姑蘇景志

"BEAUTIFUL SOO"

THE CAPITAL OF KIANGSU.

BY

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志景蘇姑

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"Heaven above; below Soochow."

ON the banks of the Grand Canal eighty miles west of Shanghai, twelve miles east of the Great Lake, and forty miles south of the Yangtse, stands a far-famed city, the silk metropolis of the Orient. Even in this hurried nineteenth century a crowd of admirers stand with reverent awe around the statue of antiquity, and gaze upon its towering heights, which seem to pierce the clouds. Let us go back two millenniums, and then along these same streets we now tread the father would lead his son and point to halls and palaces covered with the ivy of centuries. Twenty-four hundred years have these walls stood, and on these cobble-stone pavements eighty generations of men have trod to and fro. Founded B.C. 500, it was laid out only 250 years after Romulus traced the walls of the ancient mistress of the world, whose glory for fifteen centuries has consisted in the broken monuments of former grandeur, while during these same fifteen hundred years Soochow has been a literary and commercial centre. It was built during the lifetime of Confucius and synchronous with the completion of the second temple at Jerusalem under Ezra, which occurred shortly

Antiquity.

after the time of Nebuchadnezzar, whose reign marks an epoch in ancient history. It was in the days of Socrates the philosopher, Herodotus the historian, Phidias the sculptor, and Pericles the orator, that the fathers of a numerous and distinguished race first built their primitive residences in this city. There is a stone map in the Confucian temple nearly one thousand years old, and on it the streets and temple sites are almost identical with the present.

China was not always the solid cube it is at this time. Before the warring states had amalgamated, Soochow was the capital of the "Kingdom of Wu," as the country south of the Yangtse was called. It included a portion of this and the two adjacent provinces, and was independent from the 12th to the 4th centuries (B.C.) inclusive. There is nothing in the history specially germane to our subject till the accession of Hoh Lü (闔閭), who issued the decree that Soochow be laid out as the capital of his dominions. Hoh Lü was of royal descent, the grandson of a former sovereign, yet he ascended the throne not by succession but by assassinating the ruling monarch and seizing the reins of government. His reign, however, was a successful one. "He did much to improve the general condition of the country, especially in opening up the water communications and draining the swampy lands that abounded. By his wise and just government he gained the confidence of the people and succeeded ere long in establishing himself firmly on the throne. He brought his army into a great state of efficiency, and none of the neighbouring states could cope with him, so that he was able to dictate his own terms on the conclusion of every one of the four or five wars in which he was engaged."

The Reign of Hoh Lu.

His pleasure parks must have been attractive resorts. On the hills beside the Great Lake, though the population in the thriving towns and villages is dense, yet deer are not unknown;—what splendid hunting grounds must these have been when the mountains were covered with their primeval forests! From his rural palaces on the Mohdoh heights in the afternoon he could look

westward upon the Great Lake, glistening as a sea of glass, and to the east behold thousands of workmen with their wooden pestles driving down the stone foundations of the great city just rising into sight.

The founder of Soochow was Wu Tsze Sü (伍子胥). To him, the Prime Minister, was entrusted the great task of building a capital. In many respects there is no people who have a more just appreciation of virtue than the Chinese. They are not blinded by the glamour of royalty, but give honor to the great statesmen who have wielded the destinies of the empire. King Hoh Lü is known by the *literati* only; Wu Tsze Sü by the people. There are no fabled accounts of his early years, for Asiatic history at that period is far more authentic than European. His father, the Premier of another state, was murdered by the monarch, and the son fled as a refugee to Wu. He became the friend of Hoh Lü, assisted him in obtaining the throne, and for twenty years was his trusted counselor. He advised the king, in order to strengthen his government "and secure the safety and prosperity of his people," to found "a large walled city where his subjects could dwell in time of danger and where his government stores could be protected from the enemies that constantly menaced his kingdom." The king was pleased, and directed Wu Tsze Sü "to select a site and proceed with the building of the city," whereupon, with the aid no doubt of geomancers and *fung-shuy* doctors, the history of the city tells us, he "prospected the ground, tasted the water, observed the heavens, and planned the earth."

Its Founder.

What a Herculean task to build a city! What an expenditure of money! What a witness to the civilization of those early ages! Wu Tsze Sü traced the foundations of the walls, laid out the streets, opened the canals, built the bridges, and, perhaps, according to the phraseology of western towns "sold the corner lots." By his own toil he erected the monument which perpetuates his memory. By the energy of Wu Tsze Sü the borders

of the Kingdom of Wu were extended and the condition of the people so much improved, that it "became one of the strongest and most famous of the principalities into which China was divided at that time."

Hoh Lü was succeeded by his unworthy son Fu Ch'ai. With the resources which his father had collected, he erected magnificent palaces and the "Beautiful Soo Tower," so celebrated in ancient annals. His extravagance in building, his waste of the state revenues, and "the enforced labour of many thousands of his subjects in his building operations, caused widespread murmuring and dissatisfaction among the people." The faithful and honored statesman, the friend and counselor of his father, protested against the extravagance and dissipation of King Fu Ch'ai, and the latter used the short method of sending him a sword to take his own life. The noble citizens of the capital rescued his body from the canal, built two funereal temples, and called the south-west gate by his name.

We pass by the long line of kings when Soochow was the capital of an ancient state, and the four or five hundred governors since it became the seat of government of the central province along the coast line;—her statesmen and authors, warriors and poets, her men of fame and wealth can scarcely be alluded to, for our theme is the city as she is at present and not what she was in the historic past.

Its Situation.

The capital of Kiangsu is situated in the vast plain between the Yangtse and the Hangchow Bay, the "garden spot" of Far Cathay. To the east the country is perfectly level and entirely bereft of trees, except a few at the hamlets. To the south-east are the lakes, nearly one hundred in number, each from one to three miles across, and this region is so much like an archipelago that we do not know whether it pertains to the domain of land or water. To the west is a range of mountains, which from the parapets and towers of the city give a pleasing diversity to the eye. Beyond the

mountains is the Great Lake, an inland sea sixty miles across, and in it there are mountain islands, twenty miles in length, covered with groves of yangmei and pepo, where the grapes of Eshcol and honey sipped from the *olea fragrans* are found, and with the perfume of flowers in the spring they seem, as compared with the dull ricefields of the plain, like the enchanted isles.

Our city stands upon the great artificial highway of the Empire, the Grand Canal, which is from fifty to one hundred yards wide and is spanned by magnificent stone arches—one of these bridges, near Soochow, has fifty-three arches,—and when on this great stream the white sails of the junks and small craft are spread to the winds, and the trackers along the path are towing in the opposite direction, it is a beautiful sight. In regard to inland navigation, Soochow is at the hub, and from it great and wide canals diverge as spokes in every direction, each of these, as the Chinese boatmen say, "a centipede," from the innumerable streams diverging to the right and left, so there is not a city or town or village or hamlet which cannot be reached by boat in this "well-watered" plain, so inviting to the itinerant. Telegraph-poles, erected fifteen years ago, were the first mark of the approaching tread of western civilization. Last year to the north of the city was surveyed the new railway from Shanghai to Nanking, with a branch road running south, following the line of the Grand Canal to Hangchow, unless diverted to the west viâ Nantsin. It is reported that the head office of this eastern railway system is to be in Soochow.

