well ;  
 Wisely considering, to himself a friend,  
 All for the present best, and for the end.  
 Nor is the man without his share of praise,  
 Who well the dictates of the wise obeys ;  
 But he that is not wise himself, nor can  
 Harken to wisdom, is a worthless man.”

In this extract the very germ of the Chinese sentiment concerning the division of mankind is found ; and it is probable that the philosophers of China derived it from the very same source as Horace, namely, knowledge handed down from the early recipients of revealed truth.

*The Lun-yu.*—This work consists of the conversations or sayings of Confucius, together with the most remarkable actions of his life.

The most remarkable passage in the Lun-yu is the following :—Being asked if any one word could express a rule for the conduct of one’s life, Confucius answered, “ Will not the word *shoo* serve ?” And he explained this by the sentiment, “ Do to others as you would wish them to do to you.” Our Saviour’s golden rule was of similar import ; but He added : “ I say unto you, Love your enemies”—a standard to which heathenism could not attain.

The Lun-yu consists, in all, of twenty chapters. Its maxims turn chiefly upon private and public conduct, or morals and politics; the latter, as in all the other canonical works, preponderating. Confucius and his disciples may, indeed, be termed political, rather than moral teachers. The great end of the life of man seems to have been considered by them, either to rule or to obey; and the morals they taught were, either directly or indirectly, made subservient to that purpose.

*The Book of Mencius.*—Mencius was a disciple of Confucius, to whom he is considered only second in point of wisdom. He lived about a century after his predecessor; and the great aim of his life was to illustrate and promote his doctrines. In the book which bears his name, his chief object is, to inculcate the one leading principle of Confucius—philanthropic government.

While these books teach some moral, and even great truths, they leave the heart of man universally unaffected. Like the writings of the Greek and Roman philosophers, they only tend to show that their sage authors were deeply convinced of the fact, that man needs Divine inspiration far superior to any that had hitherto been imparted.

This will more fully appear, by a view of the five canonical works called *King*, of each of which Confucius was either the author or compiler.

1. The Sky-king is a book of sacred songs. It consists of about three hundred brief poems, selected by Confucius from a mass of rubbish handed down by antiquity, or supplied by his contemporaries. The merits of this book are very questionable. Most of the songs and odes are of a very humble order; and taken with their commentary, which is very minute, their style and

language are frequently unintelligible. It seems doubtful, indeed, whether they ever answered the end proposed, which is discovered in the following notion which the Chinese have of poetical language:—"The human feelings, when excited, become embodied in words; when words fail to express them, sighs or inarticulate tones succeed; when these are inadequate to do justice to feeling, then recourse is had to song." At all events, the poetry of the Sky-king falls very much short of poetical merit, when compared with the contemporaneous soul-stirring strains of the Greeks and Romans. These, in reality, were calculated to do "justice to feeling."

2. The Shoo-king is a history of the deliberations between the two ancient emperors, Yaou and Shun, and some minor rulers. Like most of the other canonical works, it chiefly turns upon the art of good government. To this end, Confucius puts maxims into their mouths, which he quotes as models of perfection. Thus, for example, he makes them say:—"It is vain to expect that good government can proceed from vicious minds." Every notion of good government is, indeed, represented as founded on certain principles, good in themselves, and which, if observed, bring order, but if abandoned, anarchy.

3. The Ly-king, or Book of Rites, is considered as the foundation of the present state of Chinese manners, and a chief cause of their unchangeableness. This seems very probable, for it carries out the leading principle of Chinese moralists and rulers; namely, to subdue the passions, and reduce the mind to a state of torpor. The Ly-king contains directions for about three thousand ceremonial usages, and the tribunal of the Le-poo is

charged with the guardianship and interpretation thereof. Hence they are made as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. This is a fearful fact; for the chains by which the minds of the Chinese are thereby manacled, are such as no human effort can shake off. The gospel, by its mighty power, can alone set them free.

4. *The Chun-tsieu* is a history of the times of Confucius, and is, strictly speaking, his only original work. Its chief object appears to have been to afford warning and examples to the rulers of the country; for in it he reproves their misgovernment, and inculcates the maxims of the "ancient kings," as unfolded at large in the Shooking, for their guidance. It seems surprising that such maxims should have formed the groundwork of a mere Asiatic despotism—for such they are nominally—whether they were the emanations of the minds of the ancient kings, or of Confucius himself. But the fact seems to be, that all the Chinese rulers, convinced of their wisdom, gladly adopted them for their guidance, though they generally shunned their practice.

5. *The Ye-king* is a mystical exposition of the theory of creation, and of the changes that are perpetually occurring in nature.

The general drift of the system is material. Having lost sight of the Creator of the universe, the Chinese philosophers attributed the propagation of every creature to the creature. Hence Tien, or Heaven, in common conversation, is spoken of in terms of respect, equivalent to "venerable father," while the Earth is called "mother." Between these all sublunary things are said to have been produced, they having first been created by the mystical Tae-keih. How unmeaning and

vague do such speculations appear, when compared with these great and sublime truths:—

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made ;  
 And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.  
 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap:  
 He layeth up the depth in storehouses.  
 Let all the earth fear the Lord :  
 Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of  
 him.  
 For he spake, and it was done ;  
 He commanded, and it stood fast.”

This review of the classical or sacred books of the Chinese shows that the philosophers, by whom they were written, saw that the multitude were gone far astray from the path of moral rectitude, but how to restore them they knew not. They found them idolaters—they left them idolaters still. Ages had rolled away since any just notion of a Supreme Being had been entertained in China, and reason was too impotent to restore a knowledge of him or his unsearchable ways.

Notwithstanding, therefore, the writings of Confucius and his disciples may have modified the government of China, and, in some degree, ameliorated the condition of the people, they still left the emperor, the court, and his subjects at large, superstitious. With their rites and ceremonies they did not interfere. Rather by the compilation of the *Ly-king*, or Book of Rites, they confirmed them. In this dark ritual, the religion of the State is amplified and perpetuated. It serves as the keystone to the superstitious fabric erected by the crafty and designing, while the remaining Sacred Books may be looked upon as so many pillars

reared to sustain the massive weight of the building.

One remarkable circumstance connected with the religion of the State in China must not be overlooked. Already the Christian reader must be aware that the emperor, alike with his subjects, is under the influence of "the old serpent, the devil." In this connection it is a remarkable fact, that the dragon is the emblem of the imperial dignity! In its most hideous shape it is portrayed upon roofs, temples, ensigns, banners, and robes; and statesmen do not worship any other animal. Surely this great heathen monarch could not have adopted a more expressive device to indicate his allegiance to the "Prince of the power of the air that worketh in the children of disobedience." The Chinese have, indeed, an idea of the existence of demons, and not only speak of Satan, but also sacrifice to him. This, however, is rather out of fear than reverence. Confucius sagely recommends that demons and spirits should be kept at a distance, while all due respect is paid to them; and if any one flatters them with profuse sacrifices, he is deemed a man void of sincerity, and a sycophant.

This worship of the evil spirit answers to that of Seeva, or "the destroyer," among the Hindus; to that of Ahriman, or "principle of evil," among the Persians; to that of Abaddon, of the Orientals; to that of Apollyon, of the Apocalypse; and to that of Anax Apollon, or "destroying king," of Homer. So closely allied, in principle, are all the religions of the pagan world; and so evident is it, that all pagan nations, whether of remote or modern times, are under the dominion of Satan! As this enemy has walked over the earth seeking

whom he might devour, the millions of China have for ages proved his easy and willing prey. They are ranged under banners on which is triumphantly represented **THE OLD DRAGON** in the shape in which he is described in the Apocalypse.

A striking illustration of this truth is found in the circumstance, that some dark hints prevail among the Chinese that the human spirit is allied to spirits in general, to which it returns after death. As, say they, all matter revolves in endless succession, and produces out of its chaos shape, either man, beast, plant, or mineral, which in process of time is added to the great mass : so also the spirit, which is moulded from incorporeal essence, is finally re-united to the great bulk. Alas, how grievously are they deceived !

The desire for happiness in the next world seems to be a stranger to the Chinese breast. They live for this world alone. Nor should this be a matter of surprise, since almost all public instruction is disregarded, and that which is imparted relates to this life only. The only system of morals founded on the above dogmas was drawn out in the days of Kang-he, and amplified in the reign of his son, Yung-chin. It reads thus :—

Pay regard to filial and fraternal duties, that a due importance may be attached to the relations of life.

Respect kindred, that the excellency of harmony may be displayed.

Let concord abound in every neighbourhood, that litigations may be prevented.

Give the chief place to husbandry, and the culture of the mulberry-tree, that food and raiment may be adequately supplied.



Observe economy, that the lavish waste of money may be prevented.

Magnify learning, that the scholar's progress may be facilitated.

Destroy heresy, that the true (or State) doctrines may prevail.

Explain the laws, that the ignorant and obstinate may be warned.

Exhibit a yielding and polite behaviour, that manners may be improved.

Be diligent in employment, that a fixed direction may be given to the industry of the people.

Instruct youth, that they may be prevented from doing evil.

Suppress false accusations, that the innocent may be protected.

Warn people against harbouring other religionists, that they may not be involved in their errors.

Urge the payment of taxes, that you may not have to demand them with importunity.

Extirpate theft and robbery, by promoting the efforts of civil officers.

Settle animosities, that a just value may be set upon human life.

This system of ethics, which constitutes the only religious instruction imparted by the state of China, is appointed to be read every first and fifteenth day of the month, by a mandarin, dressed in his robes of office. For this purpose the military and civil officers meet in a public hall, and after the ceremony of kneeling, they enter into a room, where a mandarin reads the document. Few persons, however, attend; and those who do, look upon the act as a mere ceremony. Hence it may be concluded that the standard of morals in China is very low. It cannot be otherwise,

seeing that the mass of the people are left void of instruction, and are simply taught the rules of good conduct by the law. It is nothing more than political morality enforced by rulers, because it serves to establish that authority which they hold over the bodies and the souls of their subjects.

Such is the lamentable condition in which the State-religion of China leaves its millions of subjects. It is so fearful, that even some of their own scholars have endeavoured, from a spirit of philanthropy, to apply a remedy. They have made many collections from the pages of writers on moral duties, and benevolent persons distribute such gratuitously among the multitude, who read them with avidity. But the remedy is little better than the disease. These collections, though they contain many truths, are replete with absurdities and pagan notions; and none of their sentiments are calculated to give an effectual impulse to virtuous action, and still less to lead the wandering heart back to God, the true source of happiness. Hence, like all other heathens, the Chinese are slaves to sin, and ignorant of that liberty, the liberty of the gospel, which alone can set them free. During life, and in the hour of death, they exhibit the awful picture of men very far gone astray from original righteousness: they live and die utterly ignorant, and consequently without fear of Him, "who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." They have scarcely, indeed, a notion of future rewards and punishments; and if any prove virtuous, it is upon that principle on which all the tenets of their moralists are founded—self-interest. The present time alone occupies their thoughts; the future is forgotten: for it never entered into the heart of their moralists to

conceive, much less to teach, this sublime precept—"Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

#### SECTION II.—TAOUISM.

It has been seen in the preceding section, that the religion of the State in China, and the writings of their moralists, have left the heart universally unaffected. This being the case, human depravity has full scope for action, and the Chinese become an easy prey to the designing. Such will be fully manifested in the following brief history of Taouism.

Nearly simultaneous with Confucius appeared Laou Keun, or, as he is denominated, Taou, that is, *Reason*. This man, apparently dissatisfied with the existing religion, set himself up for a teacher, and succeeded in gaining many votaries. Like the hermits, which are to be met with in many ages and countries, he withdrew from the world, and, residing in the mountains, inculcated a contempt of riches, honours, and all worldly distinctions, as well as the subjugation of every passion that could interfere with personal tranquillity and self-enjoyment.

Such was the sum of the doctrines taught by Taou himself; and, considering the state of the Chinese in the age in which he lived, they contain much that is commendable. But his followers did not rest satisfied with his system. They, professing to act under his guidance, (for they maintain that he was an incarnation of some superior being, and that there is no age in which he

does not appear among men in human shape,) have put forth tenets even more visionary and more soul-degrading than can be found in the State-religion itself: they have, in fact, become a race of cheats and jugglers, professing to hold communication with demons.

A legend from one of their works, entitled "The History of the Three States," will show the debasing nature of the superstitions which have occupied the attention of this sect. It relates to the three brothers Chang, who belonged to the sect, and who, at the head of an insurrection of rebels called "Yellow Caps," produced that strife which overthrew the Han dynasty. It reads thus:—"Lew-pei stole upon Chang-paou with his whole force. To baffle this, Chang-paou mounted his horse, and, with dishevelled hair and waving sword, betook himself to magic arts. The wind arose with loud peals of thunder, and a black cloud descended, in which appeared a number of men and horses as if engaged in battle. Lew-pei, seeing this, drew off his troops in confusion, and retreated to consult with Choo-tsien. The latter observed, 'Let him have recourse again to magic; I will prepare the blood of swine, sheep, and dogs, and, placing a party on the heights in ambush, wait until the enemy approaches, when his magic will be all dispersed by projecting the same upon him.' Lew-pei assented to this; and directed two leaders, each at the head of one thousand men, to ascend the highest part of the mountain, supplied with the blood of swine, sheep, dogs, and other impure animals. The following day, Chang-paou, with flags displayed and drums beating, offered battle, and Lew-pei proceeded to meet him. They had scarcely joined battle, however, before Chang-

paou again put his magic into exercise. The wind and thunder arose, a storm of sand and stones commenced, a dark cloud appeared in the sky, and troops of horsemen seemed to descend. Upon seeing this, Lew-pei made a show of retreating, and Chang-paou followed him; but scarcely had they turned the hill, when the troops in ambush started up and poured their impure stores upon the enemy. Instantly the air seemed filled with men and horses of paper or straw, which fell to the earth in confusion; while the wind and thunder ceased, and the stones and sand no longer flew about. Seeing his magic thus baffled, Chang-paou would have retreated; but the two leaders of Lew-pei made their appearance on either side, while himself and his lieutenant pursued in the rear. The rebels were utterly defeated, and Lew-pei, seeing the flag inscribed, 'Lord of Earth,' ran full speed on his horse towards Chang-paou, whom he wounded in the left arm with an arrow as he fled."

Such is the puerile nature of the superstitions which occupy the priests of Taou. But this is not the extent of the evils which they work in China. They are distinguished by diving into mysteries too difficult for the mind of man, aided only by reason, to comprehend: they have even set themselves to work to invent an elixir of long life, or immortality. This elixir is prepared from a mixture of herbs, and has a contrary effect to the end they propose: it not only does not lengthen, but, by its deleterious effect on the human constitution, it shortens life. When the health of their followers declines, however, they console them with the idea that they will soon be numbered with the genii, and enjoy everlasting youth. And

yet, notwithstanding all this, there are numbers who eagerly drink the fatal draught.

The followers of Taou are equally addicted to alchymy; and although they have, like other alchymists, failed in discovering the philosopher's stone, this pursuit makes them acquainted with chemistry. They are the only class of people in China, indeed, who possess any knowledge of the science; and this often enables them to pass for great physicians, whereby they gain a good livelihood. Those who pretend to a higher degree of knowledge, afflict themselves, like the Hindoo devotees, and live upon the compassion of the multitude.

A conspicuous species of imposture which the priests of Taouism practise upon the Chinese for the sake of gain, is produced by animal magnetism. By means of this art they perform tricks which might astonish a philosopher: they even convulse their frames to a fearful degree, in order to make the people believe that they are possessed of an evil spirit. Nor do they stop here: they own a union with Satan, and, to avert impending evil, offer to that arch-enemy of mankind the richest oblations. These are offered by the priests, in the midst of the most horrible grimaces, which may be looked upon as a fit emblem of the misery which lost souls endure in the shades of despair. It is as though they had commenced that life here which is the inevitable portion of the wicked hereafter.

The deities worshipped by this sect are too many to be enumerated. Among them stands the indefinable Taou; the San-tsing, or "pure ones;" Shang-te, whom some represent as a deified personage, and others as a supreme being;

and Hwa-kwang, the god of light or fire, who is the counterpart of the Moloch of antiquity. On the birth-day of Hwa-kwang—for the gods of the heathen are born, not self-created—a large coal fire is made, and persons are hired to go through it barefoot, carrying the standards of the idol, in order to prove that he has power to subdue the violence of the element. These wretches are hurried into the fire in the midst of awful imprecations, and many die annually of its consequences.

The San-tsing, or “pure ones,” three in number, seem to be an imitation of the Buddhist Triad. This threefold source, and supreme ruler, is represented as presiding in heaven among the assembled gods, the sun, moon, and stars, and delivering his name and benevolent commands to “the great barefooted angel,” to be promulgated amongst mankind, that all who see and recite that name may be delivered from all evil, and attain infinite happiness.

The followers of Taou represent that he was the discoverer of the spiritual world. Their creed peoples the spiritual world with the souls of illustrious men, who, under the name of Heën, or sages, perform the functions of rulers and lords; while the spirits of those who are contaminated with certain vices are stationed between heaven and earth, in the shape of genii, elves, and hobgoblins, where they effect both good and evil; and the souls of hardened sinners are changed to demons, and either sent to abodes of misery, or left on earth to work mischief. All nature is represented by their priests as teeming with invisible beings, which they alone can keep under due restraint. As for Taou himself, he is represented as the chief of the Seën, (which is the general denomination

of the genii, elves, and hobgoblins,) in which capacity he still presides over the world, or rather China.

The sect that promulgates these wild reveries has undergone many changes. The follies of its professors were clearly exposed by the disciples of Confucius; but they frequently revenged themselves, by establishing their authority at court, and expelling the Confucians. At various periods of Chinese history they practised their arts of imposition upon the sovereigns of the country; and under the Tang dynasty they gained such credit, that the title of Tien-sze, or "celestial doctors, or teachers," was conferred on them, and a superb temple was erected to Taou, in which his image was placed. Since that period they have been on the wane; but it is said that they have still a large establishment in the province of Keang-sy, where numbers flock from all parts, to obtain cures for diseases, or to learn their destinies. But they have formidable rivals throughout the country in the persons of the Buddhist priests, to whom the people now more generally resort. Hence, though their temples are still numerous, the priesthood is very poor, and the system exhibits signs of an approaching dissolution. Budhuism bids fair to erect a gorgeous fabric on its ruins; but divine revelation points to the period when Christianity shall prevail over this and all other superstitions.

### SECTION III.—BUDHUISM.

Chinese history relates that, in consequence of a dream, the emperor Ming-te, of the Han dynasty, sent ambassadors, A. D. 58, to the west, or India, in search of "the holy one," whom Confucius had



pointed out. On reaching India these ambassadors discovered the sect of Budhists, which was said to have existed for about one thousand years, and, imagining that they had discovered the object of their search, they brought back some of them, with their books, to China.

The life of the founder of this idolatry is involved in mystery. Some, indeed, doubt his existence; others maintain that various persons of this name have lived and taught at different periods. The traditional account of him which led the ambassadors of China to conclude that they had found "the holy one," is briefly this:—

Budha was both king and priest in a country of the west, with a queen, whom he made a divinity. He was obliged to abdicate his power, and seek a retreat for twelve years, after which he taught the dogma of the transmigration of souls, which he made the vehicle of a system of rewards and punishments hereafter. At last he regained his power, and he departed this life at an advanced age, being at once transformed into the god Fō, or Budhu.

It is commonly said by the disciples of Fō in China, that, while he is but one person, he has three forms. These are represented by three distinct gilded images, called the "three precious or pure Budhus." The engraving at the beginning of this chapter represents the Triad of Budhu—San, Paou, Fūh, "past, present, and to come." At the right hand is seated the first, whose reign is already past; in the centre, Paou, who now reigns over the world; at the left hand, Fūh, whose reign has not yet come.

As a reformer, Budhu's character is indicated

by the legend prevalent in China, that he aimed at instructing men "to amend their conduct, and practise virtue." To this end he issued these five general precepts:—1. Thou shalt kill no living creature. 2. Thou shalt not steal. 3. Thou shalt not marry. 4. Thou shalt not speak falsely. 5. Thou shalt drink no wine. Budhu also defined ten sins which he prohibited; namely, the killing of animals, theft, adultery, falsehood, discord, harsh language, idle talk, covetousness, envy and malice, and following the doctrines of false gods. From this it would appear, that Budhu, or whoever was the founder of this system, was acquainted with the Decalogue, many of its points being in strict accordance with those uttered from Mount Sinai, amidst thunderings and lightnings, by the voice of the Almighty.

Had Budhuism stopped at this precise point, it might have proved a boon to mankind; but it was far otherwise. Like all other pagan religions, it erected temples and fabricated idols, before which its priests called upon their devotees to bow in lowly adoration, instead of the One True God.

The features of Budhuism vary in different countries. The progress of the Budhuists in China is thus described by Gutzlaff:—"Accommodating their system to all the existing superstitions, they opened the door to every sort of converts, who might retain as many of their old prejudices as they chose. They were by no means rigorous in enforcing the obligations of men to morality. To expiate sins, offerings to the idols and priests were sufficient. A temple built in honour of Fō, and richly endowed, would suffice to blot out every stain of guilt, and serve as a portal to the blessed

mansions of Budhu. When death approached, they promised to every one of their votaries speedy promotion, till he should be absorbed in non-entity. With these prospects the poor deluded victim left the world. To facilitate his release from purgatory they said mass, and supplied the wants of the hungry departed spirit by rich offerings of food, which the priests greedily devoured. As Confucius had raised veneration towards ancestors into idolatrous worship, they were ready to perform the office of priests before the tablets of the dead.

“Notwithstanding this accommodating creed, the Chinese government has at times disapproved of it. As the importance of marriage has been acknowledged in China from time immemorial, and almost every person at years of maturity has been obliged to enter that state, the celibacy of the priesthood of Fō was considered a very dangerous custom. Budhu regarded contemplation apart from worldly cares as the nearest approach to bliss and perfection; therefore his followers passed lives of indolence, and practised begging as the proper means of maintaining themselves. This was diametrically opposed to the political institutions of China, where the emperor himself sets the example of holding the plough. If such a system prevailed extensively, the immense population of the empire must be reduced to starvation, for it is only by the utmost exertion that it can subsist. These serious faults in the foreign creed gave occasion for its enemies to devise its extirpation. It was proscribed as a dangerous heresy, and a cruel persecution followed; but it had taken too deep root to be easily eradicated. Then, again, some emperor would think more favourably of its tendency, and

even adopt it himself. Yet the natural consequence of its tenets was, that it could never become a religion of the State, and that the priests were never able to exercise any permanent influence over the populace. Besides, the Chinese are too rational to believe implicitly all the absurd Budhuistic fables, nor can they generally persuade themselves that their numerous images are gods. When we add to this their national apathy towards every thing concerning religion, from their being entirely engrossed by the affairs of this life, we can easily account for the disesteem in which they hold Budhuism."

The Confucians maintain that the doctrines of Fō unfit men for the active duties of life, by fixing their speculations so entirely on another state of existence, as to lead some fanatics to commit suicide, in order to anticipate futurity. The charge appears to be just; for the mental abstraction of the priests is so intense, that they have nearly all of them an expression approaching to idiocy. One of their most famous professors is even said to have passed nine years with his eyes fixed upon a wall.

In their system of moral retribution the priests of Fō teach, that what a man receives now is an indication of what he will receive hereafter; or, in other words, that he may predict his future condition from his behaviour in this life. Merit, however, seems to consist as much in inaction as action; in the abstinence from sin, as in the practice of virtue. Moreover, in one of their works, entitled "Merits and Demerits examined," their followers are directed to keep a debtor and creditor account with themselves of the acts of each day, and at the end of the year to wind it up. If

the balance is in his favour, it serves as a foundation of a stock of merits for the ensuing year; and if against him, it must be liquidated by future good deeds. It teaches them, in truth, to make up an account with Heaven, and demand the balance in bliss, or pay it by sufferings and penance.

This fallacious tenet of Budhuism is generally adopted by the Chinese, and it affords an analogy to the system of penances and indulgences in the papal church: nor does the resemblance between the two religions stop here. They practise the ordinances of celibacy, fasting, and prayers for the dead; they have holy water, rosaries of beads, which they count with their prayers, the worship of relics, and a monastic habit resembling that of the Franciscans; and they likewise kneel before an idol called *Tein-how*, or queen of heaven.

These singular coincidences between the Papal religion and Budhuism led some of the Jesuit missionaries to conjecture, that the Chinese had received a glimpse of Papal Christianity, by the way of Tartary, from the Nestorians; while others supposed that St. Thomas himself had been among them; and others concluded that Satan had practised a trick upon his friends, the Jesuits! Gutzlaff speaks more rationally on the subject, thus:—  
“That they should count their prayers by means of a rosary, and chant masses for both the living and the dead; that they should live in a state of celibacy, shave their heads, fast, &c., might be perhaps accounted for, as a mere coincidence of errors into which men are prone to fall; but their adoration of *Tein-how*, the ‘queen of heaven,’ called also Shing-moo, ‘the holy mother,’ must be a tenet engrafted upon Budhuism from foreign traditions. We are unable to fix the exact date

of the adoption of this deity. There is a legend of modern date among the people of Fokien, which tells us that she was a virgin of that province, who in a dream saw her kindred in danger of being wrecked, and boldly rescued them; but this affords no satisfactory solution. It is likely that some degenerate Nestorian Christians amalgamated with their faith and ceremonies the prevailing errors of China, and caused the priests of Budhu to adopt many of their rites." This writer saw a marble bust of Napoleon, before which incense was burnt in a temple; whence he remarks, that it would not be extraordinary if they had also adopted among their other idols such a conspicuous object of worship as the Virgin is among Papists.

This supposition seems to be corroborated by the fact, that the Saviour himself is ranked among the number of Chinese gods! This is proved by the following history of Christ, as translated by Dr. Milne, from a work entitled "A complete History of Gods and Genii:" a work which was compiled in twenty-two octavo volumes, in the reign of the immortal Kang-he. "The extreme western nations say, that at the distance of ninety-seven thousand *ly*\* from China, a journey of about three years, commences the border of Sy-keang. In that country there was formerly a virgin named Ma-le-a. In the first year of Yuen-chy, in the dynasty Hăn, a celestial god reverently announced to her, saying, 'The Lord of heaven has selected thee to be his mother.' Having finished his discourse, she actually conceived, and afterwards

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\* The *ly*, or Chinese mile, is equal to  $1,897\frac{1}{2}$  English feet. The distance from China to Palestine, therefore, according to the notion of the Chinese, is about 30,000 miles.

bore a son. The mother, filled with joy and reverence, wrapped him in a cloth, and laid him in a manger. A flock of celestial gods (angels) sang and rejoiced in the void space. Forty days after, his mother presented him to the holy teacher, and named him Yay-soo. When twelve years of age, he followed his mother to worship in the holy place. Returning home they lost each other. After three days' search, coming into the palace, she saw Yay-soo sitting on an honourable seat, conversing with aged and learned doctors, about the works and doctrines of the Lord of heaven. Seeing his mother, he was glad, returned with her, and served her with the utmost filial reverence. When thirty years of age he left his mother and teacher, and travelling to the country of Yu-teh-a, taught men to do good. The sacred miracles which he wrought were very numerous. The chief families, and those in office in that country, being proud and wicked in the extreme, envied him for the multitude of those who joined themselves to him, and planned to slay him. Among the twelve disciples of Yay-soo, there was a covetous one, named Yu-tah-sze. Aware of the wish of the greater part of his countrymen, and seizing on a proffered gain, he led forth a multitude at night, who, taking Yay-soo, bound him, and carried him before Anasze, in the court-house of Pelah-to. Rudely stripping off his garments, they tied him to a stone pillar, inflicting on him upwards of 5,400 stripes, until his whole body was torn and mangled; but still he was silent, and like a lamb remonstrated not. The wicked rabble, taking a cap made of piercing thorns, pressed it forcibly down on his temples. They hung a vile red cloak on his body, and hypocritically did reverence to him as a king.

They made a very large and heavy machine of wood, resembling the character *ten*, (or an upright cross,) which they compelled him to bear on his shoulders. The whole way it sorely pressed him down, so that he moved and fell alternately. His hands and feet were nailed to the wood, and being thirsty, a sour and bitter drink was given him. When he died, the heavens were darkened, the earth shook; the rocks, striking against each other, were broken into small pieces. He was then aged thirty-three years. On the third day after his death, he again returned to life, and his body was splendid and beautiful. He appeared first to his mother, in order to remove her sorrow. Forty days after, when about to ascend to heaven, he commanded his disciples, in all a hundred and two, to separate and go every where under heaven to teach, and administer a sacred water, to wash away the sins of those who should join their sect. Having finished his commands, a flock of ancient holy ones followed him up to the celestial kingdom. Ten days after, a celestial god descended, to receive his mother, who also ascended up on high. Being set above the nine orders, she became the empress of heaven and earth, and the protectress of human beings."

The writer who furnished this curious Chinese account of Christ has supplied another remarkable coincidence between the practices of Budhism and Popery. He says—"There is something to be said in favour of those Christians who believe in the magic powers of foreign words, and who think a prayer either more acceptable to the Deity or more suited to common edification, because the people do not generally understand it. They are not singular in this belief. Some of



the Jews had the same opinion; the followers of Budhu, and the Mohammedans, all cherish the same sentiment. From the seat of his holiness at Rome, and eastward through all Asia, to the cave of the Jammaboos of Japan, this sentiment is espoused. The bloody Druids of ancient Europe; the Mohammedan Hatib; the Buddhist priests of China; the Papal clergy, and the bonzes of Japan, all entertain the notion that the mysteries of religion will be the more revered the less they are understood, and the devotions of the people performed by proxy the more welcome in heaven for their being dressed in the garb of a foreign tongue. Thus the synagogue, the mosque, the pagan temple, and the Papal church, seem all to agree in ascribing marvellous efficacy to the sounds of an unknown language; and as they have Jews, Mohammedans, and pagans, on their side, those Christians who plead for the use of an unknown tongue in the services of religion have certainly a host, as to number, in support of their opinion, though Scripture, reason, and common sense, are on the other side.

“The sacred language of the Budhists is called ‘the language of Fân,’ which is the name of the birth-place of Budhu. It is totally unknown to the Chinese generally, and the priests themselves know nothing of it beyond the sound of a few favourite words and phrases. Among them there may now and then be found a scholar, and some have written books, but as a body they are extremely ignorant. Beyond the stated and occasional lessons of their liturgy, which they have learned to repeat by rote, they have very little knowledge of books, and many of them cannot read. As a sect, however, they profess to cherish

the most profound veneration for the language of Fân. They ascribe miraculous effects to the use of the written character and of the oral language, and consider both to be of celestial origin. To the repetition of the bare sounds, without regard to the meaning, they attach the highest importance; hence they occasionally go over the same words hundreds and thousands of times. I once asked a priest, 'What advantage can you expect to derive from merely repeating a number of words, with the sense of which you are entirely unacquainted?' His answer was, 'True, I do not know the sense; it is profound and mysterious; yet the benefit of often repeating the sounds is incalculable, it is infinite!'"

We will now notice the paradise of the Budhists. The creed of Budhuism represents that there are thirty-three stories in heaven, and that Budhu sits upon a lotus, which is a favourite type of creative power, in the uppermost story, whence he surveys the whole world. The land of his kingdom is gold, and its gardens, groves, houses, and temples are adorned with seven kinds of precious stones. Around it are seven rows of trees, seven elegant net-works, seven fences of palisades; while in the midst are seven towers of gems, having seven flights of pearl stairs, and seven bridges made of pearls. It is inhabited by the Olo-han, the first disciples of Budhu; by the demi-gods, and pure gods of the ocean; by the numberless renovating Fös; and by the demi-gods of the past, present, and future; and all the sages, whether produced in heaven or earth. To obtain an entrance into this kingdom, it is represented that a man must have Fö in the mind, and Fö on the lips, at all times and seasons; and Fö is made to swear that

if such a votary should miss the bliss he seeks, he will descend from his lotus throne, and no longer be a god!

The paradise of Fō includes most of those sensual indulgences which the founders of false religions have universally promised their votaries. When those die, who have earned for themselves a title to inherit it, their bodies, reproduced from the lotus, become pure and fragrant, and their countenances fair and well formed. Their hearts are replete with wisdom, and without vexation. If they dress not, they are not cold; and if they do, they are not made hot. So also, if they do not eat, they do not become hungry; and if they do, they are not satiated. They are without pain, irritation, and sickness, and they do not become aged. Around them they behold the lotus flowers, and trees of gems, delightfully waving, like the motion of a sheet of embroidered silk, while over their heads they see the firmament full of flowers, falling in beautiful confusion, like rain. In short, the felicity of the paradise of Fō may be called superlative, and its inhabitants are represented as enjoying it for ever.

These absurd notions of paradise are equalled by those which the Budhists entertain of hell. These have been thus described from a translation made by Dr. Morrison, of the explanatory letter-press on ten large wood-cuts, which are occasionally exhibited in their temples, and which have reference to this subject:—"Prior to their final condemnation, the souls are exposed to judgment in the courts of the Shě-ming-wâng, 'the ten kings of darkness.' The proceedings in these courts are represented exactly after the manner of the Chinese judicial trials, with the difference

in the punishments, which, in these pictures of the infernal regions, are of course sufficiently appalling. In one view are seen the judge, with his attendants and officers of the court, to whom the merciful goddess Kuan-yin appears, in order to save from punishment a soul that is condemned to be pounded in a mortar. Other punishments consist of sawing asunder, tying to a burning pillar of brass, etc. Liars have their tongues cut out; thieves and robbers are cast upon a hill of knives, and so on. After the trials are over, the more eminently good ascend to paradise; the middling class return to earth in other bodies to enjoy riches and honours; while the wicked are tormented in hell, or transformed into various animals whose dispositions and habits they imitated during their lives."

It appears singular, that while the Buddhist priests teach their votaries there is a heaven and hell, they should also teach the dogma of the transmigration of souls, in which doctrine they are represented as being finally swallowed up in annihilation. But the truth is, they know not what they teach. As, indeed, they have collected idols from every country, so it would appear that they have collected notions from every country, and grafted them on their original creed, so that it has become hard to be understood and explained.

The priests of Budhu are very numerous in China. They are taken from the dregs of the people, are a stupid and indolent class of men, and are generally very poor. They live a life of celibacy, and confine themselves principally to a vegetable diet. The costume which they wear resembles that of the Papal priesthood; and they are, in China, a society of mendicants, and go

about like the monks, asking alms for the support of their establishment. Among them there is also a regular gradation of rank, as in the Papal church. According to his reputation for sanctity, his length of service, and other claims, each priest may rise from the rank of servitor, whose duty it is to perform the menial offices of the temple, to that of Tae-ho-shang, abbot, or head of the establishment.

The temples of Budhuism differ very little from those of the State-religion and Taouism. One of the most celebrated, which is at Canton, has been thus described by an eye-witness:—"I visited, one evening, the temple situated at Honan, on the opposite side of the river to that on which the factories are built. Having crossed with my companions in a boat, we proceeded a little way down the river, and landed at a dirty causeway, near some timber-yards, in which a quantity of fir timber of various dimensions was piled with extreme regularity. The entrance to the temple, or temples, and extensive grounds about them, was close to the landing-place; and passing some miserable fruit and eating-stalls adjoining, we noticed a large clean open space, planted with trees, and having in the centre a broad pavement of granite, kept very clean. The quietness that reigned within formed a pleasing retreat from the noise and bustle without. This paved way brought us to the first portico, where we beheld, on huge granite pedestals, a colossal figure on each side, placed there as guards of the entrance to the temple of Budhu: the one on the right, in entering, is the warrior Chin-ky, and on the left is Chin-loong. After passing these terrific colossal guards, we entered another court somewhat similar to the first, also planted with trees, with a continuation of the

granite footpath, which led, through several gateways, to one of the temples. At this time the priesthood were assembled, worshipping, chanting, striking gongs arranged in rows, and frequently performing the Ko-tow in adoration of their gilded, senseless deity. The priests, with shaven crowns, and arrayed in the yellow robes of their religion, appeared to go through the mummerly with devotion. They had the lowering look of bigotry, which constant habit had at last legibly written upon their countenances. As soon as the mummerly had ceased, the priests all flocked out of the temple, adjourned to their respective rooms, divested themselves of their official robes, and the senseless figures were left to themselves with the lamps burning before them."

Such temples as these are to be found in every province, and they partake of the nature of monastic establishments. Some of them are so large, that they contain two or three hundred priests, who are supported by the offerings or legacies of the votaries, like the priests of Popery. Many of the temples are erected upon mountains and in ravines; and the priesthood in these live as hermits, and do nothing but eat, pray, and burn incense. Sometimes, however, they make long journeys, in order to talk to the people about the miracles which they pretend have happened in their temples, hoping thereby to increase their influence. The pilgrims who repair to their temples, which they do in great numbers, live a life of ease and comfort, performing their worship, counting their beads, and afterwards regaling themselves with the viands which the priests prepare. Some of their devotees, though mingling in the world, have monthly meetings for prayer,

at which one of the elder priests presides, and females are allowed to attend.

Connected with the religion and worship of Fō are those pagodas of China, which consist,



Temple and Bridge.

some of nine, and others of seven stories. This has evident reference to the tales of the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, and the seven Budhus, who are said to have existed at different periods. Images of Fō, and the various gods and saints associated with him, are found in niches of the wall, as the visitor mounts the spiral staircase which conducts to the summit. Many of these

pagodas are in a dilapidated state ; and whenever they are found in repair, they are attached to extensive establishments as those above described, and which are enriched by the contributions and bequests of their votaries. The government has nothing to do with their maintenance, and it even exhibits a repugnance towards them. It does not, however, proscribe Budhuism, as from time to time it has other sects. On the contrary, its priests are left free to promulgate their dark superstitions, and to make converts throughout the length and breadth of the empire.

It is not known how many votaries Budhuism has in China. The greater part of the population profess no religion at all, and are satisfied with repairing occasionally to the temples ; and even those who do, exhibit no sectarianism. They do not boast that they are of Taou, or of Budhu, but content themselves with showing their particular predilections to a creed by their donations. While, however, no accurate statement can be made as to the number of the disciples of Budhu in China, some judgment may be formed on this point from the fact that the priesthood number one or two millions, and that these are dispersed abroad throughout the whole empire.

The fact of China swarming with so many Budhu priests, is one of the most appalling features in their history. What fearful evils they are capable of working among a mass of people so proverbially simple and prone to superstition as the Chinese are, words cannot describe : and when to these are added the priests of the State, and the priests of Taou, the evil rises to a fearful extreme. The Chinese are generally fatalists, or believers in inevitable destiny ; and those who are



not, believe that *conduct is fate*; or, in other words, that a man may lay the foundation of his own destiny by his actions. Then again, they believe in ghosts, against which they use talismans and spells without number. They are also given to omens, and various kinds of divinations, all of which bear the marks of the strangest and wildest superstition.

Having thus described the three chief sects of China, it may not prove uninteresting to take a brief view of the progress of Nestorianism, Popery, Protestantism, Mohammedanism, and other religions which have been from time to time introduced into that country.

#### SECTION IV.—OTHER RELIGIONS.

##### NESTORIANISM.

The Jesuits relate that, in the year 1265, some Roman Catholic missionaries discovered, at one of the principal cities of the province of Shen-sy, an inscription in Syriac letters, which recorded the first introduction of Christianity into China in the year 635, by certain Nestorian bishops, who had been driven eastward by persecutions in the Roman provinces. These refugees, and their descendants, seem to have exerted themselves in promulgating the truths of the gospel; and Marco Polo relates, that they so far succeeded, as to be allowed to build two churches in a city on the banks of the Yang-tse-keang, where a Nestorian, named Mar-Sachis, was appointed to the government of the city for three years. The influence, however, which Nestorianism had upon the Chinese must have been very slight; for all traces of it are lost in the pages of history.

## POPERY.

The first mission for the conversion of the Chinese to the Papal faith was sent out by Pope Innocent IV., in 1246; but the first successful promoter of it was John de Corvino, who was despatched to Asia by Pope Nicholas IV., in 1288. John de Corvino was allowed to settle at Peking, where he built a church, and is said to have baptized many thousands of converts, as well as to have instructed numbers of children in the Latin language, and the tenets of Romanism. At his death, however, the establishment which he founded seems to have sunk into insignificance, if not wholly to have ceased. It remained for the Portuguese Jesuits to establish a permanent footing in China. And this they did through the zealous labours of Francis Xavier and Ricci. The latter, especially, notwithstanding fierce opposition, finally established himself at Peking; where, by his adroit and pliant conduct, as well as by his great talents, he became the object of admiration. He was a Jesuit in the true sense of that term, which, by a course of duplicity on the part of those who bear it, has become expressive of cunning and deceptive guile. At his death, in 1610, thirty churches existed in the province of Keang-nan alone; and, after that event, kindred spirits pursued the work with equal vigour and cunning. Even mandarins embraced the tenets of Popery. Since that period the Jesuits have undergone various vicissitudes. They were tolerated by some emperors, while others raised against them a fierce persecution. The period of their greatest success was during the reign of the first emperor of the Ta-tsing dynasty, when there were few large cities in which some of their establishments were

not found. At that time, also, other orders flocked over to China; but when that emperor died, a general persecution commenced. They revived again, however, under the rule of Kang-he, who, perceiving that he could learn much from these foreigners, took them under the wing of his protection. But dissensions arose among the different orders, which proved a stronger drawback upon their missions than all former persecutions. It raised up for them two powerful opponents in the persons of Kang-he's successors; the former of whom abolished the order of Jesuits, and the latter did every thing in his power to extirpate Popery. The present monarch, who succeeded these determined opposers of the Papal religion, has uniformly shown more forbearance till recently, when he issued a furious edict, commanding all "native Christians," on pain of death, to renounce their faith; though it does not appear that any measures for putting the edict into execution have been taken. The foreign priests have been dismissed from the interior; but the "native Christians" are left to worship in their private churches; for they are not permitted to worship openly, except at Macao and Peking.

Of the Chinese Papists it has been said, that they retain much of their native character. This is no matter for wonder; for setting aside the fact, that the Jesuits, observing them wedded to antiquated custom, permitted them to retain many of their superstitions and idolatries, the religion they taught was little better calculated to improve the heart. They took away from them some of their clay-gilt gods, but they substituted for them little images and relics of saints. Hence the heart, the seat of all virtuous and pious emotion, remained

unaffected. And thus will it remain, till touched by the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the pure and unadulterated gospel.

#### PROTESTANTISM.

There have been peculiar difficulties in the way of Protestant missions in China. A broad seal has been set upon the interior, so that the heralds of the gospel could not have entered had they been sent. This is proved by the previous account of the progress of Popery in China: it was only by art and cunning that it was introduced, and by sinful temporizing that it became established. And even after the Papists had thus worked their way into the good graces of the Chinese, the Jesuits were finally expelled the country in disgrace.

Protestants, however, have not altogether slumbered in this good cause. Some, notwithstanding they have seen a lion in the way, have zealously braved the danger. The first of these was Dr. Morrison, who was once a Sunday-school boy, and who translated the Scriptures and compiled a dictionary of the Chinese language, thereby laying a broad foundation for future operations. He was afterwards joined by Dr. Milne, who was compelled, through the jealousy of the Portuguese, to remove from the coasts of China to Malacca. This, coupled with the fact, that the friendly intercourse with Europeans is jealously watched by the Chinese government, in order to prevent it, precluded the free course of the word of life. And yet a few Chinese embraced the gospel, and were ready to venture all for the name of Christ. Yielding to the influences of the Holy Spirit, they forsook their pagan altars, and bowed to the authority of the Redeemer. For-

saking their "lying vanities," they built their hopes on the Rock of Ages, and they testified their sincerity by pointing out that Saviour to others whom they had found so precious to their own souls. Among the most extraordinary of these was Leang-afa, whose history is well known in our country.

A primary object of the missionaries has been to enlighten the nation by means of religious tracts and books. A series of such were published at Batavia and Malacca, and widely circulated in every part of the empire, as well as in the settlements of the Archipelago and Siam. Afterwards, when the few native members of the Protestant church at Canton were dispersed, the press was transferred to Singapore, and thence the distribution of books on the coast was still continued with gratifying results. The people read them with avidity, as though they were thirsting for the waters of life. So eager were they to receive them, that the emperor became desirous of knowing their contents; and though he at first simply pronounced them to be "unclassical," on a recent occasion, when a successful attempt was made to scatter the word of eternal life by means of books, an edict was issued, complaining of the intrusion. But no edict promulgated by the emperor of China is sufficiently authoritative to prevent his subjects from receiving these publications. Recent events, moreover, have opened a highway for them, not only on the coasts, but into the very interior of China. Means only now are wanting. These obtained, and books and missionaries may unite in the hallowed work of evangelizing China. And they may go forth in the sure and certain hope that the best results will follow. Let true

Christians but arise to the rescue of these benighted wanderers of the human race from the shackles in which they are bound, and they, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit resting upon their labours, will be set free. Difficulties may be in the way, but Christian love and zeal can readily surmount all these. China is a field open to Christian heroes and martyrs, and who are more irresistible than they? Fighting under the banners of Christ, they can command the victory over all the powers set in array against them. Let them, then, advance to the very centre of Satan's empire, and they will not fail to pull down the ensign of the great dragon. Let all the churches under the immediate influence of the Divine Spirit unite in this great work, looking upwards for a blessing, and it must be accomplished. China, hitherto one of the strongest holds of Satan, will then become a section of the "kingdom of our God, and of his Christ."\*

#### MOHAMMEDANISM.

It has been urged, that practical toleration is a principle on which the Chinese government is founded. Would that history bore out this assertion, for then had the gospel long ago have found its way even into the centre of China. Unfortunately, however, it only holds good so far as false religions are concerned, and of them only in a limited sense. Still, it is a remarkable fact, that while the government of China has watched over the proceedings of Protestants with a jealous

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\* For more ample details concerning the progress of Christianity in China, the reader is referred to the last chapter of the volume.

eye, it has permitted the growth of false religions; and even of Mohammedanism. It can only be accounted for by the facts, that Christianity alone is calculated to overthrow the hollow system on which the government is based, and those by which it is surrounded; and that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and the everlasting gospel of his Son Jesus Christ.

In the early ages of Mohammedanism it was promulgated by the sword. The motto of that false prophet was—"When ye encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads, until ye have made a great slaughter among them; and bind them in bonds; and either give them a free dismissal afterwards, or exact a ransom, until the foe shall have laid down his arms." The immediate successors of Mohammed followed his line of policy, and all his followers for ages burned with proselyting zeal. A short time after the death of Mohammed, his faith entered the western provinces of China; but its progress was inconsiderable till the ninth and tenth centuries, when some Arab merchants formed several congregations among the Chinese. Under Kub-lai-khan's reign, also, the highest mandarins were chosen from amongst the Saracens; and they would not fail to endeavour to propagate their doctrines. These so far gained credit, that to this day some few Mussulmans are to be found in almost every large city of the empire; but they possess small influence over the idolatrous community. Hence it is that they have been generally left by the government to live, and to enjoy their opinions, unmolested. No emperor, however, except Kub-lai, has favoured them; nor is it likely that they will ever become a predomi-

nant sect. In some places they have built mosques, as in Canton, Kan-suh, and beyond the Yellow River, on the banks of the Great Canal; but they generally appear to be despised by their fellow-countrymen. Moreover, they are not very strict Mussulmans, for they wear the same dress, eat the same kind of food, pork excepted, and perform nearly the same ceremonies as the multitude.

#### THE JEWS IN CHINA.

In the works of Benjamin of Tudela, it is mentioned, that some Jews had settled in the Chinese empire. This information is essentially correct, for Gozani, one of the Portuguese Jesuits, visited their synagogue, which is at Kae-fung-foo, the capital of the province of Honan. They are called the Taou-kin-keaou, "the sect that extracts the sinew." Father Gozani sought to obtain a sight of the manuscript of the Pentateuch which they had in their possession, and of which they read a section every Sabbath, but in this he did not succeed.\* When they read it, he observes, they cover the face with a transparent veil, in memory of Moses, who descended from the mountain with his face covered, and who thus published the decalogue and the law of God to his people. The fact of their reading it in public may serve as a key to the analogies drawn between the decalogue and the commandments ascribed to Budhu, etc.; for these Jews are said to have reached China two hundred years before Christ. The sect attracts very little attention, and remains entirely unnoticed by the government, although they still ad-

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\* This has since been seen; but all attempts to obtain a collation of their Scriptures with ours have failed.



here to the traditions of their fathers, and conform to many points of the law.

#### THE NATIVE CHINESE SECTS.

There are various sects among the Chinese, which may be termed semi-religious, semi-political. Among these are the *Pih-leën-keaou*, or “the white water-lily sect,” which sprung from Budhism, and use the lotus as a badge of their order;—the *San-ho-hwuy*, or “triad society,” so denominated from the three ruling powers of the universe, heaven, earth, and man, and which is said to have sprung up from the former;—the *Tsingcha-mun*, or “tea sect,” who burn incense, make offerings of fine tea, bow down and worship the heavens, the earth, sun, moon, fire and water, Fö, and their deceased parents;—and a sect which has for its title “The wonderful association.” The members of all these sects have been persecuted at various times for designing to subvert the government, and the suspicion does not appear to have been without a cause. This is especially the case with the *Pih-leën-keaou*, and the *San-ho-hwuy*; the former of which have frequently broken out into open rebellion; and the latter have for their ostensible object the overthrow of the Tartar dynasty, which they are bound by oath to effect, either sooner or later. The members of the *San-ho-hwuy* have secret signs, by which they make themselves known to each other, and are bound in duty to afford mutual assistance. The very essence of their creed, likewise, consists in the explanation of some unintelligible symbols, in which three powers, three virtues, and three determinations, are always traced.