The Grand Canal.

The Chinese have a proverb "Above is Heaven; below Soochow and Hangchow." Travellers tell us that throughout the eighteen provinces the Celestials speak of Soochow as the terrestrial Paradise. The Buddhists point their votaries to the Western Heaven; the Taoists to the isles of the Immortals in the east; but this practical people consider it quite enough happiness to reside for three score and ten years in "Beautiful Soo." The gardens where flowers bloom

Its Renown.

through three and a half seasons, the brightly varnished pleasure-boats, the large tea-shops, the fine chairs borne on the shoulders of coolies, the streets thronged with men robed in silks and furs—for here it is men, not the gentler sex, who patronize fashion's bazaar—is all that the Chinaman's heart desires.

The city was founded during the latter years of Confucius, "the throneless King," and though his foot never trod these streets, nor his eye beheld the mountain, lake and plain, yet he made Soochow his literary capital, the centre of his domain of letters, and so for twenty centuries to the four hundred millions it is what Athens was to the little peninsula on the Ægean. In this book-loving land it is "down hill in every direction" from Soochow. During the dark ages of Europe this city was as bright as England during Queen Anne's reign. Proud scholars have crowded the examination halls, authors have filled the shelves of the book stores, and poets have sung of the old landmarks so celebrated in history. Translations of these works do not do them full justice, for the thoughts of the Chinese mind appear best when clothed in their native language, and the freshness of the flowers of speech are gone when the ideas of the original are plucked and transferred into the western receptacle of thought. It is surprising, where aristocracy is not necessarily hereditary, and where it rests upon individual toil to climb the rugged heights of literature in order to obtain official preferment, how generation after generation are advanced to the highest position simply by personal effort. "Wealth and luxury do not seem to enfeeble the mental vigor of the high gentry, but the son takes the father's place simply because he is worthy of the place." A noble succession. Oftener than any other city has the honor of the first literary graduate of the Empire—one in three years—been accorded to a Soochow aspirant. The late minister to Germany, Mr. Hung Kuin (洪鈞), whose coffin was brought from Peking in state, allowed to enter the city, and given a princely burial, was the "Senior Wrangler"

Literary Centre.

in 1868. Another was Mr. Loh Fung Zah (陸鳳石), and the day when his wife rode as a queen through the streets in 1874, and the whole populace turned out to do her honor, is well impressed upon our memories, as it was the innocent cause of a riot at one of our chapels.

In the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 600-900) there were two celebrated poets in Soochow, Pah Hiang Shan (白香山), whose ancestral hall is at the Level Bridge, and Loh K'wei Mung (陸龜蒙), who went abroad as an official but returned to engage in literary pursuits.

In the Ming dynasty, Kou Ting Jen (顧鼎臣) became a minister to the Emperor Chen Teh (正德) and for three months as regent ruled "all under Heaven." His youth was legendary. The son of a concubine, he was cast by his father into a pig-sty and cared for by the four-footed animals. This marvellous protection marked him as a man of destiny, and soon his talents made him known.

T'ang Pah Hu (唐伯虎) lived on Peach Blossom Street and was a famous artist. His contemporary Chuh Chu Shan (祝芝山) was a celebrated penman. The pictures of the former and the manuscripts of the latter now command fabulous prices.

Hwang Ch'ong (況鍾), called Hwang Clear Heaven (況青天), was a Prefect of Soochow. His monumental gateway, "The People Can Never Forget Him," is at the official landing outside the West Gate.

Of the present dynasty, Kou Tan (顧荼) lived on North Street. His life is given in the City History. Yih T'ien Sze (葉天士) one hundred years ago was a celebrated physician and the author of several medical works. Ching Shen Tan (金聖嘆) lived near the Twin Pagodas. His commentaries on, and prefaces to, works of general literature are highly valued at this time. During his day the Literary Chancellor was selling degrees, so to attract attention to the matter he took the image

of the God of Riches and placed it in the district Confucian Temple (thus defiling the sacred shrine of letters) and brought Confucius' image to the idol temple. The Emperor decapitated the Chancellor and the perpetrator; and the coolie hong by assisting in the affair lost its charter.

A few years since, one of those who have recently acquired wealth, the late Kou Tsze Shan (顧子山), returned from the Taotai's Yamên at Ningpo, built a palatial residence (according to Chinese ideas) and adorned the city with a pleasure garden. It is reported that many of the Mandarins in Soochow leave the city in moderate circumstances, but after a few years, with the spoils of office, return from distant provinces as semi-millionaires. The Book says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap." We cannot expect the blessing of Heaven to rest upon the sons of those whose "inheritance has been gotten hastily" and whose official accounts have never been audited.

The present aristocracy of Kiangsu's capital, many of whom can prove a genealogical mandarinate of four or five centuries, is in itself an interesting field of inquiry, and to a wide-awake student who delights in the historic past, and with whom time is no special object, would richly reward enterprising research.

Soochow's Greatest Man.

The most illustrious name in the annals of "Beautiful Soo" is * Fan Wen Chen Kung (范文正公), who in the early part of the 11th century was the most renowned statesman of the Sung dynasty, an era remarkable in the classic history of this Ancient Empire for the high character of its officials and scholars. Born in Soochow A.D. 989, he became an LL.D. at the early age of twenty-seven, and upon his appointment as State Historiographer at Kaifung, the capital, numbers of students flocked to his academy to hear his lectures on the classics, and from his private funds he was ever

* *See* Article in July 1889 *Recorder* by Rev. A. P. PARKER, D.D., and also six valuable papers in Vol. XIV. on the History of Soochow by the same writer.

ready to assist poor young men in their efforts to obtain an education.

In 1032 there was a great drought in Southern Shantung and Northern Kiangsu. As no attention was paid to his first memorial, he sent a second to the Emperor in which he asked what he and the inmates of the palace would do if they were deprived of one-half day's rations? He was appointed to superintend the famine relief, and by remitting the taxes and opening the granaries he fed starving millions.

In 1038 he was sent to suppress a rebellion in the West. In the discipline of his army, the celerity of his movements and the vigor of his attacks, he exhibited the qualities of an able general, while his lenient treatment of the prisoners and the just government he established gained for him the goodwill of the tribes he conquered.

His outspoken opposition to injustice brought him frequently into collision with the Emperor, who would appoint him to a post in a distant province and then in a year or two recall him to the capital. The Prime Minister was as unscrupulous as he was powerful, and every one who desired to rise at court must gain his favor by bribery. Fan Wen undertook to expose these abuses by describing graphically to the Emperor what Mandarins were in office by right and what ones were there by favouritism and corruption. His reward was temporary banishment, but soon invited to return as Vice-President of the Privy Council, where he became the principal counselor to the Emperor. He worked night and day in the discharge of his duties, dismissed unworthy and inefficient men, examined carefully into the details of the government, and required all officials to render a strict account of their expenditures. The changes he attempted in the administration were too sweeping and aroused such bitter opposition as to require his temporary withdrawal from state affairs.