That associations of this nature should be formed

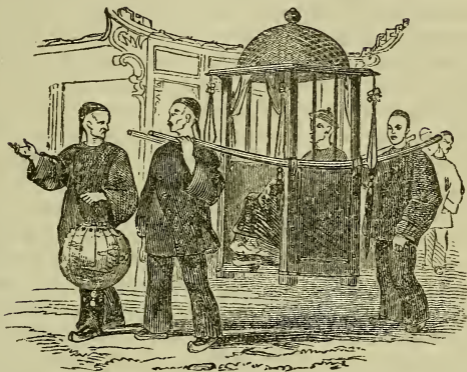
in China, is a very natural consequence of the state in which society exists. Ancient and modern history attests with a trumpet-tongue, that, where the mind is universally influenced by idolatry, there no government can rule in perfect security. The pillars of state must ever be in danger of being overthrown; for the heart, influenced by its inherent depravity alone, neither feels nor knows a motive for right conduct. It may be awed into submission by the grandeur and power of monarchs for a while, as it is in China; but there ever will be an under-current flowing from its marvellous source of evil, and secretly working mischief. It is only when human nature becomes deeply imbued with the divine principles of Christianity—only when mankind have the fear of God before their eyes—that they perform all their relative duties aright.



Chinese Image-worship.

## CHAPTER IV.

## GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATION OF THE CHINESE.



Mandarin in Sedan, Bearers, and Servant with Lantern.

THE antiquity of China is indicated by the theoretically patriarchal form of its government. This is a remarkable circumstance, when coupled with the consideration that great revolutions have shaken the very foundations of the empire of China. Its institutions have been subverted by strangers, who ruled the people with a rod of iron, but the empire has again resumed its former outward state, and the people returned to their former condition: the emperor has again, of whatever dynasty he might be, been looked up to as a father,

while he has professed to govern his subjects as children.

This feature in the Chinese government is clearly unfolded both in their ritual and criminal code. In them an exact parallel is drawn between the relations in which every person stands to his own parents, and to the emperor. He suffers similar punishments for similar offences against both; he mourns, and goes unshaved, for the same period, at the death of both; and both possess similar power over his person. Hence he is bred up to civil obedience, though at the expense of his liberty; and the State has reason to expect that he will prove a quiet subject, because he has been trained to the restraints put upon him.

That the people may be conversant with the duties they owe to their parents, elders, and emperor, it is ordained that the magistrates should read, on the days corresponding to the new and full moon, some portions of the book of Sacred Instructions in public. This book is addressed to the people: and how well calculated it is to teach at least the moral of obedience, the annexed extracts will show. Teaching them duty in general, it says,—“In our general conduct, not to be orderly is to fail in our duty; in serving our sovereign, not to be faithful is to fail in filial duty; in acting as a magistrate, not to be careful is to fail in filial duty; in the intercourse of friends, not to be sincere is to fail in filial duty; in arms and in war, not to be brave is to fail in filial duty.” Duty thus makes up the sum of life; and the same principle is observable in the claims of elders, which are thus enforced:—“The duty to parents and the duty to elders are indeed similar in obligation; for he who can be a pious son, will also

prove an obedient younger brother; and he who is both, will, while at home, prove an honest and orderly subject, and in foreign service a faithful and courageous soldier. . . . Mencius has said, 'Were all men to honour their kindred and respect their elders, the world would be at peace.' "

The assertion that has been made, that the fundamental principle of the Chinese government is "enforced by positive laws," may be illustrated by the narration of a case which occurred in one of the central provinces—a case which shows that the State deems it necessary to treat family rebellion with the same severity as treason, supposing them to be allied in principle. A man, aided by his wife, had severely beaten his mother; and this being reported to the viceroy at Peking, it was determined to punish them in a signal manner, in order to enforce the fundamental principle of the empire. And so it was done. The principal offenders were put to death; the mother of the wife was bamboed and exiled; the scholars of the district were not permitted to attend the public examination for three years; the magistrates were deprived of their office and banished; the house in which the offenders lived was razed to its very foundations; and the spot where the offence occurred was anathematized, or made accursed! This punishment took place under the sanction, and by the command, of an imperial edict, which concluded thus:—"If there be any rebellious children, who oppose, beat, or degrade their parents, they shall be punished in like manner. If ye people, indeed, know the renovating principle, then fear and obey the imperial will, nor look on this as an empty declamation. For now, according to this case of Teng-chen, whenever there are

the like, I resolve to condemn them, and from my heart strictly charge you to beware. I instruct the magistrates of every province severely to warn the heads of families, and elders of villages; and on the second and sixteenth of every month to read the Sacred Instructions, in order to show the importance of the relations of life, that persons may not rebel against their parents. I intend to render the empire filial.”

The practical wisdom displayed in the enforcement of obedience to parents by the Chinese government, is a matter for admiration. It may, indeed, only have been adopted out of policy, or as the means to an end, but the effect is the same. It is the State teaching a great moral principle; and its instructions have a salutary effect. By it the young not only respect their parents, but their elders; and men of all ages and classes, thus trained to practical obedience, with some exceptions only, become willing subjects.

Admiration of this fundamental principle of the Chinese government, however, has its limits. The end to which it is made the means is one of doubtful good. Unhappily, indeed, under the endearing name of a patriarchal and paternal government, China is the beau-ideal of despotism. By it, one man only, the emperor, possesses authority; and he uses that authority frequently to evil purposes—purposes which have a debasing influence over the minds of his subjects.

Amidst all his despotism and high pretensions, however, the Chinese emperor, through his organ the government, is not unmindful of his duties. Having thus effected social peace and order, he employs it to the promotion of the very best of all possible preventives of commotion, that of cheerful

industry. Under his fostering care, agriculture, trade and commerce flourish, and the people are left to possess their full share of the results of their labour. The surest proof of this is the characteristic cheerfulness with which the Chinese proceed to their daily toil; and which is so marked, that it never fails to excite the attention of travellers to that country.

Another good effect of the social peace and order promoted by the government of China, is the universal diffusion of intelligence and education through the lower classes. Notwithstanding the empire consists of so many millions, almost every man can read and write sufficiently for the ordinary purposes of life. Education is, in truth, inculcated by the government; for one of the discourses in the book of Sacred Instructions, which is read to the people, inculcates the necessity of a general acquaintance with the penal laws, and these penal laws are printed and distributed among the people. It is held, that as men cannot properly be punished for what they do not know, so they will be less liable to incur the penalty if they are made duly acquainted with the prohibition. Education, therefore, is made by the Chinese the means of "preventive justice;" and it is, upon every principle of reason, humanity, and sound principle, preferable to "punitive justice."

This appears to be the general sentiment of the Chinese; and this is enforced upon the parent's notice by the government. Every parent is by law liable to punishment for the crimes of his children at any period of their lives; and he, also, is entitled to rewards for their merits; and hence, influenced by the motives of fear and hope, education is generally promoted. Every town and

village has its public place of instruction, and wealthy families have private tutors. So sensible are the Chinese of the importance of education, that their language abounds with maxims having reference to its utility, such as, "Bend the mulberry tree when young;" and, "Without education no governors can be obtained for the people."

It is all these circumstances combined, the latter of which are but ramifications of the first principle of government, that have produced the general harmony which prevails among the Chinese. A common maxim among them is, "Better be a dog in peace, than a man in anarchy;" and they observe that "The worst of men are fondest of change and commotion, hoping that they may thereby benefit themselves; but by adherence to a steady, quiet system, affairs proceed without confusion, and bad men have nothing to gain." It is to this soul-pervading sentiment, perhaps, that amidst all the internal revolutions of China, no single instance has occurred of an attempt to change the form of the patriarchal government. All seem to be deeply convinced that their interest is concerned in the maintenance of the state of things as it is, and hence they are averse to any innovations.

Even if this feeling did not prevent, policy has thrown such obstacles in the way of change as could not easily be overcome. In order to strengthen the hands of government, it has drawn a strong line of demarcation between its officers and the people. All, from the highest State minister to the meanest soldier, are by their situations interested in upholding the existing order of things, since all they have, and all they hope to have, is derived from the emperor. Statesmen, soldiers and scholars, alike can only look to the court for



honours and emoluments, whence they present a formidable front to every aggression. The very



Mandarin receiving Seals of Office from the Emperor.

aristocracy of the country is official, and not hereditary, whence they are ever looking to the throne for favours; and if that throne was utterly sub-

verted, their expectations would be cut off. Besides, all rank of consequence is determined by talent, the test of which is afforded by public examinations, which are open to the poorest persons; menial servants, comedians, and the lowest agents of the police excepted: and the multitude, therefore, as well as officials, are encouraged to seek for promotion at the hands of the emperor.

Another barrier in the way of change in the government of China is, that the actions of all the officers are mutually watched, and their merits or demerits represented to their superiors. Thus a sword is ever suspended over their heads, and they are careful not to cut the thread by which it hangs, lest their lives should be endangered. But this system, while it promotes watchfulness, and guards the throne, works for evil. Knowing that if they are detected in any error they will certainly suffer for it, deceit and prevarication become the order of the day, that punishment may be avoided.

To the same end, civil officers are not allowed to hold a place in their native province; and high officers are frequently removed from one station to another, raised and degraded, summoned to appear before the throne, and again dismissed. The principal authority, moreover, is divided between two grandees, independent and frequently jealous of each other, so that it would be extremely difficult for a party to be formed in the provinces of sufficient strength to overthrow the supreme government.

The exact position which the emperor of China holds in the State has been fully shown. His principal ministers form the Nuy-kō, or "interior council chamber;" and the chief counsellors, who bear the titles of Choong-t'hang and Kō-laou, are

four in number, two Tartars, and two Chinese; the former taking the precedence. To these ministers the emperor has recourse in all state affairs. Every matter, whether spiritual or temporal, is submitted to their deliberation; though, in most instances, they simply re-echo the emperor's sentiments. Notwithstanding, he never acts without them, either as priest or sovereign, whence they may be justly considered to hold the most exalted situation in the State.

The members of the imperial cabinet are generally men grown gray in the service of their country. They are selected for their supposed experience and wisdom.

Frequent changes occur in the imperial cabinet of China. At the same time there is no party spirit displayed, as in European courts. When one officer is dismissed, the others do not resign, but proceed at once to choose another, who before night is installed. This arises from the fact, that the aristocracy all entertain the same notions concerning politics. They are all submissive courtiers; and the only contest known among them, is who shall prove the most servile to the emperor. Below these are a number of assessors, who, with them, form the council of state. All these are selected from the Imperial college. Besides the supreme council, there is a body of privy councillors, who are employed when secrecy and despatch are required.

For the conduct of government-business in detail, the Leapoo, or Six Boards, are established at Pekin. These are, 1. The Board of Official Appointments, which takes cognisance of the conduct of all civil officers. 2. The Board of Revenue, which regulates all fiscal matters. 3. The

Board of Rites and Ceremonies. 4. The Military Board. 5. The Board of Criminal Jurisdiction;



Mandarins of the First, Second, and Sixth Classes.

and 6. The Board of Public Works. All these have subordinate offices under them.

Apart from these boards, there are two other establishments; namely, the "Office for Foreign

Affairs," which has the charge of the external relations of the empire, and the presidents of which always consist of Manchow or Mongol Tartars; and the "Office of Censors," who pry officially into other men's affairs, for which they are rewarded by government with pay and high-sounding titles; albeit they are mere spies. The members consist, in all, of from forty to fifty, of whom several are sent to various parts of the empire, while others remain in the vicinity of the court.

Such are the principal organs of the government of Peking; and the provincial government in its whole, as well as parts, is formed on the same model. Every governor is an emperor in his sphere, but there is this wide difference between them—instead of being responsible only to Heaven, the governors of provinces have to give an account to the emperor.

The duties of a governor are very onerous. He is, indeed, responsible for the welfare and peace of the community over which he presides, and if any disturbance or rebellion takes place, he is never forgiven. Thus, the governor of Canton received signal marks of imperial favour in 1831; but he was ruined the next year, by the rebellion of some mountaineers in the north-west, though no blame could be attached to his administration. Once in every three years, the governor of each province is compelled to forward to the Board of Civil Appointments at Peking the name of every officer under his government, with remarks on their conduct and character, supplied by the immediate superiors of each; and according to his report every one is exalted or degraded so many degrees. The offences of governors are

tried by imperial commissioners, appointed by the emperor for the special purpose.

The several degrees of both civil and military officers are distinguished by the colour of the ball which they wear at the point of their conical caps, and which are usually red, light blue, dark blue, crystal, white stone, and gold. These balls, however, are not infallible signs of the rank of the wearer, for the privilege of wearing them may be purchased. This is frequently done by the wealthy, as in case of a breach of the law it protects them from being punished on the spot, or till they have been legally deprived of the ball. But it does not prove the means of a long delay of punishment, for the process of depriving them of it is very summary. This done, the consequences of their offence soon follow, for the principle of the penal code of China may be exemplified by a common saying applied to hasty parents in the correction of their offspring:—"It is but a word and a blow, and sometimes the blow first."

The practical portion of the penal code of China is divided under six heads, corresponding to the six supreme boards at Peking. This arrangement proves an efficient engine for the control of the vast population of China. The penal code of this country is very arbitrary. Thus it is constantly meddling with relative duties, whether they regard the living or the dead; and it pays such a minute attention to trifles as makes it burdensome to its administrators. It is also notorious for the gross injustice and unrelenting cruelty which mark all its provisions against the crime of treason. Every species of advantage and protection afforded to other criminals, though these are but slight compared with those in European countries, is taken

away from a traitor, and he is sure to die. Nor himself alone : for in 1803, the life of the emperor was attempted by a single assassin, and while he was condemned to a lingering death, his sons, who were of a tender age, were strangled. Thus, the innocent, contrary to the principles of all reason and humanity, are made to suffer with the guilty : and this despotic law is even sanctioned by their sacred books : in them Confucius enjoins a son "not to live under the same heaven with the slayer of his father ;" and this rule is made to extend to the sovereign.

The extent of the punishment for particular crimes is clearly defined in the penal code, and the administrators of the law dare not go beyond the definition. So far the offender is protected from injustice. It may be truly said of the Chinese, therefore, that when they once are enclosed in the net of the law, it is difficult for them to make their escape.

The minor punishments among the Chinese are by the bamboo, whose dimensions are exactly defined, and the blows of which are administered according to the nature of the offence ; the kea, or cangue, which has been called the wooden collar, and is a species of walking pillory ; temporary banishment to a distance not exceeding fifty leagues from the prisoner's home ; and exile beyond the Chinese frontier, either temporary or during life. The three capital punishments are strangulation, beheading, and a mode of execution called ling-chy, which means literally "a disgraceful and lingering death. The application of these modes of punishment sometimes savours of despotism. Thus robbery, with the preconcerted use of weapons, is punished with

death, however small the amount may be which the robber has taken. Thus, also, killing in an affray, without reference to intent, either expressed or implied, is punished with strangulation.

In the law of homicide there is a remarkable incongruity, which could only have been engendered by that principle on which the government is founded; namely, patriarchal authority. While this law almost exculpates the parent from crime if he kills his children, whether accidentally or intentionally, it denounces the penalty of death upon children who strike or curse their parents. This absolute power bestowed upon fathers is, doubtless, productive of much evil; and if natural feeling did not generally prove a sufficient security against its abuse, China would thereby present an awful spectacle of homicide to the world. As it is, fathers have virtually the power of life and death over their children.

The prisons of China are frequently made the instruments of judicial injustice. The Chinese emphatically style them *ty-yö*, or "hell;" and their horror of them is such, that it has a tendency to deter from crime. Their severity is increased by the confinement being solitary, of which the Chinese, who are a social people, have an instinctive dread. Women are rarely confined in these miserable abodes, they being generally allowed the exemption of being placed as criminals in the custody of their nearest relations, who are answerable for their appearance at the tribunal of justice. At this tribunal the whole of the vast population of China are liable to be arraigned, except ten privileged classes, who are either in relationship to the imperial line, or in high character and station. These, except in



the case of treason, when the exemption is not allowed, cannot be either tried or punished without a special reference to the emperor. In giving evidence, oaths are never required, but severe punishments are attached to falsehood. When any one exhibits a reluctance to give evidence, a species of torture is employed to force it from him; that is, the ankles or fingers are squeezed between two sticks tied triangularly. Torture, however, is forbidden to be exercised on persons above seventy, or under fifteen years of age, as also on those labouring under permanent disease.

The severity of the penal code of China appears chiefly in those cases wherein the safety of the emperor, or the stability of the government, is involved. Apart from these, benevolent traits are sometimes discernible. Thus, in order to promote kindred and domestic ties, it is provided that relatives and servants living under the same roof shall, in ordinary cases, be held innocent, though they conceal the offences of their fellows, or assist in effecting their escape: but this benevolence ceases in the enactments relative to slaves. Every offence is aggravated or diminished in its penalty, according as it is committed by a slave towards a freeman, or a freeman towards a slave. Thus, if a slave kills his master, he is punished with a lingering death, as a traitor; but if a master kills his slave, the crime is not even made capital.

The penal code of China, therefore, cannot be said to be founded upon the strict rules of equity and justice. If in some respects it exhibits practical wisdom, in others it appears eminently calculated to keep the multitude in awe. Its defects and excesses are those inherent in all despotisms, for they evidently arise from the first and last

principle of the government, which declares that one man shall rule, the rest obey.

That the population of China is comparatively happy and secure under its administration, is universally attested by those who have visited that country. Sir George Staunton, speaking of his colleague in the commission of the last British embassy, says:—"His extensive acquaintance with Persia and India renders him a peculiarly competent judge of comparative merit in this case. He pronounces China superior to the other countries of Asia, both in the arts of government, and the general aspects of society: and adds, that the laws are more generally known, and more equally administered; that those examples of oppression, accompanied with infliction of barbarous punishment, which offend the eye and distress the feelings of the most hurried traveller in other Asiatic countries, are scarcely to be met with in China; that the proportion which the middling orders bear to the other classes of the community appeared considerable; and that compared with Turkey, Persia, and parts of India, an impression was produced highly favourable to the comparative situation of the lower orders."

The Chinese themselves appear to be generally satisfied with their lot, and even to felicitate themselves that they were born in China. Thus one of them wrote these complacent reflections:—"I felicitate myself that I was born in China. It constantly occurs to me, that I might have been born beyond the sea in some remote part of the earth, where the cold freezes, or the heat scorches: where the people are clothed with the leaves of plants, eat wood, dwell in the wilderness, lie in holes in the earth, are far removed from the converting maxims of the ancient kings, and are ig

norant of the domestic relations. Though born as one of the race of men, I should not have been different from a beast. But happily I have been born in China. I have a house to live in, and have drink, food, commodious furniture, clothing, and caps, and infinite blessings! Truly, the highest felicity is mine!"

If, Christian reader, the Chinese feel called upon to felicitate themselves that they are born in a country where they can peaceably enjoy the blessings of life, without making any reference to eternity, how much more cause have you for self-congratulation! You live in a country where you can not only enjoy liberty and prosperity, in a far higher degree than the Chinese, but where you have abundant religious privileges. See that you are grateful for this high and inestimable advantage. Cast your eyes upon heathen China—a land groaning in the iron fetters of superstition—and say: "I felicitate myself that I was *not* born in China. I might have been; and these knees, which are now permitted to kneel at a throne of grace, might be bowing before dumb idols. But happily I have been born in a Christian land! and if I have received grace to believe and obey the gospel, I have God for my Father, Jesus Christ for my Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit for my Guide and Comforter, as I journey onwards to the eternal mansions prepared for me, in common with all true Christians, in heaven. Truly I may say with the psalmist—

'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup;  
Thou maintainest my lot.

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places.

Yea, I have a goodly heritage.'"

When you have addressed these praises to God

breathe also a prayer that the poor world-seeking and superstitious Chinese may soon enjoy your privileges; that the millions now ranged under the banners of the great dragon may bow to the sceptre of Christ. The true Christian knows no selfish motive. Saved himself, he desires the salvation of the whole human race.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE AGRICULTURE OF THE CHINESE.



Chinese Harrowing.

IN all civilized communities, whether ancient or modern, agriculture has been deemed of the highest importance. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, alike paid attention to this subject. Perhaps, however, in no nation, whether

of ancient or modern times, has the husbandman been held in higher repute than in China. That country is essentially agricultural, and the cultivators of the soil rank next to the cultivators of the mind in national importance. And this is not owing to their skill, but rather to the effects of their labour. They are diligent and laborious agriculturists, but the science of good husbandry is unknown among them. This seems to arise from a love of those customs which their forefathers have handed down to them. As they tilled the land, so their descendants resolve to till it, and thus there is no spirit of improvement. Although the nation has existed for several thousand years, the very instruments they use are still those of primitive simplicity.

As in other countries, the chief instrument of the Chinese husbandman is the plough; but the plough in China is a very different thing from that with which Europeans are acquainted, or even that which many of the ancients used. A Chinese plough simply consists of a beam, handle and a share, with a wooden stem, and a rest behind, instead of a moulding board. And all this is put together in a very rude manner. It would seem, indeed, as one has observed, that a labourer, tired of plying the spade, resolved to call upon the ox for aid, and for that purpose tied his shovel to a beam: to the one end he attached the docile animal, while he held the other by means of a handle. Still, it appears to answer his purpose. His only aim is to stir up the soil, or, in other words, to form the soil, the manure and a certain quantity of water into an equable mixture. Still, were the Chinese to work the plough upon European principles, they

would, doubtless, produce more abundant crops ; for their present instrument seldom cuts to the depth of four inches ; so that they sow from year to year on the same soil, without being able to turn up new earth. But it is the endeavour of the Chinese government to confirm the people in the love of all antiquated things, if once acknowledged to be useful, without endeavouring to discover a better method.

In some parts of the country, the plough is drawn through the soil by human strength ; in others, by oxen, asses, and mules, contrary to the laws of humanity, yoked together indiscriminately. In the province of Canton the soil is ploughed by means of a buffalo, of a dark gray colour, which is called by the Chinese *shuey-new*, or "water-ox," from its propensity for muddy shallows, where it wallows in the mire. When sufficient rain has fallen to allow the rice fields to be laid under water, they are subjected to the plough ; the buffalo and his driver wading through the field up to their knees from morning to night.

Preparatory to planting, the rice is sown thickly in some richly-manured corner. It there germinates in two or three days ; and when about ten inches in height, the young plants are removed to the fields prepared for their reception. The process of transplanting exhibits a perfect division of labour. One person takes up the young shoots and hands them to another, who conveys them to their destination. They are there received by a party of labourers, some of whom dibble holes, into which they drop the plants by sixes, while others follow to settle the earth about the roots. The labour must be any thing but agreeable, for the men are compelled to

wade ankle-deep in mud and water, and to preserve a stooping position, till they have completed their task. Use, however, has rendered the work familiar; and it is said that a man is able, by an ordinary exertion of his powers, to set from twenty to twenty-five plants within one minute. Sir George Staunton also represents, that the Chinese peasantry are better able to support labour, with slight intermission, than the lower classes in Europe, from the circumstance that they are more temperate. For the most part, he says, they are sober men, and marrying early, they are less liable to corrupt the springs of life by vicious habits.

After the rice is planted, the field is kept watered as it requires. Any unusual deficiency of water would be fatal to the grain; and hence the Chinese have provided against that contingency, by furnishing canals and conduits to each field for the purpose of irrigation. The Chinese excel in their contrivances to raise water for the irrigation of their land; and it is probable, that the origin of these inventions is very remote. The simplest method is represented in the cut.

While some of the Chinese husbandmen are thus employed in irrigating the land, others are dispersed over the field, watching every plant to see if any pernicious weed is growing by its side. When such is the case, he pulls the seedling from its bed, and plucks away the intruder, after which he replaces it in its proper situation. In spite of this practice, however, weeds still spring up, and require the application of the hoe at two successive periods. This instrument is similar to that used in Europe, only it is of a stronger make, and has a short handle, which compels the labourer



Chinese Irrigation.

to stoop very much in the performance of his work.

The rice, which is the staple food in China, is ripe about August or September. Then, invited by its yellow tinges, the reaper puts in his sickle, which is the type of our reaping-hook, and cuts it down.

In the northern parts of China wheat is cultivated, but it appears to be small-grained and of an indifferent quality. In the neighbourhood of Canton, also, three kinds of millet are grown in small fields laid out in narrow ridges. As before observed, however, rice is the staple food of the Chinese, and to this the husbandman directs his chief attention. The rice grown in China is a much larger grain than that which is common in



India. It consists principally of two sorts, the white and red, the former of which is the most esteemed.

The rearing of silk-worms and the cultivation of mulberry trees constitute an important part of the agriculture of the Chinese.

The Chinese, in common with the Japanese, also pay great attention to the cultivation of the paper-mulberry tree, the skin and the bark of which are converted into paper.

Of all the trees and shrubs indigenous to China, however, the tea plant is the most remarkable and important. To the Chinese peasantry it affords a profitable employment; to the government it is a source of revenue; while to numerous and distant nations it affords a refreshing beverage.

The tea plant is an evergreen, somewhat resembling the myrtle in appearance. It grows to a height varying from three to six feet, and is capable of enduring great variations of climate, being cultivated alike in the neighbourhood of Canton, where the heat is intense, and around the walls of Peking, where the winter is sometimes as severe as in the north of Europe. The best kinds are the production of the more temperate climate of Nanking province, which occupies nearly the middle station between the two extremes above mentioned. The greatest portion of that which is brought to the Canton market, and sold to European merchants, is the produce of the hilly province of Fokien, which is situated on the sea-coast, to the north-east of Canton.

The cultivation of the tea plant affords employment to many of the Chinese peasantry. It is propagated from seed. Holes are drilled in the ground, at equal distances and in regular rows,

and into each of these holes the planter throws from six to twelve seeds, not above a fifth part of them being expected to grow. While growing, the plants are carefully watered, weeded, and manured, though, when once out of the ground, they would continue to vegetate without care.

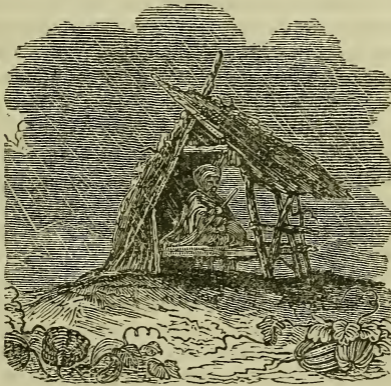
The leaf of the tea plant is not fit for gathering until the third year. At that period the shrub is in its prime. When seven years old, the leaves become few and coarse, and the shrub is then generally cut down to the stem, which in the succeeding summer produces an exuberant crop of fresh foliage.

The process of gathering the leaves is one of great nicety and importance. The leaf is plucked separately from the stalk, and in doing this the gatherer is careful that his hands are clean; and in collecting some of the fine sorts, he hardly ventures to breathe on the plant. But, with all this care, the labourer is frequently able to collect from four to ten, or even fifteen, pounds in the day. There are four of these gatherings during the season; namely, in February or March, in April or May, in June and in August.

Another prominent feature in the agriculture of the Chinese, is the growth of the cucumber. This vegetable, differing from ours in its wholesome properties, as it does universally in the east, is in great demand in China. It is grown in the south, (where the climate is hot,) without any artificial warmth, and in the open field. Around this field there is frequently nothing more than a terrace of earth thrown up for a fence, whence the contents are exposed to the depredations of thieves. To protect them, therefore, the owner erects a lodge with just sufficient room for a watchman to stand

in, and in a position where he may overlook the whole field. This lodge, when the crop is growing luxuriously around it, forms no conspicuous object in the scene ; but when the vegetables have been removed, it affords a melancholy representation of solitude and desertion. With such a melancholy abandonment Zion was threatened, because its inhabitants heeded not the voice of warning :—

“And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard,  
As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,  
As a besieged city.”



A Lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers.

As the political father of the nation, the emperor is the sole proprietor of the lands, and the cultivators are his tenants. Large tracts, both of China and Turkestan, are allotted to the soldiery, as was the case among the ancient Egyptians, till the law of territorial property was modified by

that consummate statesman the Hebrew Joseph. The husbandmen of China forfeit their lands if they do not keep them in proper cultivation, or if they refuse to pay the taxes, or invalidate their title by fraudulent practices. At the death of a parent they are divided amongst his sons, the eldest receiving the larger share. Great landholders let land out in small parcels, and pay the taxes themselves. Every one in China may cultivate waste land, upon application to government; and the people are encouraged to do this by an exemption from taxes until it is rendered productive. From this cause much land has been brought into cultivation; and still, as the population increases, from the industrious habits of the Chinese, it may reasonably be expected that many of the marshes which now form a part of the soil in China, will one day produce food for their sustenance. Vast as the population of China is, therefore, the land is still capable of feeding many more millions; for Barrow is inclined to think that one-fourth part of the whole country consists of lakes and uncultivated marshes.

There are no parks or pleasure-grounds reserved from the operations of productive industry in China, except those belonging to the emperor, near Pekin: nor is there any meadow cultivation; nothing is raised for the food of cattle, but all for man. The few cattle there are in China maintain themselves as they can on uncultivated pastures; but these are very few, for man generally performs the work of horses; and while the consumption of animal food among the higher orders is limited, the lower subsist almost exclusively on the productions of tillage. The horse is a rare object in China, for whatever cannot be transported by water is borne

on men's shoulders, and the very boats on the canals are guided in their courses by men. Thus, even the ground which would otherwise have been used for roads is made available for purposes of cultivation.

The Chinese, however, do not depend wholly on the land for sustenance. In no country besides is so much food derived from the water. So important an article of diet is fish, that, at a particular period of the year, men are employed on the great river Keang to procure the spawn to deposit wherever fish can subsist. The Chinese have several modes of taking fish, besides the ordinary contrivances of nets and wicker traps used in other countries. On moonlight nights, they use long narrow boats, having wooden flaps at their sides descending to the surface of the water. These flaps, being painted white, reflect a light, and attract the fish to such a degree that they leap upon them, and are then turned over into the boat with a jerk. Another method of taking fish is by birds, which are trained for this purpose. They disperse themselves over lakes and swamps, and return to their owners with their prey. After the fish are caught and salted, they are generally eaten with rice.

The vast resources of the Chinese, in their natural productions, are frequently cut off by drought, inundations, and the locusts. In such an event they suffer greatly, for the public granaries make poor provisions against dearth. Their original intention is defeated by the dishonesty of those who conduct them. Nor can one province, in which there may be plenty, supply the wants of another; for the Chinese rulers have restricted the intercourse of different parts of the empire to

inland navigation; and the inland trade between some provinces on the coast is impeded by lofty mountains, in which unnavigable rivers take their rise. Hence, when famine overtakes the population of a province, coupled with its natural concomitant, disease, in the language of one of the "sacred edicts," it "makes all places desolate." The evil is sometimes removed, by permission from the government to import grain by sea; but before the required relief is afforded, thousands perish. This circumstance may be looked upon as a positive check to the growth of population.

Infanticide, which prevails among the peasantry of China, also does its fearful work. Taught by the State that parents have power over the lives of their children, they frequently destroy their female offspring, in order to escape the trouble of bringing them up. This inhumanity, this dreadful crime, may likewise be superinduced by poverty. The ordinary wages of labour seem to be equivalent to twelve cents a day, which gives little more than a bare subsistence. Many, indeed, die from actual starvation, and that in the midst of plenty. Their principal food is rice, and their best beverage tea boiled over and over again, as long as any virtue remains in the leaves.

The poverty of the Chinese peasantry appears to be most conspicuous in the vicinity of the capital, where the soil is barren and sandy; and in the northern provinces, where the climate is ungenial to the process of vegetation. The cold is so intense in the winter, that, what with their scanty fare, and their lack of fuel, clothing and even shelter, many perish. "In such a condition," says Barrow, "the ties of nature yield to self-preservation; and children are sold, to save both

the parent and offspring from perishing by want, and infants become a prey to hopeless injury."

The moral character of the Chinese peasantry near Peking is represented by travellers in a very unfavourable light: they are idle, and, as a natural consequence, dissipated. In the heart of the country, however, they appear to be a comparatively artless race. Of these a traveller thus speaks:—"When they have accompanied me along the banks of the river, far in advance of my boat, and have beheld me overcome by fatigue and heat, they have always appeared anxious to relieve my distress. One has hastened to the nearest house for a seat, another has brought me water, and a third has held an umbrella over my head to defend me from the sun, whilst their companions have at some distance formed a circle round me. We were to these people as the inhabitants of another world. Our features, dress, and habits were so opposed to theirs, as to induce them to infer that our country in all its natural characters must equally differ from their own. 'Have you a moon, and sun, and rivers in your country?' are their occasional questions. Comprehending no other rational objects for the collecting of plants than their useful qualities, and seeing me gather all indiscriminately, they at once supposed that I sought them merely as objects of curiosity, and laughed heartily at my eagerness to obtain them. They pitied my ignorance, and endeavoured to teach me their relative worth, and were anxious for me to learn the important truth, that from one seed many might be obtained. A young man, having shaken some ripe seeds from the capsules of the *sesamum* and the *sida*, described to me, with much minuteness, that if I

took them to my own country, and put them into the ground, they would produce many plants, and I might thus in time obtain the blessing of good rope and oil.”

How sad the reflection that it is the self-same people who are guilty of that foul crime, infanticide. Such are the bitter fruits of pagan philosophy! While the emperor and his subjects complacently deem themselves the only civilized inhabitants of the world, “the dark places” of this idolatrous empire “are full of the habitations of cruelty.”





## CHAPTER VI.

## THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF THE CHINESE.



Chinese Literary Gentlemen.

## LANGUAGE.

THE original written characters of the Chinese were purely hieroglyphic, like those of the ancient Egyptians. Experience taught them, however, that the power of simple imitative characters to convey ideas was limited and imperfect; that they were able to express but a small portion of that which occurs to the mind of man; and from this cause the Chinese language, as it now exists, became gradually unfolded. Proof that the written language originated in picture writing may be

adduced from the similarity existing between some of the ancient and modern forms of their characters.

The Chinese language, still written in characters, is symbolic, and hence imperfect, notwithstanding it presents a greater variety than any other language on earth. A single character placed in various positions is often made to convey ideas which it would be difficult to express by a simple drawing of the object.

Greater ingenuity was required in order to represent invisible substances, such as light and air; or the qualities of things, known among us by the term adjectives, such as those implying strength, weakness, or human action. This is usually accomplished by the union of two or more simple forms, placed together in such a manner that their combinations may convey the required idea. Thus, to express brightness, the figures of the sun and moon are combined; and to denote the adjective "aspiring," a man's breath is represented as going out of his body and ascending. The character of a king is described by one mark, thus —. The idea of a family is expressed by a house, under which three human beings are sheltered.

The Chinese distinguish six modes of writing their characters:—

1. The ancient mode of writing is derived immediately from hieroglyphics, and is either a caricature or a stiff and imperfectly written character.

2. That which is used by official attendants, and is written with greater freedom than that employed in books.

3. The pattern style, which is the mode of neat

writing at the present day. It is also employed in printing.

4. The regular running hand, in which any thing which requires despatch is written.

5. A hasty and abbreviated form of writing, used in common transactions of life, and in correspondence.

6. The regular form of the character used in printing. It appears very beautiful in the impression.

The division of characters, made according to the ideas they express, are also sixfold:—

1. Figures, or more strictly hieroglyphics, bearing a resemblance to the objects they express.

2. Epithets, or characters, expressive of attributes and relative circumstances.

3. Combination of ideas, in order to express a simple object.

4. Invented symbols, or characters in which both the form and idea are transposed.

5. Symbols uniting sound, which are of necessity very uncertain as to their signification.

6. Metaphorical symbols, which bear a resemblance to the original meaning, but are nevertheless simply figurative.

Many of these characters are similar in form, but differ widely in meaning; while others have a variety of forms to express a similar idea. The number of the whole is uncertain. Some writers state that there are ten thousand, while others assert there are as many as eighty thousand. Perhaps the medium would be nearest the truth; but the fact is, there is no dictionary, either native or foreign, in which they are all contained.

From the great number of characters used, as well as their varied significations, it has been sup-

posed that the Chinese language is difficult of acquisition. On this subject, a writer remarks—“The roots, or original characters of the Chinese, or what, by a species of analogy may be called its *alphabet*, are only 214 in number, and might be reduced to a much smaller amount by a little dissection and analysis. To assert that there are so many thousand characters in the language, is very much the same thing as to say that there are so many thousand words in Johnson’s Dictionary. Nor is a knowledge of the *whole* more necessary for every practical purpose, than it is to get all Johnson’s Dictionary by heart, in order to read and converse in English.”

The written characters of the Chinese language are the same over an extent of 2000 miles of latitude—from Japan in the north to Cochin China in the south. This uniformity in the written character, however, has not prevented the existence of diversities in the oral languages of the different provinces. While the natives of the two extremities of the empire, indeed, can read the same books, and can understand each other perfectly on paper, they can scarcely hold intelligible converse with each other. For example: while a native of Pe-kin pronounces the numerals expressive of the number 22, *urh-she-urh*, a native of Canton calls them *ee-shap-ee*, although both write them alike.

The total number of different syllables in the Chinese language does not greatly exceed four hundred, but these are multiplied by various intonations, which are sufficiently distinct to the ear of a native.

#### LITERATURE.

On the subject of Chinese literature, Sir George

Staunton remarks : " One of the most remarkable national peculiarities of the Chinese is their extraordinary fondness for letters, and the general prevalence of literary habits among the middling and higher orders, and the very honourable pre-eminence which, from the most remote period, has been universally conceded to that class which is exclusively devoted to literary pursuits. Since the memorable era of Confucius, the Chinese empire has been repeatedly dismembered, and again restored to its integrity ; its sceptre, as we have seen, has passed through the hands of many families or dynasties ; it has been a prey to many intestine divisions and revolutions, and it has been twice subdued by a foreign foe ; but the reverence of the government and people for the name and institutions of Confucius has survived every change."

Under the influence of such institutions, it is by no means surprising that the proportion of the community exclusively devoted to letters should be much greater in China than it is in any other country on the surface of the globe. It is so great as to constitute of itself a distinct class in the State. It is the first and most honourable of the four classes into which the body of the people is considered as divisible, according to the Chinese political system ; namely, the literary, the agricultural, the manufacturing, and the mercantile.

The literature of the Chinese consists of their sacred or canonical works ; moral and didactic books, history, biography, works on their criminal law, works on astronomy, geography, medicine, etc. ; poetry, dramatic writings, and works of fiction. All these are briefly noticed underneath, that the reader may be enabled to form a just notion of the state of literature in China.

*Sacred, or canonical works.*—These works have been already briefly reviewed. They are the productions of Confucius and his school, and may be termed philosophical writings. Their whole aim is to teach the Chinese emperors how to rule, and the nation how to obey. For this purpose, they represent that all must be virtuous, since on no other principle can order be obtained. This was both just and wise, but it was one thing to tell a people that they must be virtuous, and another to instruct them how to practise virtue. The “sacred or canonical works” fail in this essential knowledge, and hence they must be termed simply theoretical. Confucius himself discovered the inefficacy of his philosophy. He taught the principles of good government, and maintained that, if his principles were generally received, all the world would become virtuous, war would cease, and the empire enjoy prosperity and peace; but although he frequently obtained office, for the sole purpose of proving by his own administration that his theory could be reduced to practice, he always failed. Slander assailed him; vice triumphed over virtue; and, at length, disgusted with politics, he retired into private life. The philosopher himself could not, in truth, sustain an even tenor of moral rectitude; for it is recorded, that he unjustly discarded his lawful wife. So fallible is human wisdom, and so powerless is it to affect the seat of all human action—**THE HEART.** The canonical works may teach some great truths to both the ruler of China and his people, and may even have, to some extent, influenced their conduct; but the heart still retains its original and native corruption, and it can only be cleansed by the influences of the Holy Spirit.

*Moral and didactic books.*—These works rank next to the “sacred or canonical works.” They are moral and political essays, which have the sanction both of the government and the learned. Dr. Milne thus speaks of the *Shing-yu*, or “Sacred Edict,” which ranks high in this list of books: “It treats of moral duties and of political economy. Like all similar Chinese productions, it begins with filial piety, and thence branches out into various other relative duties, according to their supposed importance. Indeed, on whatever subject a Chinese writer treats, he can at all times, with the utmost facility, draw arguments for its support from the relation between parent and child. Even the grossest absurdities of their idolatry are thus supported. The work we are now considering is, in general, for the matter of it, well worth a perusal. Though Christians can derive no improvement to their ethics from it, yet it will confirm them more and more in the belief of two important points, namely, that God has not left himself without a witness in the minds of the heathen; and that the bare light of nature, as it is called, even when aided by all the light of pagan philosophy, is totally incapable of leading men to the knowledge and worship of the true God. Yet, for my own part, as an individual, I am of opinion that, as all truth and all good came originally from the same source, so we ought to look with a degree of reverence on those fragments of just sentiment and good principle which we sometimes meet with among the heathen.”

The following aphorisms, derived from the moral and didactic works, are offered as examples of the “just sentiment and good principle” which

sometimes emanate from the minds of Chinese authors.

The error of a moment becomes the sorrow of a whole life.

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.

Between two parties, do not speak swords here and flatteries there.

Carelessness gives temptation to dishonesty.

The man who combats himself, will be happier than he who contends with others.

A man need only correct himself with the same rigour that he reprehends others; and excuse others with the same indulgence that he shows to himself.

Envy not those who have, nor despise those who have not.

Do not despise the good things of Providence.

Domestic failings should not be published.

Let every man sweep the snow from before his own doors, and not busy himself about the frost on his neighbour's tiles.

The more talents are exercised, the more they will be developed.

The torment of envy is like a grain of sand in the eye.

Complain not of Heaven, and blame not men.

Do not deceive and oppress the orphan and widow.

Be not proud of wealth, nor complain of poverty.

He who does not soar high, will suffer less by a fall.

Do not wrongfully accuse any one.

Though the life of a man falls short of a hundred years, he gives himself as much pain and anxiety as if he were to live a thousand.

Such aphorisms as these adorn both the temples and dwellings of the Chinese. A recent writer has adduced others, which bear a resemblance to some passages of Scripture, as the following:—

Virtue is the surest road to longevity; but vice meets with an early doom.

The heart is the fountain of life.

The fear of the Lord prolongeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. Prov. x. 27.

Out of it [the heart] are the issues of life. Prov. iv. 23.



Honours come by diligence; riches spring from economy.

If you love your son, give him plenty of the cudgel; if you hate your son, cram him with dainties.

A virtuous woman is a source of honour to her husband; a vicious one causes him disgrace.

Every blade of grass has its share of the dews of heaven; and though the birds of the forest have no garners, the wide world is before them.

That which touches vermilion is reddened.

The hand of the diligent shall bear rule; but the slothful shall be under tribute. Prov. xii. 24.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. Prov. xiii. 24.

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband; but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. Prov. xii. 4.

Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Matt. vi. 26.

Evil communications corrupt good manners. 1 Cor. xv. 33.

Similarity of sentiment may certainly be traced in these passages, but the vast superiority of the sacred writers is apparent. Compared with their breathings, indeed, those adduced from Chinese authors sink into insignificance. This is more especially observable in the passage set in juxtaposition with that uttered by our Saviour. The writer of it knew only that the birds of the air are fed without treasuring up their stores in garners: Christ taught his disciples, and the world at large, that they are fed by the bounty of a common Father.

*History.*—History may be said to occupy the next place to the moral and didactic works in Chinese literature. The master-works are the *Shoo-king*, and the historical annals of Confucius, called *Chun-tsew*. On these, all succeeding works are founded, as far as their data extend; but there are other minor histories which treat of later ages. The histories of the Chinese, however, are not such works as the Roman, Greek, and European historians have produced. The very best among them are by no means superior to the fragments of the annals of Egypt and Chaldea.

The earlier annals are little better than fiction, and those of a later date are replete with fulsome adulation. As Gutzlaff observes, "Instead of allowing that common mortals had any part in the affairs of the world, they speak only of the emperors who then reigned. They represent them as the sources from which the whole order of things emanated, and all others as mere puppets, who moved at the pleasure of the autocrat. This is truly Chinese. The whole nation is represented by the emperor, and absorbed in him."

An example of the style which Chinese historians have adopted is subjoined:—"In the sixth year of Hung-woo, the founder of the Ming dynasty, the emperor summoned the mandarins of the various districts before him, and thus addressed them: 'Kindness and cheerfulness are the virtues which man ought to possess: hard-heartedness and cruelty will rob him of every good quality. If you only pretend to be kind, you will not possess any real goodness of heart; and if you only wish to appear cheerful, you will not exhibit true affability. Strive, therefore, to practise true virtue.'

"The emperor chose the Taou priests to perform the service at the national altars, and to officiate at festivals of the gods of the land, river, and cows.

"Hoo-wei-yung, a deputy magistrate, was degraded on account of not having brought the multifarious affairs of his province to a conclusion.

"On the first day of the third month was a solar eclipse. About the same time, several military officers and civilians received promotion."

This is the classical method of writing history among the Chinese, and in such a strain their

pages read from first to last. Statements that in such and such a month, in such and such a year of the reign of a certain prince, the minister or general went to the capital, or traversed the country; and the prince repaired to his palace, offered sacrifices, or issued orders, etc., make up their sum. They are mere dry chronological details, wherein no spring of human action is traced, and no reference is made to the great Disposer of human events.

The portion of Chinese history most interesting to a foreigner is, when the country was involved in contests with the Tartars, or subjected by their invasions.

The lack of veracity, which is a dark spot in the character of the Chinese, is everywhere discovered in their historical writings. That order and connection may be preserved in them, they will even supply data where it is impossible for them to be ascertained. Like Livy, and other ancient historians, they also put orations into the mouths of their heroes, which they neither uttered nor conceived. Some writers have clothed their whole narrative in this garb, as though they wished to write a dialogue; at the same time so deep is their ingenuity, that even their mythological stories have an appearance of probability, if not of truth. These remarks apply more especially to details having reference to their own country. When they speak of "barbarians," as they know but little about them, and their self-love is strong, their statements are not only imperfect, but mixed with gross falsehood.

*Biography.*—The Chinese call biography *Sing-heo*, or "the study of names." In this department of literature they have a great variety of books, at

the head of which, in date and estimation, stands the *Lun-yu*, or discourses of Confucius, before noticed. Some of their memoirs are exceedingly interesting, and throw more light on history than the works of professed historians. There is a modern biographical work called *Sing-poo*, which consists of one hundred volumes, and comprises the lives of eminent men and women, as do our biographical dictionaries.

*Works on astronomy, geography, medicine, etc.*—The Chinese possess one work, published in one hundred volumes, which treats of spherical trigonometry, geometry, astronomy, and music. Of medicine, also, they possess some works, as the *Chang-Seng*, or “long life,” an essay on diet and regimen; and the famous *Pun-tsaou*, or “herbal.” In geography, their literature is rich; and they have maps, in which every province is laid down on the spherical projection, with lines of latitude, and meridians of longitude. All these works, however, are of very little practical utility. Notwithstanding their boasted civilization, the science of the Chinese is not many degrees superior to that of the primitive ages.

*Poetry.*—In what rude strains the ancient poets among the Chinese sang has been mentioned in a review of the “book of Songs,” included in the sacred classics. Since that age, the structure of their verse has undergone considerable improvement.

It would require more space than our limits will allow to give specimens of every kind of Chinese poetry. Hence one example only is subjoined, which will give the reader an idea of their descriptive verse. It is extracted at random

from a very famous poem concerning the English, which was written in 1813, by one better instructed than most of his countrymen who have ventured to travel abroad. It is entitled "London," and was originally published in the Royal Asiatic Transactions, where it was printed with the Chinese text, and where the translator observed that the poem, being a simple description, contains few flights of fancy, whence it was judged best to afford a literal prose translation, retaining all the hyperboles of the original.

Afar in the ocean, towards the extremities of the north-west,

There is a nation, or country, called England :

The climate is frigid, and you are compelled to approach the fire :

The houses are so lofty, that you may pluck the stars !

The pious inhabitants respect the ceremonies of worship,

And the virtuous among them ever read the sacred books ;

They bear a peculiar enmity towards the French nation,

The weapons of war rest not for a moment between them.

Their fertile hills, adorned with the richest luxuriance,  
Resemble, in the outline of their summits, the arched eyebrows of a fair woman.

The inhabitants are inspired with a respect for the female sex,

Who in this land correspond with the perfect features of nature ;

Their young maidens have cheeks resembling red blossoms,

And the complexion of their beauties is like the white gem :

Of old has connubial affection been highly esteemed among them,

Husband and wife delighting in mutual harmony.

Here some stanzas are omitted, after which the poet proceeds to describe the city of London.

The two banks of the river lie to the north and south ;  
Three bridges\* interrupt the stream, and form a commu-  
nication :

Vessels of every kind pass between the arches,  
While men and horses pace among the clouds [fogs] :  
A thousand masses of stone rise one above the other,  
And the river flows through nine channels :  
The bridge of Loyâng, which out-tops all in our empire,  
Is in shape and size somewhat like these.

The towering edifices rise story above story,  
In all the stateliness of splendid mansions :  
Railings of iron thickly stud the sides of every entrance,  
And streams from the river circulate through the walls.  
The sides of each apartment are variegated with devices ;  
Through the windows of glass appear the scarlet hang-  
ings :

And in the street itself is presented a beautiful scene ;  
The congregated buildings have all the aspect of a picture.

The spacious streets are exceedingly smooth and level,  
Each being crossed by others at intervals :

On either side perambulate men and women :  
In the centre career along the carriages and horses :  
The mingled sound of voices is heard in the shops at  
evening ;

During winter the heaped-up snows adhere to the path-  
way :

Lamps are displayed at night along the street-sides,  
Whose radiance twinkles like the stars of the sky.

On the difficulties attending the translation of  
Chinese poetry, Gutzlaff remarks :—“ That it is  
interwoven with so many strange and original  
metaphors and figures of speech, and contains  
such various allusions to history and deified he-  
roes, that at first sight it appears a mere jargon.  
But when a sufficient acquaintance with these  
peculiarities has enabled the reader to penetrate  
into the spirit, a splendid vista opens, and the  
most sublime images present themselves before

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\* The only bridges then existing.

him. This, however, applies to the works of master-poets only: the productions of numberless imitators are insipid and full of affectation. Nature presents scenes as grand and sublime in China as in any other part of the world. The most romantic spots are the abodes of poets even at the present day. Much, therefore, that we admire in descriptive writers of other nations who have copied from nature, may be discovered in the effusions of Chinese bards, in a different garb."