His literary works embrace some fifty volumes. He founded ancestral estates for the poor of the clan, drew up regulations for their management, and purchased the land for the Confucian temple at Soochow. His biographer says he was firm in his principles and mild in his manners. In the service of the king or dealing with his fellow men he always kept his word. He was honest in handling the public funds. Whether as a teacher meeting his classes, or as a Governor ruling a province, or as a General commanding an army, or as acting Prime Minister controlling an empire, he displayed both wisdom and genius. When he died at the age of sixty-three, the Emperor mourned his loss, the people felt that a prince had fallen, and even the barbarians on the frontier, whom he had brought under imperial sway, wept when they heard the tidings. In the ancestral temple in the centre of Soochow, by Imperial authority, the Prefect and District Magistrate offer sacrifices twice a year in honor of Fan Wen Chen Kung and his four sons.

The Wealth and Poverty.

Turning from Soochow's famous statesmen to its material progress, as might well be imagined, wealth has accumulated in this great emporium. The large wholesale houses, the pawnshops whose capital amounts to millions, the enormous value of real estate, the great trade which centres in the city, the variety of manufacturing interests, go to prove how vast is its wealth. Banks are numerous, and though the exterior of the building may be plain, the interior of the vaults displays the great deposits of silver. Through these banks money can be transmitted to any part of the eighteen provinces. The basis of the wealth is the fine white rice grown in this Prefecture, each square mile of which yields from twelve to fifteen thousand bushels annually. Next to this is the silk trade with its various ramifications. Then, besides the commercial interests, is the hoarded wealth of officialdom seeking secure investment. Also millionaires from other sections select Soochow as their place of residence. The land within a radius of

twenty miles is mostly owned by those who dwell within the walls. These are the "happy families" who receive their "rent rice" and enjoy the fruits of other men's labors.

This is a land of contrasts—along beside the money of the rich lies the penury of the poor. In the tenement houses from ten to thirty families are huddled together; some in two rooms, some in one room, and some whole families in one-half of a room. Tens of thousands live on the merest pittance, and some know not the pleasure of a hearty meal of food. With their board, the wages of bookkeepers is from $5 to $8 *per mensem;* of clerks, from $2 to $5; of menservants, $1 with perquisites; and of women, fifty or seventy-five cents with meat once in two months. At embroidery, women usually earn from three to eight cents a day, unless a skilled hand is selected to embroider a robe for the princesses. Between the upper and lower class is the large middle class of teachers and of well-to-do shopmen and mechanics, over one-half of the population, whose wardrobes are liberally furnished with cotton cloth by the piece, and who eat a full allowance of rice, vegetables, fish and pork. All these things contribute a share to their abounding good nature as they smoke the pipe of peace and live happily from one year to another in the Paris of the Middle Kingdom.

The Expectant Mandarin.

Besides those in office, the provincial capital is the home of the expectant Mandarin. Hard is the life of a Chinese official, for out of office he is not permitted to engage in trade, and must live off the earnings or squeezes of his former term of years. He cannot act as president of a company, or be placed in charge of important financial interests, or be the head of a law school or University. With the introduction of the civilization of the West, many of these may prove leaders in the lines of national progress and not find it necessary to such a fabulous extent "to lay by in store" during the term of official tenure. The Mandarins of this class are frequently sent as deputies to hold court in distant places or

to settle local disputes and disturbances. There are over 2,500 "official residences" in Soochow, which includes all grades of officials, both civil and military, each with from ten to thirty retainers, or in round numbers 40,000, who form an idle portion of the population, as they simply buy and eat and enjoy themselves, all hoping for a vacancy in some distant Yamên. Patience is a cardinal virtue, for it may be two years and it may be five that the official must keep up the appearance of wealth and station, though he may be in desperate straits and living on borrowed capital, till a vacancy occurs, when, by a handsome contribution of some thousands to his superiors, he is again "set up in business." This vast number of Mandarins having their headquarters here gives weight and dignity to the city, and on the reception days of H.E. the Governor, the front of the Yamên is crowded with the four-coolie chairs of those who come to bow and pass out without even the privilege of shaking hands.

Characteristics of the People.

The people of Soochow occupy an intermediate position between the taller hardy race of the north and the short swarthy Cantonese. The "South of the River" people are not remarkable for their height or physical strength, for rice is not the food that furnishes muscle. The young scholars as a class are more like girls than men, and to look for the Grecian athlete, Soochow is not the place.

A marked characteristic of the people is their love of amusement. Though there is much bustle in the marts of trade and unceasing toil among the labouring classes, there is, on the other hand, an unfailing provision for the relaxation of tired workers and the gratification of the younger members of society. The theatres are not provided with "reserved seats," and the spectators, a compact mass, stand open-mouthed, gazing to their hearts' content and enjoying the sight of the masked actors stalking out on the stage in embroidered robes, and with wild antics and voices pitched to an unnatural key, representing imaginary characters of ancient days. One or two streets have

several schools of harmony, and at weddings, funerals and the dedication of idols, choirs of boys and companies of musicians entrance their audiences with the celestial music of clashing cymbals, twanging guitars and shrill flutes. Story-tellers are pretty sure to get a good crowd around, while interesting episodes in Chinese history are recounted to their listeners. "Punch and Judy" is the favourite of the youngsters and also of their seniors in the open places along the streets.

The Women.

There is comparatively more freedom allowed the gentler sex in this city than in other places. Those of the middle class go about the streets a great deal and visit the stores, and also at times the pleasure gardens. But the chivalry of the west, which has taken its tone from Christianity in the high place of honor it accords to woman, is utterly unknown in this country, as is seen by the men staring at a lady, and sometimes by the boisterous fun at her expense, as "she has to run the gauntlet of jeers from a crowd of rough men, all the worse to bear on account of her seclusion from all outdoor life, and as her small feet handicap her pace, her rude reception is reduced to a slow torture." It is generally estimated that five per cent. of the women can read. Soochow is noted for its pretty ladies.

Another peculiar feature of the inland civilization of China, which boasts of its high church Confucianism, is seen in the fact that the gentlemen and ladies of aristocratic families will take an outing on the pleasure boats at the great festivals, and right beside them will be other boats whose occupants do not claim high respectability. Polygamy is common among the rich and noble. Suicide is a crime fearfully prevalent.

If the sky is clear and the sun past meridian—for this class do not agree with Benjamin Franklin "early to bed and early to rise"—the prominent object on the street is the Soochow dude, with his red bonnet, black satin jacket, blue silk robe, green

trowsers, embroidered slippers and loosely plaited queue; and his air of self-satisfaction is eminently pleasing to himself.

The number of wealthy and official families makes the feast a prominent feature of high life. The restaurants understand the art of preparing thoroughly cooked and highly seasoned dishes, and they present to the guests a variety that charms not only the celestial taste but is pleasing to the western palate; the only request the foreigner has to present is that he be allowed to take the dishes in sections during the next ten days.

Owing to the great wealth accumulated here, and to the numbers who are idle, we would naturally expect much voluptuousness and not a little looseness of morals among the gilded youth of China's Babylon, and in this respect we find the facts agree with the theory. Instead of running down the category of open sins we will single out one vice for which we think the Soochow wits are in a marked degree distinguished, and that is the ease with which they curse. Perhaps in the use of profane language they would, among all tribes and nationalities, be assigned the highest position. The most filthy, obscene, blasphemous language proceeds from their lips. They curse on the streets, in the tea-shops, and in their homes. Men curse and women curse, and the first words that infant lips pronounce are profane. Alas! for the last five-and-twenty years, foreigners have come in for their due share. In other places "foreign devil" is the style of address; here they have seven appellations which they have hurled at us seven times, as often with seven times the vehemence. Happily since the opening of the port this has improved. In other respects their conduct towards Europeans has been in the main blameless. No placards against them have ever been posted on the walls.

Profanity.

There is, however, a bright side to the picture. Courteous! The inhabitants of this city are the soul of politeness! The Mandarins during past years have done all in their power for the peace and security of the American citizens, their "foreign

guests." Talented! Trained for these ages in the schools, their intellects flash as bright as a Damascus blade in the sunlight! Witty! Fond of the drama and quick at repartee, with a language capable of indefinite punning, their conversation sparkles with humor, and only one who admires a joke knows how to get on with them. In the large mercantile houses, except where it is a stranger or the uninitiated, there is scrupulous integrity to the amount of 90 per cent. In their business relations there is a marked courtesy, so that Chinese from other places say: "It is easy to transact business in Soochow."

The Language.

Coming to the subject of the dialect, Mandarin is *the* language of China, as fourteen out of eighteen provinces speak it with its many variations. The exceptions are the four provinces on the coast South of the Yangtse. To the west of us is solid Mandarin. Also from Peking the Mandarin comes sweeping down to Chinkiang. At Changchow, sixty miles above here, it is a mixed dialect, but when we come to Soochow there is a complete change,—the hard speech of the north becomes as it were the soft language of the French capital. The voices of the people are gentle, their notes musical, and the remarkable sweetness of the dialect may be specially noticed when the women speak. Instead of the measured tread of the Mandarin, the mellifluous Soochow is spoken with great rapidity; instead of striking at the tone of each character, the speaker has to catch the rhythm of the sentence. The Mandarin has but few particles or little words; here they are thrown in by the handful as in Xenophon's Anabasis, but the skill is in using them properly. If so, it goes far in securing an understanding of what is said, and in palliating other defects in talking. The Soochow dialect with its branches is spoken by about ten millions.

In respect to the number of its schools—for there are about 10,000, as each teacher has a half-dozen or a dozen pupils, and there are no high schools or colleges under native management with a number of preceptors—Soochow stands in the foremost rank.

Some of the teachers make a comfortable support, but the rank and file, though highly appreciated, are poorly paid, or, as it is said, "They eat cold-plank bench rice." The school by its babel of sounds is heard long before it is seen; the pupil is taught that play is unscholarly and that he must talk and walk according to the rules of propriety; he studies for years in mental darkness, learning his task by memory; he says his lesson alone with his back to the teacher, and after he approaches man's height is taught to express his thoughts in this wonderful recondite literary style. A new era has recently dawned upon the youth, for the "rage for English" has taken the place of the "four books and five classics."

How the City Lies.

Soochow is built in the form of a rectangle, and is about four miles from north to south, by two and a half to three in breadth, the wall being thirteen or fourteen miles in length. There are six gates. The arches are large and substantial, and there is an outside wall enclosing a half acre, this also with its gate, so the entrance is doubly secure. The towers above may be seen at a distance, and remind one of Bible scenes in Palestine. The wall is over 30 feet high and faced with large brick 15 x 8 x 2 inches, and has its bastions for cannon and port-holes for musketry. The interior is of dirt, like a railway embankment, and about fifteen feet thick on top. The walk on this parapet, with the hills, lakes, fields and city all in sight, is a splendid one. Outside of each gate there is a suburb; the largest, three miles in length, a city itself of 100,000, lying north-west of the Chang Men. The next in size outside the West Gate has 30,000 people. Many hongs are located in these sections, and a busy trade is carried on. By its proximity to the concession, the Pan Men suburb sprung up almost in a night.

Within the gate we find ourselves in a Chinese street. What is a street? The European would answer: "A broad thoroughfare with rows of tall houses on either side, and rows of trees,—the side-walks for men, and the road for horses." How differently a native lexicographer would define the word.

Wu Tsze Sü laid out the city with streets eight feet wide, but shopmen put their counters and railing forward, so on the main streets the space is narrowed to five or six feet. In the mornings the markets are along the streets, so that near the bridges rows of fish-tubs and vegetable baskets line the crowded alleys. Along these narrow defiles pass riders on horses, Mandarins in chairs with their official retinues, funeral processions a quarter of a mile long, workmen carrying the framework of a building, chair-bearers, burden-bearers, loads of straw, men with bundles and women with baskets, the aged tottering on a staff, and the blind feeling their way with a cane, the water-carrier with quick step, and the scholar with the snail's pace,—you wonder how you can thread your way through this tangled thicket of pedestrians. The streets are paved with small stones, raised in the centre, and in the rainy season are very slippery. A few are laid with flag-stones, as the Yang Yoh Hong,—this pavement being put down by a widow as a monument to her husband. The drains are eight or ten inches deep and are often filled with the mud swept from the shop doors. Piles of rubbish accumulate at the corners, but in the depth of winter they are comparatively free from unpleasant odors. As a stranger at the port remarked: "Oh! you live in Soochow. I have heard it is a fine city. It must be a nice place to live in." Visitors pronounce this a very clean *Chinese* city.

The Streets.

The magnificent churches, the stately edifices, the superb mansions with brown stone fronts, are all wanting in a native town, and in their stead we see row after row of shanty-like buildings. The houses are usually painted black, and are built upon stones driven down into the earth by huge wooden pestles, and upon these are laid large pieces of granite. Upon the side streets the stone-work reaches several feet above the ground. In building the better class of houses—and there are some which cost $100,000—large sums are expended on driving down piles before the granite slabs are laid upon them, yet on the street the

mansions of the rich appear as humble as the homes of the shopkeeper. The houses consist of a series of rows of buildings with courts between for the sunshine and the rain. In front are small rooms for the entrance and porter's lodge, within is the reception hall, the front side consisting of long windows, and a very pretty system of king and queen posts has been contrived by which the weight of several beams is transmitted to the central pillars which sustain the heavy roof. In the rear are the sleeping apartments, mostly upstairs, as the ground floor is paved with tiles. The shops have the entire front open, the sign-boards hanging perpendicularly, and, as many of these are gilded, it gives the street an appearance highly ornamental. The street in front of the City Temple, with its fine display of embroidery, fans, rugs, ivory, silver-ware and foreign goods, is the handsomest in the city.

Houses.

The quiet, peaceable dispositions of the people may be known by the fact that there are no police on the streets, whereas Chicago, which is one-third larger than Soochow, pays annually a million and a half dollars to her municipal force. Each of the five wards has a police-office, where a "Justice of the Peace" administers corporal punishment for minor offences—principally to the constables, the protectors of the peace, for allowing thefts in their precincts. A new-comer who did not like the behaviour of the throng in the afternoon at the City Temple asked, "What resource has a man in a crowd like this?" and was answered, "To get out of it."