*Dramatic writings.*—The Chinese possess a collection of plays in about two hundred volumes, from which one hundred pieces have been selected for general use, as the flower of the whole. These plays chiefly relate to facts in history and domestic manners. Since the Tartar conquest, they have much degenerated in their character.

*Works of fiction.*—There is a numerous class of works of fiction in the Chinese language, all of which are either written in the conversational style, or in detached verses. Among them, some have become very popular, and a few are ranked under the title of *Tsae-tsze*, or "works of genius." Their character is twofold. While some have a peculiar value, inasmuch as they paint Chinese society as it really exists; others are composed of the most improbable and extravagant stories. Some, indeed, cannot be read without horrifying the mind of the reader, whence the government prohibits their publication. But their contents are so agreeable to the depraved appetite of man, that this prohibition is defied. They are still sold, and their possessors read them with the greatest avidity.

It will be seen by the foregoing, that the Chinese, although they possess a bulky literature,

have very little that is really practical and useful. Their sacred works are mere political essays on the art of government, and contain much that is fallacious; their moral and didactic works are incapable of giving a right impulse to human action; their histories are mere skeletons, conveying no really useful knowledge beyond the data of events; their works on the criminal code do nothing more than teach by the bastinado; their volumes on the sciences are miserably deficient in true information; while their lighter books are, to a considerable extent, calculated to work mischief among the deluded and semi-barbarous multitude.

The mass of thought contained in their volumes, indeed, presents a hideous picture of the human mind. And with these productions the millions of China are compelled to be satisfied. They are their guides through life, and their stay in the hour of death. This is a fearful consideration, when it is remembered that the Chinese form a third part of the whole human race; and it should arouse the slumbering zeal of Christians on their behalf. That great and ancient nation requires renovating, for the whole head of it is sick, and the whole heart faint with its iniquities. And how can this be effected, but by spreading the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, throughout the length and breadth of the whole land? The words of our blessed Lord are encouraging to all his disciples: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." He has been lifted up on the cross a sacrifice for the sins of the world, nor will the Chinese possess true knowledge till they know him, whom to know is life eternal.

Past experience teaches that the efforts of pagan philosophers are utterly vain. Confucius and his

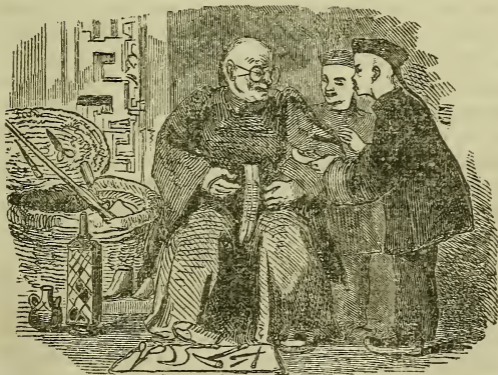


disciples wrought to that end, both by their personal efforts and their writings, but human nature laughed them to scorn. It showed itself, despite all their labours, corrupted still. And thus will it show itself, even to the end of the world, unless the glorious gospel is made known unto them. That alone can renovate China, so long paralyzed by superstition, custom, and despotism.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MANUFACTURES, ARTS, AND SCIENCES OF THE CHINESE.



Itinerant Shoemaker.

#### MANUFACTURES.

It is supposed that the art of printing, the composition of gunpowder, and the magnetic compass, had each their origin in China, and were imported

into Europe through the channels of oriental commerce by the way of Asia Minor, or the Red Sea. Europeans, however, have far outstripped the Chinese in their use and application.

The art of printing was practised in China during the tenth century of our era. History relates that the first essay in the art was to transfer the pages from stone blocks, on which the writing had been engraved. By this process the ground of the paper was black, and the letters white. This, however, in the course of time, gave way to wooden blocks, on which the characters were cut in relief, and the effect thereby reversed. The paper remained white, and the characters were impressed in ink. This is the Chinese mode of printing at the present day, and perhaps it is better suited to the Chinese characters than that in use among ourselves. It would, indeed, be difficult for a printer to pick out the various characters required for the printing of a single book, as our compositors do the twenty-six letters of our alphabet, from the little cells in which they are arranged before him. Besides, the plan of printing from blocks is much better for the Chinese, inasmuch as copies of their "sacred works" are required in great numbers for the use of the whole population.

The material used for printing in China is pear-tree wood. A block of this wood is finely planed and squared to the shape and dimensions of two pages. After this the surface is rubbed over with a paste, sometimes made from boiled rice, which renders it smooth. While yet wet, the future pages, firmly transcribed on their transparent paper, are laid upon it in an inverted position, and this paper being subsequently rubbed off, a clear impression in ink of the inverted writing remains

on the wood. The workman then, with a sharp graver, cuts away that portion of the wooden surface not covered by ink, and leaves the characters in relief. Any error may be corrected by inserting small pieces of wood, but the process is so cheap and expeditious, that it is easy to replane and re-engrave the block.

The paper used by the Chinese in their volumes is almost as thin and absorbent of ink as that we call silver paper. The impression is given with a soft contact, and, being so thin and transparent, on one side only. This is done with such expedition that one man can strike off two thousand copies in a day.

The invention of gunpowder, as composed of sulphur, saltpetre, and willow charcoal, is carried very far back by the Chinese. Probably it was applied by them to fire-works—in which they excel at the present day—at a very early date; but its particular application to fire-arms seems to have been derived from the west, for it is certain that they were ignorant of their use till about A. D. 1300. Soon after this they appear to have had a species of guns, consisting of tubes of wrought-iron, bound together by hoops; and when the Jesuits located themselves in China, they taught the Chinese to cast cannon. The celebrated Kang-he, after the conquest of China, employed father Verbiest to superintend the casting of some hundred guns, which union of military with clerical pursuits brought some scandal upon him at Rome. Neither the guns nor the powder of the Chinese, however, seem to be very effective, or at least to equal those manufactured and in use by Europeans. It is recorded as a wonder, that one of

their cannon pierced a frigate with a shot when it was within pistol-shot of the battery.

One of the manufactures in which the Chinese most excel is silks. Their brilliant colours, and exquisite texture, have constituted them the most splendid article of dress in China. All, from the noble to the peasant, are ambitious of wearing them, and they are used not only in robes and trowsers, but in boots shoes and caps. The silks most worn by the Chinese are plain, but they are manufactured of every colour, and with beautiful figures. So highly do the Chinese esteem the manufacture of silks, that the empress is its patroness, and goes annually, with her maids of honour, to worship the god of silk, whilst she encourages the rearing of the worm, and the weaving of the article amongst her women. The manufacture, beautiful as it is, is merely the work of human hands, woven in simple looms, like that produced among the ancients.

The velvet of the Chinese is inferior to the European: but their damask, sarsnet, satin, crape, and shawls, are reckoned superior. The Chinese, also, display considerable skill in the manufacture of cotton goods, and in a variety of stuffs made of silk and cotton, which are very costly. Carpets are manufactured in the northern provinces, which are of the most elegant description; and in the same parts they imitate our woollens, though with little success.

The Chinese are celebrated for the manufacture of artificial flowers, and the mats and various other articles made of bamboo are remarkable for their neatness. Ivory is wrought with great elegance, and their manufacture of cut glass nearly equals that of England. In porcelain and lacquered

ware they excel, though in the former they are now outstripped by foreigners, and in the latter, for lustre and beauty, by the Japanese.

Of the more common manufactures, or trades, Gutzlaff says:—"For the working of iron and steel, the Chinese have never been celebrated; their instruments and utensils are very clumsy, their steel badly tempered, and their knives and razors indifferently polished. The finer toys and trinkets made of that substance, which eclipses the lustre of every other metal, are unknown in China.

"It would be difficult to find a blacksmith in China able to make a large anchor, or a huge piece of machinery. Their needles, locks, &c., are all of a similar description; they are not able to make good springs, or to temper the steel properly. What they want in skill, however, they supply in economy and perseverance. Their bellows and instruments, adapted for saving every particle, prove them to be a nation duly attentive to the minor points, and parsimonious with the very flings. They understand casting iron. Many of their kitchen utensils, which we make of copper, are here made of iron. Their iron cannon-foundries are very numerous, and even the barrel of a match-lock is cast.

"The Chinese work in tin with great neatness, of which they cast and beat a great variety of utensils. It often serves as a substitute for copper, the latter being more expensive. Chinese braziers and coppersmiths are not frequently met with, because the government prohibits the use of copper and brass, except for the casting of coin. Their work is therefore confined to a few unimportant things, which they make with great neat-

ness. They are not able to manufacture tin-plates, and these are imported principally for the fabrication of lacquered ware. The work of gold and silversmiths, and jewellers, is exquisite, and can vie with that of any other nation.

“Chinese artisans are in the habit of itinerating with their implements, and performing work as it may casually fall in their way. The cook may be seen in the market with all culinary utensils for the preparation of viands; whilst the fruiterer, fish-monger and butcher are near at hand to supply the materials. Even a smithy is carried about, and used at any convenient place in the open air where most customers may be expected. The



Itinerant Barber.

streets swarm with tinkers of every description, and their occupations extend to the repairing of every article. The dexterity with which they put together broken glass, porcelain, and other fragile articles, is astonishing. Their earnings are so trifling, that the most industrious workman does not gain above one mace (about twenty cents) per day.

“Barbers put their wash-stand on one end of a bamboo-pole, and their case of drawers, fitted up as a seat for their customers, and containing all the tonsorial apparatus, on the other end. They perform their functions in the open street, or in the market place, without feeling the least sense of impropriety.

“Shoemakers and tailors are much better off than workers in metal. They receive higher wages, and are more esteemed. Joiners and carpenters have the name of skilful artisans. The former are able to imitate exactly our European furniture, and the latter are famous for boat-building, though very deficient in the construction of houses. Some few individuals at Canton, and in other large cities, can make clocks and watches; but they are unable to manufacture the steel work. We have also seen a rudely-made musket, of which, however, the lock was foreign. All articles, the making of which requires more than mere mechanical skill, and the application of profound thought and mathematical exactness, is beyond Chinese ingenuity. Whenever they have a good pattern, the natives of Canton will endeavour to imitate it, but they attempt nothing further. Addicted from their youth to follow ancient rule, they do not, even in their daily occupations, think for themselves, but prefer accommodating themselves to others.”

The Chinese are strangers to machinery, but their ingenuity is conspicuous in the ready and simple modes in which they contrive to abridge labour. An example of this is furnished by a modern writer. He says:—"Chance led me to the shop of a blacksmith, the manufacturer of various iron instruments, from a sword to a hoe. This man well understood the modifying properties of heat, and took the fullest advantage of them in all the practical concerns of his business. He was forming a reaping-hook at the time of my visit. A large pair of shears, having one blade fixed in a heavy block of wood, and the other furnished with a long handle, to serve as a lever, stood beside him. Bringing a piece of metal of the necessary dimensions from the forge at a white heat, he placed it between the blades of this instrument, and cut it into shape with equal ease and despatch."

The fashion of most of the Chinese tools is very peculiar. The saw of the carpenter, for instance, is formed of a thin plate of steel, which is kept straight by a light frame of bamboo at the back, which serves at the same time for a handle. Then again, carpenters work their awls or augers with a thong, the two extremities of which are attached to the two ends of a stick. The thong being quite slack, is turned round the handle of the awl once, and the instrument is then worked backwards and forwards with great velocity.

The native ingenuity of the Chinese has been thus noticed by Sir George Staunton:—"Two of them took down the two magnificent glass lustres sent as presents to the emperor, in order to place them in a more advantageous position. They separated them piece by piece, and put them toge-



ther again without difficulty or mistake, the whole consisting of many thousand pieces, though they had never seen any thing of the kind before. Another Chinese cut a narrow slip from the edge of a curved plate of glass, in order to supply the place of one belonging to the dome of the Planetarium, which had been broken. The English mechanics belonging to the embassy had in vain attempted to cut the glass according to this curved line, with the assistance of a diamond. The native workman did not show his method; but it was said he succeeded by first drawing the point of a heated iron across the surface to be divided."

#### ARTS.

In sculpture, or the art of cutting stone into imitative forms of living objects, the Chinese are very defective. Their figures are altogether rude, both in form and proportion. And it may be owing to this lack of skill in the art of sculpture, that their gods are never represented in stone, but always in modelled clay. No very great anatomical skill is required, as the figures, unlike those in the Grecian Pantheon in general, are always clothed. The drapery in which they are enveloped, and which is executed with much truth and effect, conceals their deficiency of skill in modelling. If exhibited in a state of nudity, their idols would appear a caricature of human beings, rather than imitations. The same deficiency of skill is, also, displayed in their sculptured representations of flowers.

In drawing and painting, where a scientific adherence to the rules of perspective are not required, the Chinese are sometimes very successful; but perspective is disregarded, and as for shading,

they object to its introduction. "When several portraits," says Mr. Barrow, "intended as presents for the emperor, were exposed to view, the mandarins, observing the variety of tints occasioned by the light and shade, asked whether the originals had the right and left sides of the figure of different colours? They considered the shadow of the nose as a great imperfection in the figure, and some supposed it to have been placed there by accident." But though the Chinese disregard the rules of perspective and shading, their drawings by the eye are often tolerably correct. They paint insects, birds, fruits, and flowers very beautifully, and with great vividness of colour. Still their representations of living objects are very stiff—the life, which can only render paintings celebrated, is wanting. The Chinese, however, are not incapable of producing better things; for some native artists employed at Canton and Macao, by English naturalists, have delineated various specimens in botany and zoology scientifically.

Of the music of the Chinese, Gutzlaff remarks:—"During all our peregrinations, having been present at the celebration of marriages and funerals, and at the review of troops, we have never been able to make out a single air. Musical notes, though known, are not in common use. A band of music consists of the loud gong, large and small drums, cymbals, pipes, various flutes, trumpets like those made for children, horns, which are instruments with many pipes, a guitar with one or two strings, and a variety of others; amongst which are bells, hung up in a frame, in order to give an harmonious chime. The principle on which a concert is played appears to be, which of the musicians shall outdo the other in loudness of

sound, in which attempt the beater of the gong generally succeeds to admiration."

The houses of the Chinese are tent-like edifices ; and their bridges, which have been extolled by the Jesuits as something extraordinary, are found, upon examination, to display no scientific principles. "Something," says Lay, "taught them to connect two banks of a river, by means of stones or bricks laid together, and to leave a hole in the middle to let the water pass through; but there is no evidence to show they ever reflected upon the cause which kept the several parts in their places, or sought any further for it than the mortar or cement by which they were bound together. The architect looked on, displayed his portly form, and plied his fan from time to time, or chatted familiarly with his men, but never ran the risk of a premature wrinkle or look of care, by any speculation about the abstruse doctrines of equilibrium."

#### SCIENCE.

If the civilization of a people is to be measured by their skill in the sciences, then the Chinese are but a few stages in advance of barbarism. Educated they may be, but their education consists almost solely in knowing how to read and write, as the common people of Europe. On abstract science they set no value, apart from obvious and immediate utility, and hence it forms no part of their studies.

The whole system of medicine partakes of the nature of quackery. Their remedies for diseases are as multifarious as they are absurd. At the head of all drugs stands *gin-seng*, the vivifying effects of which are said to be so great, that if a piece be put into the mouth of a person just de-

ceased, he will again revive ! Tea, in various modes of preparation, is much valued as a medicine, and different parts of rare animals are included in their list.

Of the mathematical sciences, with the exception of the elements of arithmetic and astronomy, the Chinese are entirely ignorant.

What the Chinese know scientifically of astronomy appears to be owing partly to the instructions of the Mohammedans, but chiefly to the Jesuit missionaries attached to the Astronomical Board. Their knowledge, however, is still very imperfect. Astrological observations, vain and fallacious though they be, better suit their genius and their tastes. The emperor is, in truth, the great patron of astrology; for he will not undertake any thing except he is first assured that it is in accordance with the starry heavens; whence it is natural that the Chinese should prefer the cultivation of astrology to that of astronomy. The mysteries of astronomy and astrology are wielded as an engine of power over the ignorance of the people. The government has declared it death to publish a counterfeit or imitation of the Imperial Almanac, and it countenances the extravagancies of the populace during the observation of an eclipse, and the terror caused by the appearance of a comet. When an eclipse occurs, the emperor goes through sundry ceremonies, and affects to consider it as a warning to him for some mal-administration.

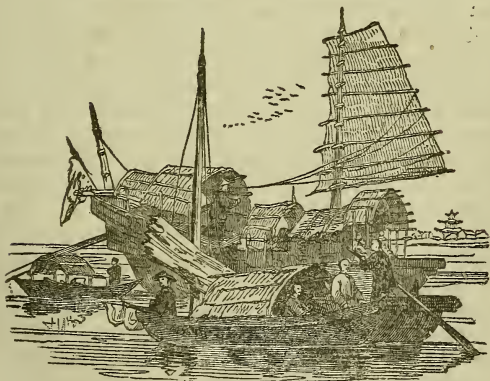
In geometry they are very deficient; and, by a natural consequence, they have no correct notions of geography. But for the Jesuits, they might even now have represented their country as the centre of a circle, studded round with foreign

nations, as they did anciently. Taught by them, under the patronage of the enlightened Kang-he, they have laid down every province separately on the spherical projection, with lines of latitude, calculated from the equator, and meridians of longitude. But these maps are inaccurate; and as for every thing external to their own country and Tartary, they scarcely give it a thought. They possess a rough map of the two terrestrial hemispheres, supplied them by the Jesuits, which is their only work on general geography.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE COMMERCE OF THE CHINESE.



Shipping and Boats.

#### INTERCOURSE WITH THE ANCIENTS.

ALTHOUGH the Chinese are an essentially agricultural people, and although their policy has ever

been to live secluded from the rest of mankind, yet history relates that some of the treasures of their country very early found their way into the distant parts of the earth. This is more especially the case with reference to the article of silk. After silk was known in Europe, it was always represented as coming from some remote country, and this remote country has been said to be Thinæ, Sinæ, or Serica, or the country of the Seres, all which have reference to China.

A knowledge of China cannot be traced back to a more remote period than the age of Alexander. The Macedonian Greeks, having carried their arms into India, there heard of it under the ancient names of Thinæ and Sinæ; but this was not the origin of commerce with China. Anterior to that date the Greeks had used silk, and it appears probable that it was used in Western Asia before it was known to the Greeks. It was from Western Asia that the Greeks first obtained it, and they used it long before they knew whence the substance came. Centuries passed, indeed, before they, or even the Romans, had any information about the remote country from which silk came, or of the manner in which it was produced. Thus Virgil supposed that the Seres carded the silk from leaves; and Dionysius, the geographer, conceived it to be a vegetable product. In the days of Pausanias more distinct information had been obtained concerning the silk-worm, and the country whence it came; and about A. D. 166, the increasing demand for the article, with the increase of luxury among the Romans, suggested the idea of a direct commercial intercourse with China. The emperor Marcus Antoninus sent an embassy thither for the purpose, but the policy of that em-

pire was as exclusive then as it is at the present day. The embassy was coldly received, and a second embassy, in 284, met with a similar reception. The Romans were compelled still to receive the article through an indirect medium, and the question may be asked, what that medium was? Ancient authors furnish so little information about China, and their notions of the country moreover are so obscure, that it would be difficult to describe the direct route by which the silk of the "remote east" found its way into Europe. In the earliest ages, however, it would appear that silk was brought from China, where it was originally found, to India, by an inland communication, beginning from the bay of Issus in Cilicia; and that it was brought out of India by the Red Sea to Egypt, and thence to Greece and Rome. At a later date, the Romans obtained it from Persia. Merchants of Samarcand and Bokhara proceeded through the northern provinces of Chinese Tartary, by a dangerous and difficult route, to China; these on their return transported it into Persia, and the Persian merchants sold it to the Romans at the fairs of Armenia and Nisibis. About A. D. 550, the Persians had obtained the monopoly of the whole silk trade; and whatever nation desired this article of luxury was compelled to seek it from them. They were so jealous of the trade, that no person from the west was allowed to traverse the dominions of Persia towards China, nor was any traveller thence, allowed to proceed to the west. They were thus enabled to control the supply, so that the inhabitants of Tyre and Berytus in Phenicia, who had manufactured the article for the Roman market, were sometimes unable to procure an adequate quantity of the raw material.

In the reign of Justinian, indeed, an event happened which put an end to the indirect intercourse between China and Europe, and in a short time served to obscure the slight knowledge which had been obtained of that country. The government of Constantinople put an entire stop to the importation of silk, and in this extremity Justinian applied to the Arabians, and to the king of Abyssinia, hoping to induce them to undertake the import of the raw material. His application, however, was unsuccessful, and the luxurious Romans had the mortifying prospect before them of being compelled to substitute cotton for silk. But an incident occurred which furnished the means through which an abundant supply of the raw material was eventually procured. Two Nestorian monks of Persia, who had travelled to Serindi, or China, had made themselves acquainted with the history and treatment of the silkworm, as well as the process of manufacture. These monks stated their information to the emperor, who engaged them to return to Serindi, and bring away some of the eggs of the silk-worm. Accordingly they returned to Serindi, and secured a quantity of the eggs, which they deposited in a hollow cane, and brought to Constantinople. These eggs were hatched by the heat of a dung-hill, and the worms were fed with mulberry leaves; and from that time silk was manufactured in Europe.

#### INTERCOURSE WITH THE MODERNS.

After the age of Justinian, all traces of European intercourse with China, whether directly or indirectly, are lost for a series of ages. In the ninth century, the Arabians appear to have extended their commerce by sea to the southern



coasts of China, while their caravans maintained a land intercourse with that country, through Persia and Thibet, or India. The knowledge of this intercourse was furnished by two Mohammedan travellers, who were there about the middle of the ninth century. Such was the state of learning, however, that this knowledge was not made known to Europeans till 1718. Still Europe had benefited from the Arabian intercourse with China. The art of paper-making was introduced by them in the eleventh century; and soon after they taught Europeans the art of block-printing, of making pendulum clocks, and the use of the mariner's compass. All these arts had been long in the possession of the Chinese, and it seems probable that the Arabs gathered a knowledge of them from that people, and brought them into Europe.

The Arabian merchants appear to have been privileged to enter into the interior of China. Their geographical works, at least, mention the names of various cities, though it is not always easy to discover to what town their descriptions refer. But thus much can be collected, that the northern provinces were called Cathay; the southern, Tchin, or Sin; and that the capital of the country was called Cambalu.

In the thirteenth century, some information concerning China was collected from Tartary. The conquests of Genghis Khan and his successors, and the encroachments of the Tartars upon the eastern frontiers of Europe, induced the pope to send two embassies to the Tartarian camps. When the second of these embassies arrived, they found ambassadors from Persia, India, Russia, and China; and they obtained correct information what part of China the Tartars had then sub-

jugated, and some little knowledge of the people. In describing the latter, Carpini, who was at the head of this embassy, says, "They seem to be a mild and humanized people; they wear no beard, and in their face rather resemble the Mongols, though their faces are not so broad. They have a peculiar language of their own; and better artisans, in all sorts of work, cannot be found. Their country abounds in corn, wine, gold, silver, and silks; and, in short, in every thing desirable for life."

A few years later, Louis IX. of France despatched two ambassadors to the Tartars, on hearing that they were well disposed toward the Christian faith. These ambassadors penetrated through the heart of Asia to Karakorum, at that time the capital of the khan of the Tartars. This city was not far from the confines of China, and it abounded with Chinese; so that the ambassadors, while there, learned much both of the country and the people.

In the meantime, commerce sent forth private adventurers, who greatly contributed to a knowledge of China. Among these the family of the Poli, of Venice, is very conspicuous. Maffeo and Nicolo Polo, two brothers, being informed that an advantageous commercial speculation might be made with the Tartars on the Volga, went thither; and on their return they met with an ambassador from Kublai, the great khan, who invited them to his court. This was accepted, and they were held in such high estimation by Kublai, that he commissioned them to request the pope to send him one hundred learned men to teach Christianity and the "Seven Sciences" in his dominion. Shortly after they had reached Europe, Gregory X. was

raised to the Papal throne ; and he so far complied with the khan's request as to send two individuals, who were reputed men of letters and science, as well as good theologians. At the same time Marco Polo, the son of Maffeo, was sent with some presents to the khan, and proper diplomatic credentials. When Marco arrived, the khan had made himself master of the empire of China, and he was detained in his suite for more than twenty years. Here he had opportunities of making himself acquainted with both the country and the people. He published an account of the country in manuscript, and it was at first believed ; but in a short time it became the fashion to decry his work as a tissue of romance.

A few years after the return of Marco Polo, one Oderic de Porteneau, a friar, seized with a desire to visit the remote and infidel countries of the east, penetrated into Southern China, and visited Cambalu. The Tartar government still existed, and on his return he published an account of it, which agreed with that of Marco Polo. The statements of Oderic, however, were treated with even more skepticism than those of the Venetian. From that time, until the nations of Europe commenced a system of commercial enterprise, great and mighty as the empire of China was, it was only heard of incidentally. About the commencement of the fourteenth century, an Armenian monk gave some information to Clement V. concerning the history and geography of those remote regions ; and some further details were given by the Persian historian, Mirkhond, and some Persian travellers : but their accounts produced no desire in the breasts of Europeans to visit the country, or to trade with the people.

At length, in the sixteenth century, the fame of the empire reached some Portuguese, who had established themselves at Malacca; and having satisfied, themselves by ocular demonstration, that such a nation existed, and proved it to the government, the Portuguese authorities sent missions to the emperor, in order to establish a free trade with the country. At first, they were permitted to trade at the port of Tamon, and afterwards at Ningpo and Chincheu; but, in consequence of their behaviour, they were successively expelled from these towns. While they were engaged in the trade at Sanshan, however, they assisted the Chinese in clearing the seas of some pirates, by whom the neighbourhood of Canton was infested; and they received, as the reward of their services, the exclusive right to trade with China for many years, and the possession of the island of Macao. The Portuguese still nominally retain this island: but Chinese soldiers mount guard at the landing-place, and Chinese edicts control the commands of the Portuguese authorities.

The discovery of the empire of China, and the early proceedings of the Portuguese in that country, excited a great sensation in Europe. A century, however, passed away, before any other nation seemed disposed to dispute their advantages. Early in the seventeenth century, the Dutch, who were their rivals in the commerce of India, determined to meet them as such on the shores of the "celestial empire." An embassy sent to the court of China for that purpose failed, chiefly, it would seem, from their singular appearance, (which alarmed the Chinese,) and from the aspersions of the Portuguese, who inspired the government with much suspicion of the new

visitors. Thus repulsed, and unable to obtain any Chinese goods, except through the medium of the Portuguese, the Dutch resolved to obtain by force what they were unable to obtain by negotiation. A fleet was fitted out and placed under the command of Admiral Kiezerzoon, who succeeded in capturing one of the Pehou islands, situated between Formosa and the main land. Still the Chinese would hold no friendly intercourse with them, alleging that they would never treat with persons who kept possession of any part of the imperial territories; and informing them, that if they would retire to Formosa, which was then out of the Chinese dominion, they would treat with them. The Dutch did retire to Formosa; but it was subsequently wrested from them by Coxinga, who governed the southern provinces of Quangsee, Quangtung, and Fokien, and who rebelled against the emperor. In their war with Coxinga, the Chinese called in the aid of the Dutch, and he fell before their united forces. This led to the establishment of the Dutch at Canton, where they were allowed to build a house for the purposes of trade, which they soon converted into a fortress. A battery only was wanting to make it a citadel, and the Dutch were desirous of thus establishing their power in China. They employed themselves in bringing in cannon clandestinely; but their treachery being discovered, their vessels were burned, their fort demolished, all Dutchmen were banished, and trade forbidden with them on pain of death. The memory of this attempt appears to have been soon obliterated, for, in 1762, they were again permitted to establish a factory at Canton. Their trade with China, however, was interrupted by the war

between England and Holland; and though, since the fall of Napoleon, it has been resumed, the Dutch have not been able to recover the relative position in the trade which they occupied anterior to that date.

The Russians have been more successful in establishing a trade with China. Involved in territorial disputes with that nation, at length negotiations ensued, and, in 1689, a treaty was signed, by which Russia, on condition of being permitted to trade with China, agreed to abandon an extensive territory on the Chinese frontier, to destroy the fortress of Albazin, and to surrender the navigation of the river Amour. This treaty was afterwards ratified by Peter the Great, and by it Russia has gained considerably greater privileges than have ever been accorded to any other European nation by the Chinese government. Still the trade between these two empires is one of mere barter. It is carried on solely at Kiakhta, on the frontiers of the two countries, each nation carrying its goods to that mart to exchange with those of the other. The profits arising therefrom are valuable to Russia; but, by a fundamental law of China, no nation can trade at two points, and Russia is in consequence excluded from the more valuable trade at Canton.

The intercourse of America with China has been strictly commercial; it commenced in 1784, and it has gradually increased, till it has acquired an importance second only to that of Great Britain.

It is in connection with the trade of Great Britain that the nature of Chinese commerce, and the manner in which it is conducted, will be more fully unfolded.

The first attempt of the English to establish

commercial intercourse with China was made in the days of Elizabeth. In 1596, Sir Robert Dudley was commissioned to sail thither; and he carried with him a letter to "The most high, serene, and powerful prince and ruler of the great kingdom of China, the greatest empire in the eastern parts of the world." But Dudley never reached China, and never returned home, and his fate remains a mystery. The English were brought into actual contact with the Chinese, however, in the year 1605. Sir E. Michelbourne obtained a patent for trading to the eastern seas, and not finding the Chinese favourably disposed to commerce, he not only seized the ships of any nation he met with, but plundered several valuable Chinese junks. This was an untoward action, for it had the effect of prejudicing the minds of the Chinese against the English, which prejudice was fostered by the Portuguese. The English were designated as the enemies of China; trade with them was expressly prohibited, and they continued for many years the most abhorred of all the nations of Europe.

The enmity of the Chinese towards the English was made manifest in 1637, when another attempt was made to establish a commercial intercourse between the two countries. At that date, the British merchants sent four ships and a pinnace, under the command of Captain Weddel, to Macao, which was in the possession of the Portuguese. While here, the pinnace, with fifty men, and a ship's barge, were despatched to the river of Canton, and on reaching an anchorage they landed, and were hospitably entertained at a native village. In their subsequent progress up the river they met with a fleet of twenty junks, and were kindly in-

vited on board, and a Portuguese negro, who understood Chinese, interpreted between them and their hosts. All seemed to augur well, for the Chinese offered to conduct the officers to Canton, where they might present the petition for trade which they had with them to the viceroy, provided the pinnace would instantly return to Macao. This was agreed to, but before they had reached Canton, they were met by a boat from the viceroy, and informed that their petition should be granted if they would return to Macao.

Not wishing to give offence, the English officers returned to Macao; but, instead of the expected arrangements, they found only derision for their credulity. Thus incensed, the whole fleet sailed for Canton, and they had advanced as far as the Bocca Tigris, when they were met by some official personages, who, after some specious explanations of their conduct, promised the officers that they should positively have an audience of the viceroy if they would remain at anchor for six days. Although justly suspicious of the good faith of the Chinese, the English consented to remain at anchor; but, on the fourth day, they were suddenly cannonaded from a neighbouring fortification. Their shot being ill-directed, however, did little harm, and before they could again discharge their unwieldy artillery, the English guns bore upon their batteries, and made fearful havoc. In two hours the fort was taken, the Chinese utterly dispersed, and the British flag waved for the first time in the air of China.

Still the English were unwilling to continue hostile towards the Chinese. They abandoned their advantages, and made another attempt to address the viceroy. But again they were de



ceived. Some officers were permitted to present their petition to the viceroy, and leave was granted to the English to take possession of one small island outside the river, which they might fortify, and make the centre of their commerce. Trade was already commenced, and every thing appeared to be going on prosperously; but, on a sudden, an attempt was made to destroy the English fleet at Macao by means of fire-ships, and the officers at Canton were confined in the house they occupied, while food and fire were denied them, and a guard placed at the door to prevent their escape. The attempt on the English fleet proved abortive; and the crew, enraged at the detention of their officers, laid waste plantations, destroyed villages, and sunk or disabled all the vessels they could meet with. This destruction soon determined the Chinese to a more pacific line of conduct. The officers were released, and the English permitted to conclude their trade; but they had no sooner quitted the river, than an edict was issued, strictly prohibiting all trade with the English nation.

The terror of the English, which this event caused in China, was of long duration. Twenty years after, when the Dutch petitioned to be allowed to trade with the Chinese, they were informed that they must prove themselves not to be Englishmen before their petition was granted. The English, it was stated, had arrived in the river with ships of war, which had not only beaten their navy, but had battered their castles, taken their great men prisoners, fighting more like demons than men, whereby they had become the declared enemies of China.

Subsequent to this event, several attempts were made by the English to gain a footing in China,

but they were unavailing. At length, however, from the assistance rendered by them to the Chinese in the southern provinces against the Tartars, who had subjugated the north to their sway, they procured a residence on the islands of Amoy and Quemoy. But the reduction of the whole empire by the Tartars soon afterwards deprived them of this advantage, and it was not till near the end of the century that they were allowed to partake of their commerce with other European nations.

The commercial intercourse of England was first carried on through the medium of the East India Company, under whose management it flourished. The trade of the East India Company with China, however, was brought to a close, according to the provisions of a new act, which rendered the trade free, in April, 1834, after having lasted just two centuries. Soon after this, several ships quitted Canton with cargoes of tea for the British islands, and the trade continued, with some interruptions, till 1839, when the Chinese required that all opium ships should be sent away, under the penalty of hostile measures. This requisition was disregarded, and a demand was then made that all the opium on board the ships should be delivered to the government for the purpose of being destroyed. It was further demanded, that a bond should be given in the Chinese and foreign languages, that the ships should hereafter never dare to bring opium; and that, should any be brought, the ships should be forfeited, and the parties suffer death.

These demands were made under a show of determined hostility, and from these circumstances Captain Elliot, then British superintendent of the

trade at Canton, required the surrender of all the English opium on the coast of China, and 20,283 chests of that baneful drug were delivered to the commissioners appointed by the Chinese government, from the ships assembled for that purpose below the Bocca Tigris. At the same time, the British superintendent gave a bond to the owners as an indemnity. Still the Chinese government was not satisfied. Hostilities commenced, and war with China was the consequence, the events of which are doubtless fresh in the minds of the reader.\* The result of that war, so far as commerce is concerned, has proved favourable to the English nation. By its indemnification to the amount of \$20,000,000 has been procured for all the losses of the English merchants by the Chinese, and the trade between the two countries established upon a broader foundation than it has ever been before. The English, indeed, have virtually gained some settlements in the Chinese territory; and there can be little doubt but they will be able to maintain their position, and keep the extensive empire of China in awe.

It is to be feared, however, that the population of China will still possess the opportunity of inhaling the fatal drug, which has caused so many millions to sleep the sleep of death. But if some foreigners still persist in the traffic, let it be the duty of others to endeavour to counteract its evils. There is an impression among the Chinese, that the object which the English have in view by introducing opium into the country, is to weaken and

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\* As this is a re-print of an English work, the reader will understand that the view here given of the origin of the late Chinese war is to be received with due allowance.—*Ed.*

enfeeble the "celestial empire," for some ulterior purpose. One of the emperor's edicts says, that "the English are of a violent, overbearing disposition, and that they have long cherished plans great and deep." It is to be hoped that the British nation will prove that as a body of people they desire their temporal and eternal welfare, and while some seek individual gain, even at the expense of the souls and bodies of their fellow-men, many are ready to make a sacrifice of their temporal goods on their behalf.

All foreign commerce (the inland trade excepted) is carried on at Canton. For this purpose, honges, or factories, are built along the bank of the river, extending backwards in depth a hundred and thirty yards, into a long narrow lane, on each side of which are the abodes of foreigners.

Abeel gives an interesting description of the appearance which the open space in front of the factories presents at different hours of the day. He says:—"It is the rendezvous of multitudes of the natives, who assemble daily, to transact business, gratify curiosity, or murder time. It is level for a short distance, beyond which, it stretches over a large pile of rubbish, deposited here after the desolating fire of 1822, and retained, notwithstanding numerous applications for its removal, as a lasting and growing nuisance to foreigners.

"As the morning opens upon this scene, silence retires, and the ears of the stranger are assailed by a new and peculiar combination of sounds. Human voices of harsh, drawling tones, cries of confined dogs and cats, screams of roughly-handled poultry, notes of feathered songsters, some of them admirably gifted and trained, with, at times, an accompaniment of very unmusical instruments,

all unite in this inharmonious concert. The occupations of the tradesmen are varied. Meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, drugs, manufactures ; every thing saleable is brought to the general market. A number convey their portable kitchens hither, and prepare such dishes as suit the palates and purses of this promiscuous concourse. Others plant the barber's shop, or its necessary apparatus, in a convenient place, and spend their leisure hours in lolling about and conversation. Those who frequent the place for trade are probably less numerous than the groups of idlers, who pass their time in listening to stories, witnessing juggling tricks, attending the operations and lectures of empirics, gaping at objects of novelty, and too frequently endeavouring to obtain each other's money by gambling.

“ When the sun is oppressive, the crowd retires, with the exception of the hucksters, who intercept his withering beams by temporary tilts. The erection of tents is a liberty not sanctioned by law, or rather, contrary to the oral prohibitions of the petty officers who have charge of the square. Consequently, when men of authority make their appearance, the scene suddenly changes. From the moment of alarm, there is the most hasty despatch, until every thing is removed that militates against their order. Their exit appears to be regarded as the signal of re-erection, and all things speedily revert to their former state. Such a show of subjection, with real contempt for authority, when it opposes individual gain, is said to be a prominent feature of the nation.”

In moralizing upon the mass of accountable beings met with at Canton, Mr. Abeel remarks : “ In surveying this multitude, there are a great

many points of interest to the eye of Christian compassion and benevolence. Independent of the associations which are common to all the heathen, there are facts of importance peculiar to this daily throng. Great numbers of them can read, and are attracted by every publication that meets their eyes. It is customary to paste up advertisements in the most public place of the square and the streets, and the groups generally found through the day gathered around them show their eagerness to catch at every piece of information. What a place must this be for the operations of a press, sacred to the cause of the Redeemer !”

As traders, the Chinese are eminently active, persevering, and intelligent. They are, in truth, a highly commercial people. Business is transacted with great despatch, and it is affirmed that there is no part of the world where cargoes may be sold and bought, unloaded and loaded, with more business-like speed and activity. An instance of this despatch is furnished by an American writer thus :—“ While our officers were at dinner, a gentleman left the table for a moment, and returned as soon as he was scarcely missed. He informed his guests, that he had made a sale, while absent, of opium, to the amount of \$200,000, and assured them that the Chinese are remarkably expert in business. Shopkeepers, from whom you may buy the most trifling article, supply ships with cargoes, worth \$200,000, and will contract to do so, with all the necessary security, in the length of time he had been absent from the table. They will manage all the smuggling, if any be necessary; get all the chops for duties; and deliver the articles on board the ship at Lintin, Whampoa, or Macao.”

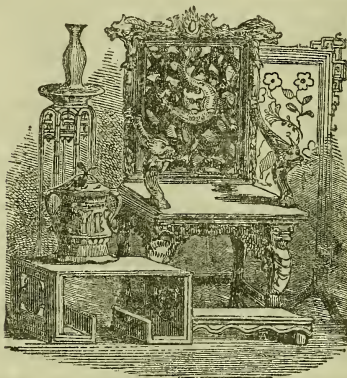
The articles of import and export to be met with at Canton are too numerous to be mentioned. It will be sufficient to say that Europe and America pour many of their natural productions, and some of their manufactures, into China; and that China, in return, sends its most valuable productions, natural and artificial, to be dispersed throughout the world. Of these productions tea holds the first rank; and the importance of this branch of commerce may be seen in the fact, that since the commencement of the present century, about 1,000,000,000 lbs. have been sent into England. Well has it been said by the poet Cowper, that

——“the bond of commerce was designed  
 To associate all the branches of mankind;  
 And if a boundless plenty be the robe,  
 Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.  
 Wise to promote whatever ends he means,  
 God opens fruitful nature's various scenes:  
 Each climate needs what other climes produce,  
 And offers something to the general use;  
 No land but listens to the common call,  
 And in return receives supply from all.”

Still the present trade with our own country and Europe dwindles to a mere point, when compared with the extent of the empire, and the amount of its population. The direct annual revenue accruing from Canton has been ascertained to exceed, annually, \$2,000,000 on imports alone; but this bears no proportion to indirect gains arising from trade. Contributions are exacted from the hong merchants under various names, as “Uses of the army,” “Imperial tribute,” “Yellow river dues,” &c.; and the Consoo fund, at first intended as a provision for defraying the debts of bankrupt hong, is a rich source of

revenue to the Chinese, as well as a heavy loss to foreign traders. Besides this, the inferior offices of the customs at Canton, being farmed out, are maintained by irregular charges on European commerce.

Extensive as the commerce with China, then, appears to be, it is yet a field almost unexplored. It is hoped that recent events will afford the merchant more ample scope than heretofore; that he will be permitted eventually to enter into the interior of China. Such a consummation is devoutly to be wished, not only for the prosperity of Europe, but for the spiritual well-being of the Chinese. For if the merchant were allowed to carry his wares into the heart of the country, the missionary might carry there the infinitely richer treasures of the word of life.

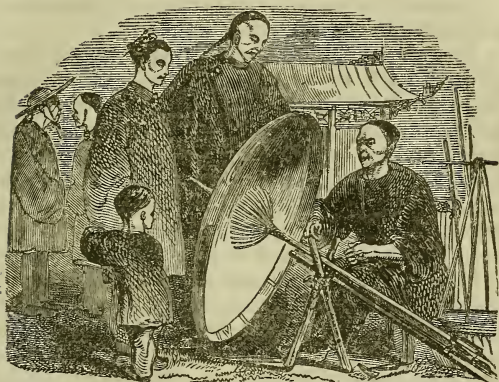


Articles of Furniture.



## CHAPTER IX.

## THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE CHINESE.



Group of the Lower Classes—Umbrella Mender.

THE hope entertained by Christians, that China will one day prove a highway for the heralds of salvation, is not unfounded. A change has already taken place. Until recently, its peculiarities of manners, customs, education, government, religions, and its acknowledged antiquity, have been concealed from the observation of other nations. Now, however, some have visited this country, and some have even penetrated into the interior, and made themselves acquainted with the habits of the people. We believe that the Almighty has designs of mercy toward China, and in his own good time they will be accomplished. At his word

Every valley shall be exalted,  
And every mountain and hill shall be made low :  
And the crooked shall be made straight,  
And the rough places plain :  
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together. Isa. xl. 4, 5.

Information has already been given concerning education among the Chinese.

Historians depicted the ancients as they deemed they might have been, rather than as they were. Their guide was tradition, and that, being blind, led them astray. Fallible as reason is, it would have proved a better teacher ; for had they drawn a correct inference from the defective state of society in their own days, when education was more general than in the remote ages, they must have become convinced of its utter insufficiency.

How powerless to produce right moral conduct is the mode of education in China, may be seen in several of the preceding chapters. This will be more clearly discerned, however, in a description of the manners and customs of the people, which may be subdivided under four general terms, namely, the Character and Domestic Institutions of the Chinese ; Ceremonial Usages ; Amusements ; and Costume and Domestic Manners.

#### THE CHARACTER AND DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHINESE.

Speaking of the character of the Chinese, Gutzlaff remarks : “ Generally, they may be considered an agricultural people, whose density of population exceeds the means of their subsistence. The consequences are very obvious. The capital being divided into endless sections, many individuals are without a portion ; and whilst the majority

earn a scanty subsistence by the sweat of their brow, a very numerous class has nothing on which to depend. On the one hand, such a state prompts to the most unwearied exertion, merely for the sake of maintaining life; industry is no longer a matter of choice, but becomes a necessary and constant habit, whilst the least intermission of it leads to misery. On the other hand, men's minds, thus ground down to the earth, cannot aspire to higher things; in supplying the most urgent bodily wants, every thought is absorbed, the same necessities and cares present themselves daily, and there is neither time nor inclination to seek for mental or spiritual improvement. The economical habits of the Chinese, also, may thus be explained, for waste produces want, and their feeding upon any substance which yields nourishment, how loathsome soever, is no longer a matter of absurd predilection, but of absolute necessity. Their clothing, dwellings, and whole mode of life, amply bespeak the necessity by which they are controlled. Those classes who are above want are too deeply tinged with the national spirit not to show themselves Chinese by their grovelling desires. Sensual inclinations operate instead of want, and to satisfy these they are as eager as the poorer classes to procure a livelihood. Their habits degenerate into sloth, because they consider it beneath their dignity to engage in labour; and the length of the nails is used to indicate their exemption from menial occupation. If they do, however, engage in literary pursuits, the same industry which animated the peasant is visible in their studies; they actually toil to obtain knowledge, and carefully store up their acquisitions."

A marked feature in the character of the Chinese is their love of money. All their thoughts and pursuits are centred in "the mammon of unrighteousness." And this ruling passion during life is strong even in the hour of death. But we do not vouch for the truth of the statement, though it serves as a striking illustration of this avaricious passion, that they seek to establish a rate of exchange beyond the grave! They are in the habit of burning paper laid over with thin plates, under the impression that its ashes will take the value of dollars in the other world! Their gods are rewarded for their favours after the same manner; and as more than a thousand papers can be bought for a dollar, and each one when reduced to ashes is worth that sum, this is deemed a profitable mode of remittance! So vain are they in their imaginations, and so are their foolish hearts darkened.

The favourable parts of the Chinese character are mildness, docility, industry, peaceableness, subordination and respect for the aged. These, however, are accompanied by the vices of insincerity, falsehood, mutual distrust and jealousy. No disgrace is attached to lying and deceit among them, and it is praiseworthy if practised towards foreigners.

Concerning their duplicity, Barrow observes: "As a direct refusal to any request would betray a want of good breeding, every proposal finds their immediate acquiescence: they promise without hesitation, but generally disappoint by the invention of some slight pretence or plausible objection: they have no proper sense of the obligations of truth.

The quietness observable in the character of the Chinese is the natural result of their training. By the Confucian system, the nation is moulded in a certain form, and, from the highest to the lowest, they present the aspect of a peace-loving people. But this is more the outward show of the face than the inward feeling of the heart. Stern discipline may generally keep them in awe, and the mass may kiss the rod which smites them; but, under real or supposed injury, they are sometimes found to be very revengeful. Women have been known to destroy themselves, in order to bring down the vengeance of the government on the heads of those with whom they have quarrelled; and history records that the people have arisen as one body against a magistrate by whom they were oppressed.

The inordinate national pride, for which the Chinese are proverbial, seems to be the offspring of self-love and ignorance. Imagining that their country is the centre of a system, as the old astronomers deemed that the earth was of the universe, they have hence learned to look upon all other nations with contempt. And this natural disposition of the people has been artfully promoted by the government, considering that its interest was concerned in increasing mutual dislike and disunion. Slandorous proclamations are frequently issued against foreigners at Canton, and penalties of no slight nature are attached to a "traitorous intercourse" with Europeans. From these causes it is that, though the merchants are scrupulous in their commercial engagements, yet on all other points foreigners are considered "fair game."

Poverty is no reproach among the Chinese. Personal merit and age are in far higher esteem

than mere wealth. Notwithstanding, poverty is a dreaded evil. It is greatly obviated by a system of clubbing together in families, which resembles the clanships of Scotch Highlanders. This system arises from a sacred regard to kindred, but it operates as a public provision for the relief of the poor, and serves as one of the best means for the distribution of wealth. At times, also, it exercises a salutary check on the measures of the arbitrary government; whence many attempts have been made to effect its dissolution. But the institution is too much interwoven with the whole being of the nation to be utterly overthrown. It has existed from the first ages of the history of China, and it will, doubtless, exist for ages yet to come, if not through all time. The ties of blood, and the love of their relations, among the Chinese, are so strong as to make them look with indifference on society at large: and they are strengthened by the doctrines of their philosophers. Confucius connived at injustice in favour of a relation; and Mencius rejected, with equal disdain, egotism and general philanthropy, while he taught that relations should possess the undivided love of relations.

The same feeling which the Chinese display towards relations is also displayed towards the place of their birth. They have a popular saying, "If he who attains to honours or wealth never returns to his native place, he is like a finely dressed person walking in the dark." Hence regard for the place of their birth clings to the Chinese through life; and they commonly apply, toward the end of their days, for leave to quit the honours and emoluments of office, and retire to their native village. Colonists, also, who venture

abroad in search of gain, return home as soon as they have acquired a competency, though at the risk of being oppressed, under the forms of law, for leaving their native country.

It seems strange that a people so ardently attached to their families and their birth-place should be guilty of the crime of infanticide. Yet so it is. Barrow concludes, from observation, that four thousand infants are annually exposed to death in Peking alone. Some of the scenes he witnessed are almost incredible, when contrasted with the boasted civilization of the "celestial empire." About twenty-four infants, he says, half of whom may die a natural death, are cast out into the streets every night, and dogs and swine are let loose to devour them. Those who remain undevoured are picked up, and carried in carts to a common pit without the city walls, in which the living and the dead are thrown together. The most prevalent mode of effecting the death of infants is by suffocation; and this is said to be frequently done to the aged and afflicted, to "cut the brittle thread of life." So truly has it been observed by the psalmist, that

"The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."—Ps. lxxiv. 20.

Infanticide is exclusively limited to the female sex, and it may be looked upon as a proof of the degradation of females in China. On the treatment of women, the Indo-Chinese Gleaner remarks:—"The very dependent and degraded state of females in China is everywhere observable. They are not allowed the confidence of their husbands, nor to sit at table with them, nor to have a voice in domestic concerns, nor to visit the temples of prayer. Religion is denied them.

Little attention seems to be paid to the peculiar circumstances in which, as wives and mothers, they may be placed. 'Rise, run, work, eat little, spend little, be silent, keep out of sight, obey, bear; and rather bleed, starve, and die, than dare to complain,' is the language of the rules laid down for their treatment. Fortunately for them, humanity, common sense and interest, in many cases, plead in their favour, and procure a relaxation of the rigour of these restrictions; yet where such restrictions have the sanction both of public opinion and of supreme authority, how is it possible to prevent their hurtful operation."