There are no ancient ruins in the city. The local history tells us of many famous buildings which were the pride of the people in the centuries gone by, yet their walls were not built of hewn stone, as in Athens and Rome, so as to withstand the ravages of ages, but only of crumbling brick and of wood fancifully carved, which after a conflagration had swept away a block, or a destructive rebellion had drawn its ploughshare through the streets, preserve nothing

No Ancient Ruins.

to tell the tale of their former glory, save the decapitated and mutilated stone lions.

It has been said that there are more boats in China than in all the rest of the world put together, and truly Soochow claims her share of boats, long and short, large and small, broad and narrow, and here every facility is enjoyed for plying these crafts, which sit on the water like ducks. Around the city wall, within and without, there is a moat. The one outside is from fifty to a hundred yards wide and very deep, and in the recapture of the city from the T'aipings it formed a serious obstacle to storming the walls. Within the city there are, generally speaking, six canals from north to south, and six canals from east to west, intersecting one another at from a quarter to half a mile, or, all told, about thirty miles of canals within the city. There are a hundred and fifty or two hundred bridges at intervals of two or three hundred yards, some of these with arches, others with stone slabs thrown across, many of which are twenty feet in length. The canals are from ten to fifteen feet wide and faced with stone. In them are moored hundreds of quick pleasure boats, which, with their bright varnish, clear glass and fine carving, furnish little floating Pullmans to those who wish to go to the hills or the lakes. There are for hire thousands of uncovered boats which transport grain, goods, fuel, building materials, furniture, water, etc. from one end of the city to the other. Goods may be brought from one hundred miles and delivered at the door. Also the canals are a great convenience for laundry and culinary purposes, and favourite channels for Asiatic cholera. When the waters are high and fresh, boating is a pleasant mode of travelling for a family, but when the water turns green and then black, and melon rinds and garbage float on the surface, and the boats get jammed for a couple of hours amidst odors, not from "Araby the blest," the poor shut-in prisoner wishes he were ten thousand miles away from the Oriental Venice.

The Venice of the Orient.

Near the concession are several lakes whose peaceful waters will afford fine opportunities for the Rowing Club.

The seven Pagodas in and around the city are the ornaments of Soochow. The Methuselah is the South Gate Pagoda, built A.D. 248, aged 1,650 years, nearly twice as old as the Antediluvian. We were once asked "How we knew this?" The reply was that "Fan Fen Chen Kung, the historian, who lived 900 years ago, said so, and it is supposable that he had access to trustworthy documents that gave this date." The Tiger Hill Pagoda stands second in rank among the Patriarchs; built A.D. 600 it is aged 1,300 years, or nearly one and one-half the age of Jared. The Twin Pagodas, Seth and Enos, were erected about A.D. 1000, and are 900 years old. The Great Pagoda, built A.D. 1160, has worn its crown for seven centuries. The Ink Pagoda is quite in its youth—it is only 300 years of age.

The Pagodas.

The venerable monument of antiquity at the South Gate, which bears upon its lofty head the weight of sixteen and one-half centuries, was much injured by the T'aipings. Twenty years ago Governor Wu headed a subscription with Tls. 10,000 for repairing the Pagoda. After about Tls. 50,000 had been expended, and its spiral crown blown down by a typhoon, the work was abandoned. The erection of the scaffolding is said to have cost $10,000.

The Tiger Hill Pagoda is built near the grave of Hoh Lü, our first Soochow king. According to history, 600,000 men were employed to prepare his grave and attend the funeral. This Pagoda is the "leaning tower" of Soochow. It is much out of the perpendicular, and seems to have been so from time immemorial. From this knoll, which takes its name from the story that three days after Hoh Lü's death a white tiger was seen crouching near the grave, a fine view of the city is obtained, stretching as it does, including the suburbs, seven miles to the southeast. There is a pool on the hill, fifty feet long by twenty wide, called the "Sword Pool," where it is said Shi Hwangti whetted

his sword when he attempted to slay the tiger and rob the grave of Hoh Lü. The flat rock beside the pool is called the "Thousand Men Rock," as it is supposed that number can stand on it at one time. Near by it is the "Nodding Rock." "It is related in the history that on one occasion, when a noted Buddhist missionary was expounding the law to the people, so eloquently did he preach that a stone in front of the temple nodded to the priest in recognition of the power of his oratory."

The Twin Pagodas, standing near the Examination Hall, and exerting a fine influence upon the aspiring genius of the candidates for literary honors, are models of architectural beauty, and seem, as a *pair*, to be unique among China's towers. The tradition is that some centuries ago it was found that the *fung-shuy* was not good. A professor, skilled in determining the influences of the wind and water, was called in. "Why," said he, "do you not see these Pagodas are like pencils (pens); of what use is a pen without ink?" and so the Ink Pagoda was built,—a large black tower about twenty-five feet square and 120 feet high.

The Great Pagoda.

The glory of the capital is the Great Pagoda, the highest in China, and so the highest on *terra firma*. Stand near it and behold one of the great wonders of the world! Count the stories, note the verandahs, see the doors, as so many pigeon-holes, and men as pigmies on those giddy heights! Consider the foundation, and what a quarry of hewn stone supports that mighty pile of masonry, which, including its spiral crown, rises to nearly 250 feet in height. Walk around the base, which, with the shed room on the ground floor, is one hundred feet in diameter or one hundred yards around. Note the images in *basso relievo* among the clouds, carved on the stones, seated upon the roof, hiding in the niches, and sitting majestic upon the shrines; Buddhist gods inside and Brahman divinities without—two hundred in number,—it is a high temple of heathenism. The name of the Sir

Christopher Wren who planned this tower has not come down to us, but we can admire the skill of the master hand which drew the lines. The walls are octagonal, one wall within and one without, or a pagoda within a pagoda, each wall ten feet thick, the steps rising between them by easy gradations with a walk around before the next flight is reached, the floors being paved with brick two feet square. There are eight doors to each of the nine stories, and, with the cross passages, the halls are full of light. And what wonderful proportions—sixty feet in diameter at the base, it tapers to forty-five feet on the upper floor; each story slightly lower as you ascend, each door smaller, each verandah narrower. Walk around these porches; see the city lying at your feet; the Dragon Street running south to the Confucian Temple; the busy north-west gate; the pile of buildings constituting the City Temple; the Great Lake to the west; the range of hills and the picturesque pagodas that crown the jutting eminences; the plain dotted every fourth mile with hamlets. See the pagoda to the south,—it marks the city of Wukiang. Follow the Shanghai canal glistening in the sunlight to the east till your eye rests on a hill,—that is Quensan. At the foot of that mountain, thirty miles to the north-east, is Changsoh, a city of 100,000 inhabitants. Look north-west up the Grand Canal, thirty miles—that is Mount Wei'tsien. There is Wusih, with a population of 150,000, and within this radius of thirty miles are one hundred market towns of from one thousand to fifty thousand inhabitants and probably 100,000 villages and hamlets—five millions within the range of vision!

The City Temple.