In the life of females in China, up to the period of their marriage, there are but few shades. One of the most remarkable practices, and especially in the higher classes, is, the mutilation of their feet, which is produced by cramping them in early childhood. This is said to arise from Chinese notions of gentility, in the same manner as it is the fashion among the men to wear long nails, to convey an idea of exemption from labour. Probably, however, the custom was first imposed by the tyranny of the men, who wished to disable them from "gadding abroad;" and as custom is held sacred, it is hence perpetuated. The Chinese affect to admire the helplessness induced by this mutilation, notwithstanding its usual concomitant of sickness. Their tottering gait, as they hobble along on the heel of the foot, is compared to the waving of a willow, agitated by the wind! But the foot of a female in China is not the only part of the being cramped by the tyranny of law and custom. The mind suffers a greater and an irreparable injury. The great subject of education, among the higher classes, is implicit obedience, to



which is added a *little* reading and writing ; while the humbler classes are only taught weaving, sewing, embroidery, and the drudgery of household and field-work. Some ladies, however, are instructed in embroidering, as well as painting on silk, and music. They are not often versed in letters, but instances are sometimes quoted of those who have been skilled in composing verses.



Chinese Ladies.

In marriage, the females of China are merely the passive subjects of parental authority. A union prompted solely by love is unknown. It would be considered a monstrous infraction of the duty of filial obedience, and a crime heinous as infidelity. In this momentous concern, therefore, they are compelled to submit to the will of

their parents. Children are frequently betrothed to each other while yet infants; and those who are not, are given to men of whom they know nothing, and whose faces they have never seen. Such unions as the latter are contracted by a third party, who repairs to the parents of the female and offers terms. When the bargain is concluded, which is generally influenced by the personal attractions of the lady, (determined by the smallness of her feet, her pale complexion, and slender waist,) the stipulated sum is paid, and a day appointed for the wedding, which takes place amidst the sound of mirth and music.

On her marriage the lady assumes her husband's surname. But these forced marriages often produce the most tragical results. Suicides frequently take place among the women of China; and they frequently attempt to poison those by whom their earthly happiness is destroyed.

Divorce is common among the Chinese. They have borrowed the notion from the Budhists, that marriage goes by destiny. Early marriages are promoted by every motive of humanity. Their maxim on this subject is, that "there are three great acts of disregard to parents, and to die without a progeny is the *chief*." Hence the desire for children among the Chinese, which is scarcely less ardent than that which existed among the Hebrews. Hence, also, the birth of a son is an occasion of great rejoicing. Parents and friends alike join in celebrating the event, as one of the happiest which could fall to their lot. The father especially rejoices, and that not simply because his name will be perpetuated, but because he will have a helper during life, and one to perform his funeral rites at the family tomb.

There is no duty among the Chinese so scrupulously performed as that which relates to the tombs of their ancestors. They conceive that any neglect of this duty is sure to be succeeded by worldly misfortune.

“When a parent or elder relative among the Chinese dies,” says Davis, “the event is announced to all the branches of the family; each side of the doors is distinguished by labels in white, which is the mourning colour. The lineal descendants of the deceased, clothed in coarse white cloth, with bandages of the same around their heads, sit, weeping, near the corpse, on the ground, the women keeping up a dismal howl. In the meantime the friends of the deceased appear, with white coverlids of linen or silk, which are placed on the body. The eldest son, or next lineal male descendant, supported on each side by relations, and bearing in his hands a porcelain bowl containing two copper coins, now proceeds to the river, or the nearest well, or the wet ditch of the city, to buy water, as it is termed. The ceremony must be performed by the eldest son’s son, in preference to the second son; and this entitles him to a double share of the property, which in other respects is divided equally among the sons. The form of washing the face and body with this water being completed, the deceased is dressed as in life, and laid in a coffin, of which the planks are from four to six inches in thickness, and the bottom strewed with quick-lime. On being closed, it is made air-tight by cement, being, besides, varnished on the inside and outside. A tablet is then placed on it, inscribed with the name and titles of the deceased, as they are afterwards to be cut upon his tomb.

“ On the expiration of thrice seven, or twenty-one days, the funeral procession takes place; the tablet being conveyed in a gilded sedan, or pavilion, with incense and offerings before it. It is accompanied by music, closely resembling the Scottish bagpipe, with the continual repetition of three successive strokes on a sort of drum. The children and relations of both sexes follow, in white, without much order or regularity; and, upon reaching the grave, the ceremonies and oblations commence. It being a part of their superstition that money and garments must be burned for the use of the deceased in the world of spirits, these are, with a wise economy, represented by paper. The form of the tomb, whether large or small, is that of the last letter of the Greek alphabet,  $\Omega$ , called *omega*, which, if taken in the sense of ‘the end,’ is a singular coincidence. Those of the wealthy and noble are sometimes very large, and contain a considerable quantity of masonry, with figures of animals in stone. The whole detail of sepulchral rites, with the sentiments of the Chinese concerning the dead, are contained in the drama of ‘An Heir in Old Age.’

“ After the interment, the tablet of the deceased is brought back in procession; and if the family be rich, it is placed in the hall of ancestors; if poor, in some part of the house, with incense before it. Twice in every year, in the spring and autumn, are the periods fixed for performing the rites to the dead; but the first is the principal period, and the only one commonly attended to. Unlike the generality of the Chinese festivals, which are regulated by the moon, this is determined by the sun, and occurs annually one hundred and five days after the winter solstice,

that is, on the 5th of April. About that time the whole population of the town is seen trooping out in parties to the hills, to repair and sweep the tombs, and make offerings; leaving behind them, on their return home, long streamers of red and white paper, to mark the fulfilment of the rites. Whole ranges of hills, sprinkled with tombs, may at that season be seen covered with these testimonials of attention to the departed, fluttering in the wind and sunshine."

The graves and monuments of the Chinese are uniformly situated upon the hill sides. Their reasons for this appear to be threefold: first, that they are unfit for cultivation; secondly, as they are exposed to the winds, every kind of noxious exhalation is soon dispersed; and thirdly, they are associated in their minds with the pleasing appearances and fructifying effects of the atmosphere, as well as with curious legends and captivating stories. To the hills, therefore, the dead, whether rich or poor, are brought and buried; and hither affectionate mothers, forlorn widows, and dutiful sons, resort to mourn the loss of the departed. Frequently a temporary habitation is erected by the side of the grave, to shelter them from the inclement skies, while they eat "the bread of mourners" and the "sorrowful meat," and take their "fill of tears." They sorrow as those without hope. Wrapped in the coarsest cloth, they forego the custom of personal attention, and sometimes show an extraordinary example of patience and self-mortification. But this is not common. The majority adhere to the rules established by etiquette, as to the time which mourners ought to spend at the grave of the deceased.

The period of mourning prescribed by the ritual

is three years for a parent. This, however, is commonly reduced in practice to thrice nine, or twenty-seven months. The full period of three years must elapse before children can marry subsequent to the death of their parents. On the death of the emperor, the same observances are kept by his millions of subjects as on the death of the parent of each individual. The whole empire remains unshaven for the space of one hundred days, while the period of mourning apparently lasts longer; and all officers of government take the ball and crimson silk from their caps, thereby laying aside the insignia of rank.

The regard which the Chinese exhibit towards their deceased relatives would form a pleasing trait in their character, if it stopped at the point of their mourning. Unhappily, however, it degenerates into idolatry: their fond imaginations exalt a poor miserable worm to heaven, and enrol him among the gods! To their dead they offer the meat and the drink-offering, as unto the Deity!

The festival for the dead among the Chinese is a public celebration. Large mat-houses are erected on the hills, ornamented with lanterns and chandeliers, in which are placed images of the infernal deities, including *Yen-wang*, who may be reckoned the Pluto of the Chinese. Priests of the Budhu sect are employed on this occasion, who chant masses for the dead, present offerings of food, and burn large quantities of paper, representing clothes, habitations, etc., in order that they may pass into the other world for the use of the departed. But these celebrations, being calculated to bring large numbers together, appear to consist, in a great measure, of feasting and entertainment. While they remember the dead, and exalt them, they are

not unmindful of their own enjoyments : this festival, therefore, may be considered to have dwindled into mere ceremony. The Chinese offer all kinds of food, candles, flowers and incense, in rich abundance, at the graves of their ancestors, but they do not scruple to make use of them themselves. There seems no question, however, that they are sincere in offering their oblations to the dead, nor can it be doubted that the ceremony is idolatrous.

The Chinese appear to be led into this exhibition of idolatrous regard for the dead, by the instinctive horror which they have of death. Gutzlaff remarks : " Nothing is viewed by the Chinese with so much horror as death. Their hopes do not extend beyond the grave, and the future state is to them the wretched condition of hungry ghosts, whose hankering desires after the good things of this world are left unsatisfied. Often have we witnessed the last agony, when the soul was about to take her flight. It is a fearful struggle, unallayed by the pleasing prospect of eternity, heightened by the terror of a sudden removal into the hideous hades. Hence the mourning and wailing at the death of friends, and the painful, unsatisfying efforts of survivors, by splendid funeral rites and sepulchral gifts, to soothe their own sorrows, and to render the state of the dead at least in some degree tolerable. Confucius inculcates burial and mourning rites as the most important of all duties ; and, to excite veneration towards the dead, he inculcates their idolatrous worship. Mencius observes, that political economy consists in providing food for the living and the means of fit burial for the dead."

This feature in the Chinese character affords an

awful theme for contemplation. More than three hundred millions of human beings, born to exist throughout the countless ages of eternity, living without hope, and dying in despair! Struggling in the midst of darkness, they seek by vain rites and ceremonies, by tears and wailing, to redeem the soul from misery. How tremendous is the consideration—hundreds of millions are perishing for lack of knowledge! And they are passing to the world of spirits at the rate of about thirty thousand every day in the year.

Shall the Chinese, then, be overlooked by Christian sympathy? Surely, none whose heart is not adamant can gaze upon them without emotion, and without desiring their conversion. Feeling, however, is not enough. Christian emotion and zealous desires must be followed by active and persevering efforts to make known that gospel which is “the power of God to salvation unto every one that believeth.”

#### CEREMONIAL USAGES.

The Chinese attach great importance to ceremony. This might be supposed to produce a constrained stiffness and formality of manner; but the reverse is the fact. Persons high in station are distinguished generally in their address by a dignified simplicity and ease. This does not, however, prevent their laying great stress on precedence; and on public occasions, when the spectators are numerous, this is especially manifest. In the case of foreign embassies, particularly, they always strive to maintain their superiority over their guests by placing themselves before them, which is directly contrary to the true principles of politeness.



This behaviour towards foreigners becomes more marked when contrasted with their general rule in domestic visits, which is to contend for the lowest seat. "When any one proceeds in his chair to pay a visit, his attendants present his ticket at the gate, consisting of his name and titles written down the middle of a folded sheet of red paper ornamented with gold leaf; and there is sometimes enough paper in these, when opened out like a screen, to extend across a room. If the visitor is in mourning, his ticket is white, with blue letters. According to the relative rank of the parties, the person visited comes out a greater or less distance to receive his guest; and when they meet, their genuflexions, and endeavours to prevent the same, are also according to rule. These matters are all so well understood by those who are bred up to them, that they occasion no embarrassment whatever to the Chinese. The ordinary salutation among equals is to join the closed hands, and lift them two or three times towards the head, saying, *Haou? tsing, tsing!* that is, 'Are you well? hail, hail!'

"Soon after being seated, the attendants invariably enter with porcelain cups, furnished with covers, in each of which, on removing the little saucer by which it is surmounted, appears a small quantity of fine tea-leaves, on which boiling water has been poured: and thus it is that they drink the infusion without the addition of either sugar or milk. The delicate aroma of fine tea is no doubt more enjoyed, in this mode of taking it; and a little habit leads many Europeans in China to relish the custom. Though the infusion is generally made in the cup, they occasionally use antique and tastefully shaped tea-pots. At visits, a

circular japanned tray is frequently brought in, having numerous compartments, radiating from the centre, in which is a variety of sweetmeats, or dried fruits. These are taken up with a small two-pronged fork of silver. On the conclusion of a visit, the host conducts his guest, if he wishes to do him high honour, even to his sedan, and there remains until he is carried off: but on ordinary occasions, it is deemed sufficient to go as far as the top of the stone steps, if there are any, or merely to the door of the apartment."

Mandarins and official persons are carried in their sedans by four bearers; they are likewise accompanied by a train of attendants, who are marshalled in two files before the chair. Two of these carry gongs, on which they strike at regular intervals; two others carry chains, which they jingle in concert; and two more are armed with the bamboo, or bastinado. Others there are, who utter a long-drawn shout at intervals, to denote the approach of the great man; while the cortege is made up of servants and other followers, some of whom carry red umbrellas of dignity; and others, large red boards, on which the titles of the officer are inscribed. The populace who meet this procession are compelled to stand aside, with their arms hanging close to their sides, and their eyes on the ground. A departure from this custom would insure them an infliction of the bastinado, without any ceremony.

The solemn feasts of the emperor, and the private feasts and formal dinners among the Chinese, are conducted in a similar manner. The former have been thus described by an eye-witness, who was present at an entertainment given to the last English embassy:—"The ambassador informed

the gentlemen of his suite that he was going to perform the same salutation of respect, before the yellow screen, that he was accustomed to make to the vacant throne of his sovereign in the House of Lords. We were directed to keep our eyes on him, and do exactly as he did. A low solemn hymn, of not unpleasant melody, now commenced; and, at the voice of a crier, the two imperial legates fell prostrate three times, and each time thrice struck the floor with their foreheads: a cranio-verberative sound being audible, amidst the deep silence which prevailed around. The ambassador and his suite, standing up in the mean while, made nine profound bows. . . . .

“When the ceremony was over, the feast was brought in, and the theatrical entertainments commenced. The legates sat to the left, on an elevation of one step; and the ambassador and two commissioners on the same elevation to the right. The other Chinese grandees sat on the left, a little below the legates; and the gentlemen of the embassy to the right, below his lordship and the commissioners. The two lines thus faced each other down the room.

“As no chairs can be used where the emperor is present, or supposed to be so, the whole party sat cross-legged on cushions; but the mandarins, being accustomed to the posture, of course had the advantage. The tables were low in proportion; and when we were all seated, a number of attendants placed on each table, holding only two guests, a large tray which fitted it, and contained a complete course, of which four in all were served. The first consisted of a rich soup; the second, of sixteen round and narrow dishes, containing salted meats and other relishes; the third, of eighteen

basins of birds'-nests, sharks'-fins, deer-sinews, and other viands, supposed to be highly nourishing; the fourth, of twelve bowls of stews, immersed in a rich soup. The guests helped themselves with chopsticks, (small spoons of porcelain, fashioned like a child's pap-boat,) and four-pronged forks of silver, small and straight; and when they drank to each other, the warm wine was poured into little cups by the attendants, who at the same time bent on one knee.

“At the other end of the hall, where we sat, so as to be viewed by each person from his place, down the two ranges of tables, proceeded the stage performances. The music was wretched, and the occasional crash of gongs abominable. Some pyrotechnic monsters, breathing fire and smoke, were among the characters personified; but the best part of the scene was the tumbling, which was really superior in its kind. The strength and activity of one man were particularly eminent.”

At their great entertainments, the Chinese have a number of courses, beginning with those more digestible, and ending with rice and stews. They are noted gourmands, and their feasts often last several hours, whilst tea and liquors are served up in the intervals of the repast. If the party consists of the learned, they amuse themselves with riddles, after the manner of the ancient oriental and classical nations, and with reciting poems and satirical verses. Amongst the lower classes, games of chance, consisting of throwing out some fingers, and letting the other party guess the number, similar to the Italian *mora*, are very common. At all times the Chinese are a cheerful people, but at their feasts they are jovial; they then talk

and laugh, incessantly seeking to drown care in present enjoyment. At such seasons they may be likened to the ancient Epicureans, whose maxim was, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Their feasting, indeed, which begins in ceremony, generally ends in revelry and drunkenness.

The great staff of life in China is rice, which is either eaten dry, or mixed with water, so as to resemble a soup. Out of rice they make their chief intoxicating liquor, which, when good, is something like strong whiskey, both in its colourless appearance and its smoky flavour. Other vegetables are common, such as the sweet potato, Barbadoes millet, peas, beans, turnips, carrots, &c. Of their fruits, the orange, lichen, loquats and mangoes are much in use, and of a very exquisite flavour. Their favourite animal food is pork, the taste for which is national and peculiar. There is a maxim prevalent among them, that "a scholar does not quit his books, nor a poor man his pigs." The pig is, in truth, universally reared about cottages, and its flesh is by far the commonest meat. The flesh of the bullock, sheep, deer, dog, cat and horse is eaten, but compared with that of swine, it is a rarity. Fish are eaten in great abundance, either fresh, dried, or salted; and they rear great quantities of ducks, and various species of fowl, for the table. The comprehensive principle on which Chinese diet is regulated, is, to eat every thing which can possibly give nourishment. But the greatest dainties consumed by the Chinese are brought from foreign countries. Among these, the edible bird's-nest, and the sea-slug, of which there are various kinds, occupy the first rank. Shark-fins, fish-maws, cow-

sinews, and the points of stag-antlers, buffalo-hides, &c., are considered great dainties, on account of their gelatinous qualities. These are boiled down to a jelly, and eaten with a little seasoning.

The edible bird's-nest, so grateful to the Chinese palate, has been thus described:—"The manufacturers of the nests are small swallows, which are supposed to collect the glutinous substance of which they are composed from the sea. The nests resemble small tea-saucers in form, the rim being about the size of that of a tumbler. The best, that is those collected before the eggs of the bird have been laid, are of a light red colour and nearly transparent, bearing almost a perfect resemblance to isinglass, except that they are rather more brittle. China is almost the only market for this delicacy, the nests being greatly in demand throughout the celestial empire, in consequence of their supposed nutritious qualities. They are of three different degrees of excellence, and the best kind are sold in China at two dollars the ounce. When used for culinary purposes, they are dissolved in water, and made into a tasteless soup. I have eaten them several times at the tables of rich Chinese, but they were not at all agreeable to the palate."

Cookery among the Chinese is more like the French than the English. Their dishes are usually *made*, and vegetables are introduced into every preparation of meat. Generally speaking, their dishes are very palatable; but there are some which they esteem as delicacies, which would have few attractions for a European. Among these are the dishes made of the larvæ of the sphinx moth, and of a grub bred in the sugar-cane, which are much relished in China. Some of the

articles eaten by the poor are truly disgusting; they refuse nothing; even rats, mice and every kind of vermin are eaten without repugnance. It is probable, however, that poverty induces this habit, for the Chinese are by no means an unclean people in their diet. Travellers, indeed, give them the credit of being, in general, scrupulously nice in their food. Gutzlaff says, they are very clean in preparing it, and that they prefer high-seasoned dishes, salt meats and vegetables, to all other viands.

#### AMUSEMENTS.

The Chinese, living in uninterrupted peace, and bearing no part in public transactions, relieve the dull monotony of their lives by games at once frivolous and puerile. This contrariety in the national character of the Chinese compared with that of Europeans, as well as other customs, has been thus noticed in a work printed at Macao:—“On inquiring of the boatman in which direction Macao lay, I was answered in the west-north, the wind, as I was informed, being east-south. We do not say so in Europe, thought I; but imagine my surprise when, in explaining the utility of the compass, the boatman added, that the needle pointed to the south! Desirous to change the subject, I remarked that I concluded he was about to proceed to some high festival, or merry-making, as his dress was completely white. He told me, with a look of much dejection, that his only brother had died the week before, and that he was in the deepest mourning for him. On my landing, the first object that attracted my attention was a military mandarin, who wore an embroidered petticoat, with a string of beads round his neck, and

who besides carried a fan; and it was with some dismay I observed him mount on the right side of his horse. I was surrounded by natives, all of whom had the hair shaven from the forepart of the head, while a portion of them permitted it to grow on their faces. On my way to the house prepared for my reception, I saw two Chinese boys discussing with much earnestness who should be the possessor of an orange. They debated the point with much gesture, and at length, without venturing a combat, sat down and divided the orange equally between them. At that moment my attention was drawn to several old Chinese, some of whom had gray beards, and nearly all of them wearing huge goggling spectacles. A few were chirruping and chuckling to singing birds, which they carried in bamboo cages, or perched on a stick. Others were catching flies to feed the birds; and the remainder of the party seemed to be delightfully employed in flying paper kites; while a group of boys were gravely looking on, and regarding these innocent occupations of their seniors with the most serious and gratified attention."

One of the few athletic diversions of the Chinese takes place on the occasion of a public festival, held on the fifth day of the fifth moon, which usually occurs in June. Long narrow boats, built for the purpose, and manned by from forty to eighty men with paddles, meet in the rivers of China, and race with great heat and emulation. They row to the sound of the gong, and the paddles keep time to its beat. In their contests accidents frequently occur from the upsetting of the boats, which, from their great length, are called "dragon boats."



Another public entertainment is given in the feast of lanterns. This takes place on the first full moon of the new year, and it is a display of ingenuity and taste in the construction and mechanism of a variety of lanterns made of silk, varnish, horn, paper and glass; some of which are supplied with moving figures, of men galloping on horseback, fighting, or performing various feats, together with representations of birds, beasts and other living creatures, all in full motion. The moving principle in these is formed by a horizontal wheel turned by the draft of air created by the heat of the lamp, and the circular motion is communicated in various directions by fine threads attached to moving figures.

The Chinese are celebrated for their fire-works. Some of these are ingenious and entertaining, on account of the variety of moving figures which they exhibit.

Dramatic entertainments are frequently given at public feasts, for which purpose some of the Chinese officers of state have private theatres in their houses. Scenery seems to be altogether dispensed with; on which Barrow observes:—"The want of scenery is sometimes supplied by a very unclassical idea, which exactly reverses the usual figure of personification, by making persons represent things. If, for instance, a walled city is to be stormed, a parcel of soldiers, piling themselves in a heap across the stage, are supposed to represent the wall over which the storming party is to scramble." The same writer, after having described the frivolous nature of the Chinese drama, says: "In short, the greater part of the amusements of the Chinese are at the present day of a nature so puerile, or so gross and

vulgar, that the tricks and the puppet-shows, which are exhibited in a common fair of one of the country towns of Europe, may be considered as comparatively polished, interesting and rational. In sleight of hand, in posture-making, rope-dancing, riding and athletic exercises, they are much inferior to Europeans; but in the variety of their fire-works, they perhaps may carry the palm against the whole world. In every other respect the amusements of the Chinese appear to be of a low and trifling nature, neither suited to the affected gravity of the government, nor to the generally supposed state of civilization among the people."

Conjuring, sleight of hand, and other species of dexterity, form the in-door amusements of the Chinese. These are invariably practised at feasts, if theatrical entertainments are not available. The mind left uninformed thus seeks enjoyment in the most foolish amusements.

#### COSTUME AND DOMESTIC MANNERS.

In Europe there is a never-ending change of costume: fashion is there so capricious, that what is worn to-day may be cast aside to-morrow as useless. It is not so with the Chinese. To them Morier's observations concerning oriental manners in other Asiatic countries are equally applicable. "The manners of the east," says he, "amidst all the changes of government and religion, are still the same: they are living impressions from an original mould; and at every step some object, some idiom, some dress, or some custom of common life, reminds the traveller of ancient times." The same costume as was worn in the remotest ages is worn at this day, unchanged either in

shape or material, in almost all Asiatic nations ; and this may solve the enigma, why it is that European manufactures have not hitherto found an extensive or even ready sale in the east, China included.

There is a marked distinction between the summer and winter dress of the Chinese, arising from the extremes of heat and cold which prevail throughout the country at opposite seasons of the year. This difference is principally marked by the cap. The summer-cap is a cone of finely-woven filaments of bamboo, and surmounted (in persons of rank) by a red, blue, white, or gilded ball at the point of the cone. From this ornamental ball, a bunch of crimson silk or red horse-hair descends all around over the cap, and sometimes a single pearl is worn in front. The winter cap fits close to the head, and has a brim of black velvet or fur, turned sharply up all around, and rising a little higher in front and behind than at the sides. The dome-shaped top is surmounted by the ball, like the summer-cap, and from the point of its insertion a bunch of fine crimson silk descends, just covering the dome. The summer garment is a long loose gown of light silk, gauze, or linen, hanging free at ordinary times, but, on occasions of dress, gathered in round the middle by a silken girdle, which is fastened in front by a clasp. To this girdle are fastened a fan-case, tobacco-pouch, flint and steel for lighting the pipe, and sometimes a sheath with a small knife and a pair of chop-sticks. In winter, over a longer dress of silk or crape, which reaches to the ankles, the Chinese wear a large-sleeved spencer, reaching down to the hips, and made either of fur, or silk, or broadcloth, lined with skins. The

neck, which in summer is left bare, is protected in winter with a collar of silk or fur. The nether garment is loose in summer, but in winter a pair of tight leggings are drawn on separately over all, and fastened up to the sides of the person. Stockings of cotton or silk, woven, are worn at all seasons; and in winter persons of rank wear boots of cloth, satin, or velvet, with thick soles, which are kept clean by whiting, instead of the European mode of blacking.