The centre of pagan worship in the Kiangsu province is the Uön Miao Kwan or City Temple, which is under the control of the Taoists. The first building was erected about A.D. 300, so heathen ceremonies have been conducted on this spot for sixteen centuries. There are two main temples with thirteen other temples on the right, left and in the rear, a city of the gods, where five or six hundred are

assembled to be worshipped. Among the larger groups are the sixty cycle gods, with cocks, squirrels, rats and snakes (Minerva like) rising from their craniums, "images of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things;" the seventy-two doctors or teachers, the fifty-six star deities and the thirty-six ministers of Heaven, these "sedate, hideous imbecilities which do duty as Chinese idols." From all parts of the country deputations come to engage in peace and thanksgiving services; besides, here is the gate of Tartarus, where the affairs of the dead can best be transacted. The Soochowites often speak of Heaven as "just like the City Temple." The late Banker Hu, of Hangchow, gave $40,000 or $50,000 for its repair, but he went into bankruptcy before the work was completed. The temple to the "Three Pure Ones" has large pillars to support the massive roof, and the three gods, seated upon pedestals fifteen feet high, to add dignity to their appearance, were several years in construction. The bronze censer in the court is over twenty feet in height. The temple in the rear, three stories high, with its roof ornamented with green glazed tiles and twisting dragons, a tangled mass of Asiatic glory, has been pronounced the finest temple in mid-China. The central figure on the lower floor is the Pearly Empress, the Ruler of Earth and the wife of the King of Heaven, who, with her four female servants, is almost veiled from sight, for a mythology which includes "Juno," is rather too prosaic for the Confucianist. On the upper floor, where sits the ruler of gods and men, the gilded throne, the handsome shrines, the ornate decorations, and the rows of gods, are such as to impress the heathen imagination with ideas of the majestic.

The temple grounds are the central attraction for pleasure-seekers. There are mat sheds for the hundreds who drink tea, toy shops and stands for the sale of porcelain, confectionery and trinkets of various kinds. Beggars frequent these sacred precincts, so do thieves and pickpockets and all the riff-raff of the city, as well as the "lewd fellows of the baser sort",—in actual

fact it is "a den of thieves." There are peep-shows and puppet shows, bear shows and rope dancers, jugglers and sleight-of-hand performers,—truly a "Vanity Fair."

Art Gallery.

Around the large building in front is the famous picture gallery of the city, with pictures of gods and goddesses, mountains and trees, gardens and flowers, ladies and children, tigers and birds, some in gilt and all in bright colors,—"fine specimens," a fair young amateur pronounced them, "of decorative art." Height usually represents distance in a Chinese painting; that is to say, distant objects are put at the top of the picture and nearer objects below them, while but little difference is made in the size. Great attention is paid to painting the Mandarins' robes. With a Chinese artist, "the presentation of a living, feeling soul revealed in its index, the face, sinks into utter insignificance in comparison with the external advantages of rank and fortune." The pictures which seem to please the Chinese most are impossible mountains, chaotic masses of rock, and trees denuded of their foliage,—all dashed off with India ink. With the birds they are quite successful. They study carefully the attitudes and the passions of which attitudes are the signs, and thus represent the feathery tribe. With flowers they seem instinctively to know how to apply the colors, at once so delicate and so brilliant.

The Cheu Wang Miao (Jade Stone Temple) is near the north-west gate. Here are sold in the forenoon cat's-eyes and jade ornaments. With its noise and bustle and scores of importunate salesmen, the visitor finds it a regular pandemonium. The temple, where the punishments of the lower world are to be seen, is not far from the South Gate. There are, all told, from two hundred to three hundred temples and from fifty to one hundred nunneries in the city. The Taoist priests number about 2,000 and the Buddhist priests about 5,000. These religions are numerically well represented within the city walls.

Near the South Gate is the Wu Liang Dien, or Beamless

Temple, so called because it is arched above and below, and has no woodwork. The walls are ten feet thick and made of very large and highly polished brick, and architects have pronounced the lines very fine. The central dome is quite handsome. The building has a foreign appearance and was designed as the fire-proof archives for the sacred books of Buddhism. All the cornices and ornamental work are of the most beautiful description, and as it is different from any Chinese building, it is probable the model was brought from the land of the "Heavenly Bamboo." As near as has been ascertained, it is about 800 years old; some of the neighbors say it was built by the celebrated artisan gods, Lu Pan and Chang Pan, and some of the priests think it might have been erected during the fabulous reign of the Five Emperors.

Beamless Temple.

In the southern part of Soochow is the park, surrounded by a high wall, which contains the group of buildings called the Confucian Temple. This is the dragon's head;—the Dragon Street, running directly north is his body, and the great pagoda is his tail. In front is a grove of cedars ornamented with monumental slabs, each several tons in weight and sitting upon the backs of tortoises. To the west is a second avenue with buildings on either side which runs directly to the hall where the rehearsals are held on the days previous to the sacrifice.

The first large building opposite the gateway contains astronomical diagrams and mural tablets, placed there centuries ago, and in the long halls on either side of the courtyard are the tablets of the great men of the nation whose names are worthy to be enrolled in the Chinese Academy. In the temple in the rear five generations of Confucius' forefathers, who are honored with the title of "kings," are worshipped sacrificially.

Confucian Temple.

The "Temple of Literature," 100 x 70 feet, with its massive double roof, is in appearance the most venerable building in Kiangsu. In front is a stone *dais* of about the same size

as the temple, surrounded by a marble balustrade, and, at the spring and autumn sacrifices, over this is erected a large tent with a curving zinc roof. The Confucian Ritual gives a most minute account of how the services should be conducted. Every tap of bell or drum, or note of steel or string instrument, is prescribed most accurately, and any deviation would destroy the harmony which is an essential element in their "divine worship."

The Sacrifice.

Upon the large frames under the tent hang bells and triangular steel instruments, and upon the tables lie the zithers. Long red candles burn in front of the shrines, and at the tap of the great drum, bonfires are kindled on the tripods, so that at dawn the grounds are lit up with the brilliancy of noonday. In front of the sage's royal tablet kneels a bull with his throat cut, his shaggy hair all besmeared with the mud which he brought from the fields, and close beside him crouch a sheep and a pig. Twenty-one pairs of sheep and pigs lie before the tablets of the sages.

At the appointed time, the Governor, who is called "The Sacrificial Lord," or "True Worshipper," with the high provincial magnates all in court dress, which consists of a red tasselled cover for the hat, a shoulder cape of gold thread, and a heavily embroidered skirt, takes his stand under the tent in front, and at the successive calls of the "Chief Praise Leader," five times enters the sacred temple. At the call "Worship," he kneels; "Prostrate the head," he bows; "Mount the incense," he raises his hands; "Return to your place," he follows the leader back to the tent. As he kneels before the shrine, sticks of lighted incense, fruits and viands, libations of wine in the sacrificial cups, and rolls of white silk with the government stamp, are passed by one attendant to the other. The whole service is intoned; the Musical Professor by a word directing his attendants in every sound of the instruments and tap of the bells, which are arranged in perfect order. The music is soft and sweet, and as the devout chant of the prayers is mingled with the gentle notes of the guitar, the effect is very solemn.

At the opening of the ceremonies, the presence of the divine spirit of the sage is invoked: "O Confucius, how great art thou, first in prescience, first in knowledge, the peer of Heaven and earth, the teacher of ten thousand generations, the appearance of the unicorn foretold thy good fortune; with the harmony of music [we invite thee], the sun and moon so bright, and Heaven and earth clear and still." Afterwards the "Sacrificial Lord" takes his position in the centre of the hall, and the "prayer of blessing" is read, and at each return from the temple to the tents the civil and military officials make nine or twelve devout prostrations, adoring the Literary Prince of ages past and millenniums to come, by whose kind aid they have risen to posts both honorable and lucrative. At the close of the high service, the divine spirit is requested to return to its invisible and unknown resting-place.

In Soochow there are ten principal Yamêns, all except two in the south-western corner of the city. The Governor, the Provincial Treasurer, the Criminal Judge and the Superintendent of the Silk Looms reside here. They manage the affairs of 21,000,000. Besides these, the Prefect, the three County Governors, the Generals and the Chief of Police, have their respective Yamêns. If we consider the rank of the high officials and the lucrative positions they hold, their present Yamêns are better suited to the age of Arcadian simplicity than to the progressive spirit of the nineteenth century. The first step towards a high civilization must be the erection of public buildings that befit the station and honors of the great men of the capital. The courts, however, of H.E. the Governor's mansion are large, and the audience hall is spacious and imposing.

Public Buildings.

The Palace is a building of note in the central part of the city. Within it is a cage of unclean birds, but if external appearances are all right, the contented celestial asks no questions. It is a one-story hall, in a court of three or four acres, kept in fine repair; the walls are yellow, and a great amount of decoration has been expended on the massive roof, which is the chief feature of

Chinese architecture. In front, the Mandarins kneel to receive an Imperial messenger, and on New Year's morning they repair to this place to present their compliments to His Majesty the Emperor.

The Examination Hall near the Twin Pagodas is about 250 yards long. The benches and tables are hard and narrow, and the Literary Chancellor can, from the rostrum, see the face of each competitor. Success in the Civil Service Examinations gains admission into the charmed circle of educated men, secures an elevation above the common people, makes the graduate conspicuous in his native place, and is a protection from corporal punishment. The applicants come by three or four, or half-a-dozen, from the country, bring a teacher who acts as security, and a servant as cook; they rent a room in an adjoining house and remain for a month. They seem quite clannish, and have little intercourse with those from other cities and towns. On the examination days they rise at 4 a.m.—not infrequently in the snow and rain—and sit all day in the hall writing their theses. As the successful candidates are limited in number, the larger part of the undergraduates return year after year to try their fortunes.

There are four camps in Soochow, each supposed to contain 500 soldiers, for whom pay and rations are drawn. One is outside the north-west gate, another near the Governor's residence, while a third is beautifully situated opposite the new Custom House. The most important one is on an open plateau in the central part of the city, formerly the palace grounds of the Kings of Wu. The soldiers are nominally trained according to western tactics, but under very inferior drill-masters, and their uniforms, loose and flowing, are of variegated colors, in which red predominates. Near the camp there is a monumental temple, with hundreds of funereal tablets for distinguished widows. The government printing office is one-half mile south of this, and the wooden stereotype plates are there stacked by the thousands.

Attached to each of the three District Magistrates' and the Prefect's Yamêns is a gaol. The principal one is that of the

Criminal Judge, and is called the "earthly hell." From this place, the pirates, robbers and murderers that are collected from the sixty-four counties—one or two hundred a year—are taken to the execution ground near the pagoda and decapitated.

Execution. As the criminals are borne rapidly along the streets the people from all parts of the city, both men and women, come in throngs to behold the spectacle, and as the head falls under one stroke of the executioner's sword, and the blood spouts, there is a general rush among the bystanders to redden a *cash* as a charm against evil spirits, or to dip bread into the flowing stream and eat it—a species of cannibalism—that the valor and prowess of the brave dead may be imparted to the living. The frequent witnessing of these executions is one of the potent causes for the wickedness of the Soochow people.

The Gardens. By way of contrast we will turn to happier themes. There are three noted gardens in Soochow, some of them being said to cost $ 200,000, not to mention higher estimates. The entrance fees to these pleasure resorts is five and seven cents. Besides, there is also the "Lion Forest," the largest rockery in Central China, but for want of custom it is not kept in repair. The Chinese deserve credit for their ability to provide a wonderful diversity of design within a *limited* space. Give a European a couple of acres and he has a grass lawn, a few select trees, beautiful beds of flowers with the grouping of colors and blending of shades, an arbor, and a conservatory. Let a Mongolian landscape gardener have the same space and he will furnish an Oriental Paradise. There is the lake with its winding bridges and the flower-beds on the water, for the still surface of the pond is embellished with the beauteous chalice-like flowers of the lotus, the emblem of Buddha's heaven, while under the large green leaves the gold-fish play hide and seek. The rockeries, made of lime rock cemented with lime and iron filings, with their labyrinthian caves and winding stairways, and surmounted with tall cavernous stones and petrified wood, in color

like the fawn, standing as sentinels, are as surprising in their design as they are unique in their execution, and the pavilions, which cap their summits, give to the visitor a charming resting-place. The halls and tea-houses, with chairs and tables made to suit the special apartments, face courts and hills and trees and lakes. The roads or covered galleries are all meandering, the object being to mystify the visitor, and the ornamental designs in the open-work walls are all of different patterns, while variety is also given by the octagonal, circular and pear-shaped doorways. "The literary tastes of the guests are met by the quotations from the classics hung up by the hundreds under the roofs of the sheltered walls," while students of the antique find delight in the old bronzes and stone inscriptions, and others may look at the peafowl, storks and deer in the cages and stalls. At every turn there are placed mirrors to reflect the changing scenery of the grounds, while views of the bamboo groves and flowering trees, and roses of varied hue climbing the walls, feast the eye.

One of these gardens, the *Liu Yuen*, is the property of the great railway magnate, Sheng Taotai. He has given Tls. 50,000 to run the "horse road" from the Chang Men to this already famous resort, and as the railway station will be in close proximity, it will command a patronage from far and near.

The Hills.

It is quite natural to pass from the gardens within the city to the hills without. What mountain is that standing out alone on the plain, asks the traveller. It is the Lion Mountain, and if viewed from the north bears a striking resemblance to the king of beasts crouching on the ground. At its base, a lone missionary, the Rev. D. N. Lyon, resides and preaches in the country around.

The Fan Wen Hill, the tomb of Soochow's great statesman and historian, is the prettiest picnic excursion from the city. A "quick boat" to the end of the canal, a walk or ride up the hill in a chair; through a tunnel and down again to a shady grove; then a climb up the precipitous mountain with the pretty temple

nestling on its side ; through the narrow passes between the overhanging boulders on to the flat rock, from which a fine view of the Great Lake is obtained, and then up to the summit.

The Witch's Hill, crowned with a pagoda, beside the Stone Lake to the south-west of the city, is another fine outing. The fish-ponds below mirror in the sunlight the willows which stand upon their banks. Here reside the "Five Holy Ones," or the gods the witches worship. And fearful gods they are! If a bride, with a pretty face, sickens and dies, the country people say, "The Five Holy Ones have taken her for their wife."