The dress of ceremony among the Chinese is very rich and handsome. The colour of the spencer is usually dark-blue or purple, and the long dress beneath is of some lighter or gayer colour. On state occasions this long dress is embroidered with dragons, or other devices, wrought in silk and gold.

The Chinese have no "particular passion for clean linen." Their very body-garments are sometimes made of a species of light silk, and all the rest of their dress being of silk or furs, there is little demand for white calico or linen. Even sheets and table-cloths are unknown among them. The natural result of this want of cleanliness is, that the people are subject to cutaneous and leprous complaints. The latter may be increased, as some suppose, from their fondness for pork and, perhaps, from the nature of the climate.

The dress of females is very modest and becoming, and, in the higher class, as splendid as it can be made with silks and embroidery. The ordinary dress is a large-sleeved robe of silk (or of cotton among the poorer sort) over a long garment, sometimes of a pink colour, under which are loose trowsers, which are fastened round the ankle, just above the shoe. Unmarried women wear their

hair in long tresses ; but matrons wear it twisted up towards the back of the head, ornamented with flowers or jewels, and fastened with two bodkins, stuck in crosswise. Sometimes they wear an ornament composed of gold and jewels, the wings hovering, and the beak of the bird hanging over the forehead on an elastic spring. In such a costume the females in China would frequently appear handsome, were it not for the custom of daubing their faces with white and red paint, and their mutilated feet. The young women have their eyebrows fashioned until they represent a fine curved line, which the Chinese compare to "the new moon," or to "the young leaflet of the willow."

The costume of the peasantry in China is adapted to give freedom to the body. In summer it consists of a pair of loose cotton trowsers tied round the middle, and a frock equally loose hanging over it. In very hot weather the trowsers only are worn. The head is defended from the sun by a broad umbrella-shaped hat of bamboo slips interwoven, which is exchanged for the felt cap in winter. In rainy weather they have cloaks of a species of flags or reeds, from which the water runs as from a penthouse. Generally they wear no shoes, but sometimes they wear sandals made of straw.

It would seem that the party-coloured coat, with which Jacob clad his beloved Joseph, is a universal mark of regard in oriental countries. Such a coat is frequently given by the Chinese to a retiring public magistrate whose government has been marked by moderation and justice. A deputation waits on him with a habit composed of every variety of colour, as if made by a general contribution from the people. With this habit he is

solemnly invested, and it is preserved with much care as a relic in his family for generations.

Notwithstanding the dress of the Chinese is defined by custom, and rendered sacred by antiquity, there is a vanity sometimes displayed in it which exhibits the natural pride of the human heart. There are fops among them as among Europeans.

Among the most fatal temptations to which the Chinese are exposed, and to which they most yield, may be reckoned the use of opium. Some use it in moderation. "Nothing that I ever see," says a modern traveller, "reminds me of an opium-smoker. His lank and shrivelled limbs, tottering gait, sallow visage, feeble voice and the death-boding glance of his eye, are so superlative in their degree, and so closely blended in their union, that they at once bespeak him to be the most forlorn creature that treads upon the ground. Such sights, however, are not very common, for the miserable beings generally hide themselves from public view, so that, amidst many thousands of healthy and happy faces, we only see here and there these prodigies of evil habit. Too much leisure, more money than is required for the necessaries of life, a guilty conscience, an unquiet mind and bad company, are the promoters, if not the causes, of opium-smoking. Happy is that man who, when he has provided for the necessities of the body, has nothing to bestow upon its vices."

The fumes of this noxious drug are inhaled through a peculiarly constructed pipe, whilst the wretched victim reclines at his ease. In this position he soon falls asleep, and on awaking takes a cup of tea, and then resumes the process.

When the habit is confirmed, the degraded wretch seems unable to leave it off; his strength soon fails, and he becomes a walking shadow, with eyes vacant and staring, and his whole bodily frame deranged: on his brows are stamped the mark of infamy, and he seldom reaches an advanced age. Such are the sufferings and misery which millions endure from the use of this foreign and fatal narcotic! The use of it has grown to an evil of enormous magnitude in China; and the anxiety of the Chinese government to abolish the illicit traffic in the poison is commendable, though hitherto unsuccessful. In the "Chinese Repository" there is an account of a series of paintings, by a Chinese artist, illustrating the progress of the opium-smoker: it is from health and affluence, to poverty, disease and death.

The lower orders among the Chinese are prone to the vice of gambling. Dice, cards and dominoes, are all known and used among them, though infamy is attached to the practice, and it is discountenanced by the severity of the law. The idle and dissolute meet in their public-houses, which are generally open sheds, and where are afforded the means of both gambling and drinking to excess. These evil habits are more especially observable among the sea-faring inhabitants of Canton and Fokien. The dangerous profession of these poor people, and their unsettled, wandering habits, tend to give them the reckless and improvident character attached to the lower grades of the maritime population in every part of the world. So degraded are these people by their habits, that it gives their superiors advantage over them. They become the frequent victims of cruelty and oppression, and none dare com-

plain. Their dead bodies are sometimes seen floating down the river; and the living, fearing the infliction of the bastinado by their overseers, see them pass onward without a sigh. Yet, in the midst of oppression and wrong, they are apparently light-hearted. To lighten their labour, and assist them in keeping time with the strokes of their oars, the boatmen often have recourse to a rude air, which is generally sung by the master, the whole of the crew joining in the chorus. "On many a calm, still evening," says Barrow, "when a dead silence reigned upon the water, have we listened with pleasure to this artless and unpolished air, which was sung, with little alteration, through the whole fleet."

In common with the nation in general, the maritime population of China are prone to superstition. Although the dragon is generally held in honour, yet on some occasions he is treated with great rudeness. This is especially the case on the fifth day of the fifth month, when he is supposed to lurk in ambush in some of the caves, with the fell intention of drowning some unlucky crew and sinking their boat. To prevent him, the dragon-boat performs its fantastic feats about the river immediately in the vicinity of Canton, and noise and menace prevail as it is urged along by the rowers. This is deemed sufficient to scare him from his purpose.

Another occasion, when the dragon is treated disrespectfully, is during an eclipse, when he is supposed to be making an essay to swallow the sun or the moon, to gratify his hunger. To frighten him from this act, or to entice him to quit his grasp, gongs are beaten incessantly while this phenomenon lasts. Yet the same people

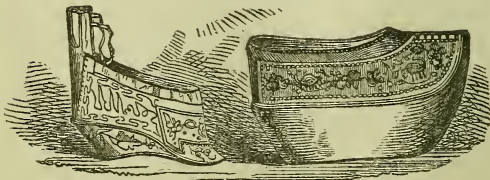


hold processions to his honour on the same river. One of these is thus graphically described :—“ On the evening of March 10, 1838, as I was returning from a walk to the barrier, I observed that the drums were more noisy than usual near the village of Mongha, while sudden gleams of light were seen from between the trees and tufts of bamboo. After a short time, a long train of lights, differing in volume and brilliancy, was seen, and soon presented to view transparent images of fish and other living things, which were made of paper, and lighted within. Among them, an enormous dragon was borne by a row of men, who moved about in fantastic evolutions, to represent the writhings and contortions of the ugly beast. As it was illuminated like the rest, the horned head, large eyes and wide-yawning jaws, glared fiercely upon the crowd, as the men who bore that part capered and sidled about to give a characteristic effect to it. The fish were very large, and exceedingly well executed ; for the Chinese show a taste for natural beauty sometimes, and are peculiarly happy in their paper imitations of the ‘finny drove.’

“ The drum is indispensable in every procession of any importance ; and as the Chinese have not adopted the plan of making it light enough to be slung from the neck, they are obliged to place it in a kind of stand or frame, which is carried by several men, while the drummer follows his instrument on foot. In the head or prow of this litter was placed the little drum, the sharp clicking sound of which was intended as a treble to the large drum. A gong was suspended upon a post near the little drum, while a fourth musician made a most obstreperous din with a large pair of cym-

bals. The man who beat the little drum seemed to find an extraordinary delight in his occupation ; while the swain with the cymbals held them close to the ear of the drummer, as if he meant to requite him for his diligence with a flood of sonorous vibrations poured fresh into his ear.

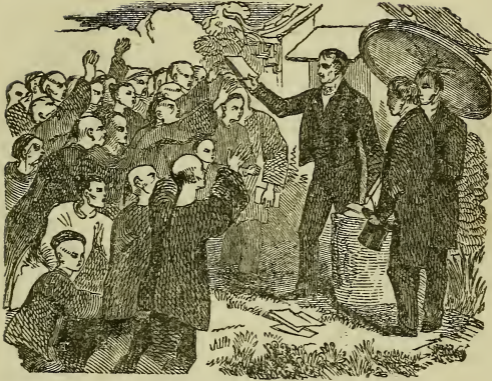
“ Among the illuminated fishes lanterns were carried, of various forms, but generally shaped like a Chinese house, with a succession of stories, each story running out conspicuously into a cornice or eaves. A flag was borne before, with a dragon painted upon it, followed by two large maces of a square shape, and divided into several tiers, with a light in each of them. But the most engaging part of the spectacle consisted of two litters, brilliantly illuminated, and borne aloft in the air ; in each of which were two little girls, with lovely features, and very gay attire. One of the twain stood upon a large pair of embroidered shoes, like those worn by Tartar ladies, out of compliment to the nation that governs China ; the other little girl was reared upon a branch of the peach tree in full flower, which, among the Chinese, is accounted the emblem of beauty and loveliness.”



Chinese Shoes.

## CHAPTER X.

## PROTESTANT MISSIONS.



Tract Distribution among the Chinese.

EARLY in the nineteenth century Protestants of various denominations were aroused to feel the claims of the pagan world, and missions were commenced in various parts of the earth, and among them China received the heralds of salvation.

The honour of sending the first Protestant missionary to China belongs to the London Missionary Society. Having resolved upon this good, great, and glorious work, that society sought for men in whose prudence they could confide, and whose talents were adapted for that station. The first person nominated was the late zealous and highly-gifted Dr. Morrison. Having directed his attention to various branches of science, which it

was hoped might prove subservient to the cause of the gospel, and gained an imperfect insight into the Chinese language, that first herald of salvation to the pagans of China set sail for Canton at the commencement of 1807.

On reaching Canton, Dr. Morrison studied the language with unwearied assiduity, although surrounded with discouragements. His labours were in truth obliged to be carried on in secret, lest the government, hearing of them, should be induced to expel him from the country. Even the persons who assisted him trembled lest they should be discovered. But under the protecting care of the Almighty, who had purposes of mercy toward that benighted land, he laboured in security, and his efforts were crowned with success. In a few years, he translated and printed in the Chinese language, first the Acts of the Apostles, then the Gospel by Luke, next the morning and evening prayers of the English Common Prayer Book, together with the Psalter, divided for the days of the month; and finally, he completed the translation of the whole inspired book of God.

The translation of the sacred Scriptures into the Chinese language was completed in 1819, and on this occasion, the translator thus expressed his feelings:—"To have Moses, David, and the prophets, Jesus Christ and his disciples, using their own words, and thereby declaring to the inhabitants of this land the wonderful works of God, indicates, I hope, the speedy introduction of a happier era in these parts of the world; and I trust, that the gloomy darkness of pagan scepticism will be dispelled by the day-spring from on high; and that the gilded idols of Budhu, and the numberless images which fill this land, will one

day assuredly fall to the ground before the power of God's word, as the idol Dagon fell before the ark.

“These are my anticipations, although there appears not the least opening at present. A bitter aversion to the name of our blessed Saviour, and to any book that contains his name or his doctrines, is felt and cherished. This, however, does not induce us to despair. I remember Britain; what she was, and what she now is in respect to religion. Three hundred years have not elapsed since national authority said that ‘the Bible should not be read openly in any church by the people, nor privately by the poor; that only noblemen and gentlemen, and noble ladies and gentlewomen, might have the Bible in their houses.’ I remember this, and cherish hope for China.”

The labours of Dr. Morrison were not confined solely to the important task of translating the word of God into the Chinese language. In the midst of these he compiled a Chinese grammar, and commenced the compilation of a Chinese and English dictionary. This latter great work he completed in 1823, and by it he has prepared the way, not only for the attainment of a knowledge of the language of China, but for the future dissemination of European learning and science, and of the great truths of Christianity in that pagan country. The completion of his dictionary, indeed, as well as that of the Chinese version of the Bible, forms an epoch in the history of Christian missions.

While thus employed, Dr. Morrison was mindful of the souls of those with whom he had an opportunity of conversing. Privately he laboured diligently to diffuse a knowledge of the truth as it

is in Jesus. Years rolled away, however, before he was permitted to reap any fruit from his labours. Until 1814, no individual had resolution to seek admission, by baptism, into the church of Christ. At that time a Chinese named Tsae-a-ko, after much instruction and strict examination, came forward and confessed his faith in Christ and was baptized. Tsae-a-ko adhered to the faith until his death, which occurred in 1818.

In 1823, Dr. Morrison visited his native country, where he was received with the honour justly due to his talents and Christian philanthropy. Previous to his leaving Macao, he dedicated a native convert, named Leang Afa, to the work of an evangelist among his own countrymen. Dr. Morrison remained in England till 1826, when he returned to Macao. On his arrival, he met Leang Afa, who had been actively and usefully employed during his absence. Fearless of persecution, he had been ardent in his study of the sacred Scriptures, which he boldly promulgated by conversation, preaching and the distribution of tracts and the book of God itself.

Bibles and tracts were the chief means now used by Dr. Morrison to promote the eternal welfare of the Chinese. In this work he was aided by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the London Religious Tract Society, both of which responded to his call to stand forward "to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Nor were his labours in vain. In October, 1832, he writes, "I have been twenty-five years in China, and am now beginning to see the work prosper. Blessed be God for his mercy to me. By the press we have been enabled to scatter knowledge far and wide. We

now greatly want writers in Chinese. My strength fails me much. The Confucian atheists, who believe that death is annihilation, are numerous. Of late, some merchants here, of that school, have been put into possession of the Testament, Milne on the Soul, and other books printed by us. Agong (another Chinese convert) has been occupied in my house all the summer, in printing sheet-tracts at the lithographic press. Leang Afa has been engaged in printing nine tracts, for which the Tract Society sent out funds. He has baptized three persons during the year."

By means of English presses, which were introduced by this first Protestant mission, Dr. Morrison and his Chinese coadjutors, Leang Afa and Agong, were furnished with many thousand tracts, which they distributed among the people. On one occasion, the native converts itinerated about 250 miles into the interior, for the purpose of distributing religious tracts among them; and on another they distributed more than 2500 in the streets of Canton, among 24,000 literary graduates who had assembled in that city for public examination. They were received with gladness, and the effects may have been great.

The press, therefore, that mighty engine for good or evil, had become the chief instrument in the hands of Dr. Morrison for diffusing the knowledge of Christ. He saw and confessed its power, and wisely used it in the service of the Redeemer. But he was not limited to the press alone. Every Sabbath he conducted Divine worship in his own house and in the Chinese language. To his work he continued "faithful unto death;" which took place on the 1st of August, 1834. On that day,

he rested from his labours, and entered into the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord.

Having thus briefly sketched Dr. Morrison's history, we shall now notice his esteemed colleague, Dr. Milne. After passing through a course of preparatory instruction, he set sail for Macao, where he arrived in 1813. On his arrival, he commenced the study of the Chinese language; but on the second or third day after he began, he received an order from the Portuguese governor to leave the island in eight days, which was almost immediately followed by another, to go on board a vessel then about to leave the port. Remonstrance was in vain. Influenced by the Papists, who were alarmed at the arrival of a Protestant missionary, the governor insisted on his departure, and he proceeded to Canton. Subsequently, he made a tour, circulating New Testaments, tracts and catechisms, through the chief settlements of the Malay Archipelago. On returning to Canton, the jealousy of the Chinese government rendered it imprudent for him to remain, and it was determined that he should proceed to Malacca, a town in southern Asia, situated on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula, between the Gulf of Bengal and the Indian Archipelago and China. The bulk of the population of this town consists of Malays, but there are some Hindus and Chinese, as well as some descendants of the Portuguese and Dutch. Among this mixed population, Dr. Milne laboured till his death, which took place in 1822.

Before his death Dr. Milne had the satisfaction of seeing an Anglo-Chinese college erected, for the instruction of Chinese youths, from which much good has resulted. This mission has, indeed, recently assumed a very favourable appearance.



Several instances of conversion have occurred among the Chinese population, and the converts have greatly aided the successors of Dr. Milne.

While stationed at Malacca, Dr. Milne visited Pulo Penang, or Prince of Wales's Island, which is the seat of government of the British possessions in the Straits of Malacca. This island is inhabited by a mixed population of Europeans, Armenians, Malays, Achinese, Battas, Chinese, Chuliahs, Bengalese, Burmans, Siamese, Arabs, Parsees and Caffres. Among these, Mr. Medhurst, who had previously assisted Dr. Milne at Malacca, established a school in a Chinese temple, and distributed a great number of tracts. Since then, other schools have been opened by other missionaries, and the station promises to be of great utility in future operations among the Chinese. The education of the rising Chinese population, both male and female, has recently assumed a promising appearance. Printing-presses have also been established at this station, and books, both in the Malay and Chinese language, have been issued from thence in great numbers.

In 1819, Mr. Milne removed from Malacca to Singapore, and a temporary building was erected, which served as a residence, a school-house and a chapel; and the usual means were employed for the benefit of the population, which consists of Chinese, Malays, Javanese, etc. Since then a printing-office has been established at Singapore, and this office, together with those at Malacca and Pulo Penang, have furnished an immense number of copies of the Scriptures and tracts, in Chinese and Malay, which have been widely dispersed; those in the former language extending even to the vicinity of Peking. On the subject of the dis-

tribution of books and tracts at Singapore, one of the missionaries remarks:—"Perhaps not less than one hundred junks, of various sizes, pay at least an annual visit to Singapore, which afford abundant facilities for sending the sacred Scriptures into the empire of China, and to almost every important Chinese colony in the Indian Archipelago. The large junks from China are chiefly from two places, Canton and Amoy. They arrive early in the year, and, as they stay some months, we have an opportunity of paying them several visits, and of holding conversations with the people. All the readers on board each junk are supplied with books, and then a small 'export cargo' is intrusted to the captain, or other intelligent and well-disposed person among the crew, to be given to their friends on returning home. A complete copy of the Scriptures is usually given to the captain for his own use. In all our intercourse with these visitors, as well as those from other parts, we have uniformly met with a friendly, and even kind reception; and the books are generally received with cheerfulness, and not unfrequently with strong feelings of gratitude."

Malacca, Pulo Penang and Singapore, have been for years so many outposts for Christian missionaries, carrying on their warfare against the Great Dragon in China. In China itself, since the death of Dr. Morrison, little has been done. Leang Afa is still labouring in his Master's cause, in the midst of much persecution; and many excellent men have been sent to China by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the American Baptist Board, some of whom reside at Canton, where they have established a printing-press, which has been actively employed for the best

interests of the Chinese. But English missionaries have not yet been permitted to reside permanently in that pagan country. Apart from the jealousy of the Chinese government towards the English, the commercial difficulties fostered by the Portuguese, and the recent rupture between the two countries, have prevented such a desirable consummation. The war having ceased, it is hoped English and American missionaries will, ere long, be permitted to go forth in great numbers and spread the glad tidings of salvation among that benighted people. Christians are anxiously watching the progress of events, and daily prayer is offered, that the way may be opened for the heralds of salvation to pass onward in their hallowed mission. Already the ports of Canton, Amoy, Fouchoufoo, Ningpo and Shang-hai, are thrown open to British merchants, and the island of Hong-kong is ceded in perpetuity to her Britannic majesty, her heirs and successors. The British flag is permitted to wave in these several ports of the "celestial empire;" and it becomes Christians to unfold the standard of the cross there likewise. By treaty, peace and friendship are secured between the two empires; and it is hoped that England and America will be permitted to send forth their missionaries to promulgate the gospel of peace to that long-enslaved people, who have been groaning under the yoke of Satan from the earliest period of the world's history.

The Chinese are a reading people, and they all speak the same language and write the same characters. In other pagan countries it has been necessary to establish schools in order to teach the infant and the adult to read; but in China the people generally can read and write. Moreover,

they are extremely inquisitive, patient in research, and fond of literature. Every thing they meet with in the shape of a book or tract is read with avidity; and had their own literature been capable of improving the moral character of man, the Chinese would, doubtless, have long ago presented a lovely picture of society. But all their writers, even the most enlightened, may be considered as "the blind leading the blind." The thick films of pagan darkness had been gathered for ages over the universal mind in China, and reason was too impotent to chase its shades away. Confucius, Mencius, and a long list of philosophers, struggled to emerge from the night of darkness in which they found themselves, but in vain.

Here, then, is a wide field for the exercise of Christian philanthropy—a field already prepared for the scattering abroad of the good seed of the word of life: for, although the missionary may not yet be permitted to labour therein, there are facilities, as before shown, for sending books and tracts even into the interior of that exclusive empire; and these facilities are greatly increased by the recent treaty between the Chinese and the English.\*

On the reception of the word of God among the Chinese, Mr. Lay, a former agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, remarks:—"Among the workmen and their acquaintances at a tailor's

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\* A more extended and particular notice of the labours of American missionaries on this interesting portion of the globe would be given in this connection, but we expect soon to publish a volume more especially devoted to this subject, and prepared by one of the missionaries, whose opportunities of acquiring information are very peculiar and well-improved.—*Ed.*

shop, I witnessed some of the best examples of an interest in the Holy Scriptures that I met with during my stay. I was asked for them again and again, with a cordiality of feeling that was truly refreshing. An interest in this kind of reading had been diffused from friend to friend, till, instead of single copies, they began to ask for numbers, accompanying their requests with the remark, that *ho too tung yun tuk shu*, 'a great many now read the books.' One of the friends came and took a bundle away to supply some kinsmen at a distance, and thus to perform, in its first elements, the work of a native distributor. The man who introduced this person to me said, 'The ladies within read the books; they say they are good books, they understand them. Is not this good?' added he, with an air of triumph. 'Yes,' replied I, 'ten times told,' or good in the superlative. For, while I had heard some complain that they did not know what to make of their sense, among the males, it was in the highest degree gratifying to hear that females in China were reading the Scriptures with the understanding. It was a little fact, when taken by itself; but it gave me the most unfeigned pleasure, because it was unsought for and unexpected, and seemed like a symptom of something that may, in its development, fill the Christian and philanthropist with wonder and delight."

The same writer, in common with the English and American missionaries, urges the necessity of distributing tracts in large numbers among the Chinese. And in the present state of the feelings of the Chinese towards "barbarians," it may fairly be presumed that they will be the means of doing more good than even the missionaries themselves.

Against the white man they have strong national antipathies, and these have been increased by his unprincipled ambition and commercial rapacity. But against books and tracts no such antipathy exists—*they* are allowed to speak to the heart. Besides, few are yet capable of teaching the Chinese in their own language, and years of toil must be endured before missionaries can go forth in numbers. They have yet to prepare for this mighty labour; but the press can speak without reserve, and in a language that can be understood. It can tell the hundreds of millions inhabiting that vast empire the way of salvation in their own tongue, wherein they were born.

“There is something grand,” says Gutzlaff, “in seeing such a prodigious number of our species united in one nation, speaking the same language, and using the same characters in expressing their thoughts by writing. Ancient and modern history furnishes no parallel of an identity which may be traced in the slightest particular.” *There is* “something grand” in this circumstance; but how indescribably grand would be the picture, if this “prodigious number of our species” were united in the worship of the one true God, instead of bowing the knee to their many false gods, or grovelling in the night of atheism! How indescribably grand would be a well-founded idea, that these hundreds of millions were passing to the realms of glory, to swell this triumph of the Redeemer’s name: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing.” And that earth will one day witness such a scene, the sure word of prophecy testifies. Wrapped in holy vision, in which futurity was re-

vealed unto him, the same "beloved John," who was privileged to hear this song of the redeemed in heaven, writes, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Christian reader, you are privileged to aid in bringing about this glorious consummation; and a talent has been committed unto you for that purpose, by Him who "hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." See that you so use that talent, that through his grace you may receive the welcome—"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Beware of entertaining the idea that the little you can do will be of no avail, and that, therefore, your exertions may be dispensed with. All true Christians are commanded to spread the gospel throughout the world, and if they were to unite in the hallowed work with all their hearts, how great and delightful would be the results!

"O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true;  
 Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! Which, who can see,  
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
 His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?

• • • • •  
 One song employs all nations; and all cry,  
 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!'  
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
 Shout to each other; and the mountain tops  
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy:  
 Till nation after nation taught the strain,  
 Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.

Behold the measure of the promise filled ;  
See Salem built, the labour of a God !  
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines ;  
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth  
Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands  
Flows unto her ; unbounded is her joy,  
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,  
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there :  
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,  
And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.  
Praise is in all her gates : upon her walls,  
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,  
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there  
Kneels with the natives of the farthest west ;  
And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand,  
And worships. Her report has travell'd forth  
Into all lands. From every clime they come  
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,  
O Sion ! an assembly such as earth  
Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see."

THE END.









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