The history of Soochow puts the height of the Mohdoh Hill, where King Hoh Lü had his summer palace, at 3,600 feet, by measuring up the curving road. The pagoda has eight stories, is 150 feet high and 900 years old. There is not a rock or boulder or cave or eminence on its summit that is not historic, for the kings of many dynasties have visited this famous headland. The Arrow Creek, running direct to the Great Lake, was opened by Hoh Lü.

Mount Seven Sons, about 800 feet high, is another sacred hill, whither the pilgrims resort under the burning August suns. Just beyond is Mount Yao Fung, where the Emperor Shunche, the first of this dynasty, who ascended the throne 1644, spent the last ten years of his life in a monastery. Thus the conquering Tartar was led captive by the Buddhist monks.

Mount Kyiöng Lung, fourteen miles from Soochow, once had temples containing 5,040 rooms, and is yet a wealthy place under the Taoist directorship. The grove is a fine one and the view superb. Its height is 1,100 feet. The rich from the city and the poor from the country make semi-annual pilgrimages to this holy mountain. There is a tradition that, B.C. 2700, a rain priest resided here and sought for the elixir of immortality. The sides of all these hills are covered with the sacred resting-places of bygone generations. These are visited twice a year, and even the sombre worship at the graves, after the prescribed rites have been

accomplished, is transformed into pleasant picnics and happy family reunions.

Kwangfoh, a town beyond Mohdoh, is the prettiest place on this plain. Near it on the shores of the lake is Uön Mo Shan, a celebrated monastery. Around these hills winds the Imperial Highway, twelve feet wide, paved with brick and faced with stone, now in fine order, which was built by the Emperor Kien Lung, who "sent his messengers before his face to prepare the way" when he visited Soochow a hundred years ago.

Benevolent Institutions.

Returning from the hills we may visit the benevolent institutions, which, though only a small percentage of those in Protestant countries, yet constitute a distinct feature of Chinese civilization. Besides those which provide coffins for the dead there are five classes which care for the living: 1. Foundling asylums, one of which has 400 children let out to poor families, who are paid for their maintenance, and the orphans are generally kindly treated. 2. There are two homes for old women. 3. The old men's home, covering several acres, near the Tiger Pagoda. The veterans are supplied with one meal a day, and those who are able, go out and ask for alms. 4. The general distribution of clothing and food to the poor in the winter by wealthy families and benevolent societies. 5. Quite a number of free schools. One of these, on the Yang Yoh Hong, has six grades, and is a well-conducted native school. There are also reformatory institutions, as the "Prodigal Asylum," near the camp, for dissolute and rebellious sons, and the "Purifying Heart Institute" for those who desire a quiet retreat in which to "amend their ways."

When we come to the trade of Soochow, the principal article is silk. In the silk houses are found about one hundred varieties of satin and two hundred kinds of silks and gauzes, and as they are unrolled for the inspection of purchasers the sight is a splendid one. Some of these hongs carry a capital of several hundred thousand dollars. Here merchants come to supply

the markets of the great cities throughout the provinces. When a silk robe was considered too great a luxury for a Roman Emperor, the Soochow scholar wore his gown of this material. In plain Anglo-Saxon, there have been more fine clothes worn in this city than in any other place in the world. The weavers are divided into two guilds, the Nanking and the Soochow, and have together about 7,000 looms. One office owns fifty or a hundred looms and supplies thread to the weavers. As reeling the thread and preparing it for weaving takes many hands, there are probably a dozen or more men, women and girls employed to each loom, so these guilds feed several tens of thousands. The looms are in little houses of one story, and are worked by the feet treading on rickety bamboo rods; each loom has a hole in the ground, and underneath the chickens and the children play, but, *mirabile dictu*, from the very midst of all this dirt are turned out silks and satins with the most delicate colors of all descriptions. Great skill is displayed in weaving the figures. An artist lays off the warp and arranges certain perpendicular threads at which a little boy perched above pulls, while the weaver's shuttle flies to and fro, and here is finished a magnificent pattern of brocaded satin.

Silk.

In and around the city embroidery employs 100,000 women, Mandarins' robes, ladies' dresses, and stage actors' apparel are all embroidered. The Superintendent of the Silk Looms twice a year sends on 1,000 trunks of embroidered clothing for the use of the Emperor's household. In this yamen 1,000 men, it is said, sublet the jobs to the women. The embroidery in gold or flowers is simply exquisite, and they will execute any design that is given them. This business makes the trade in silk thread a very extensive one, and as the shopkeeper unrolls a package he displays two dozen shades of one color. The women come to the shops to purchase one cent's worth of floss. At the first of the year, when the country women buy on credit, a popular shop may do a business of $1,500 in two weeks.

The pawnshops have a capital of many millions; the clothing stores obtain their stock of goods from these. The Westerner must dismiss from his mind all preconceived ideas of the pawnshop, for in a country where there must be an annual and accurate settlement of accounts, goods have to be hypothecated for silver. These great hongs encourage the pernicious habit of temporarily disposing of valuables to realize ready money. The pawnshop is a safe repository for the gentlemen's and ladies' furs in summer, where they will be well taken care of and preserved from the destructive moth.

Pawnshops.

Several streets are devoted to furniture. The wood is highly polished, and substantial tables and chairs, sofas and wardrobes, are on hand. The handsomely carved sets of furniture, inlaid with marble, where the princely bedstead includes bureau and sets of drawers, would do credit to any mansion. There is much fancy work done in the fine kinds of wood. Carving seems to be an art just designed for the patient persevering toil of a Chinaman, for no labor is too great to bestow on the most minute undertaking, and in a country where time enters so little into the essence of life, days and months are lavishly spent on what would be thought elsewhere to be unremunerative toil.

The north-west corner of the city is almost entirely given up to the manufacture of ornaments from jade, the emblem of virtue: hair-pins, six or eight inches in length, for ladies; large thumb-rings, an inch broad, for gentlemen; bracelets for girls, and pen-cups for the scholars, besides a great variety of trinkets.

On the central street, running from north to south, shops for antique wares and old curios are numerous. Bronze vases and other vessels, used in the most primitive of cults, which still have full sway over the Chinese mind, are for sale at every turn. The native drug-stores are extensive establishments. The book business is immense. There are large stores for the sale of moral and religious books

Hongs and Manufactures.

only. Orders frequently come to Soochow for books of rare value. As in every part of China where such a large number are annually carried to their last resting-place, the coffin trade is prominent. Imported wood is on the hills cut the length of a dead man. Silversmiths have a prosperous business where the gentle sex is so fond of bracelets and head ornaments. "Your trade is a very extensive one," I said to one of this calling. "But it is a very sinful one," he replied. "Wherein consists the sin?" I inquired. "We adulterate with brass."

The traveller is struck with the number of eating-shops. The fruit stands so temptingly arranged, are loaded ten months in the year. Fish in endless variety—provided by a kind Providence for the hungry millions—are found in the market. In the meat shops are pork and mutton, tame fowls and "wild chickens" (pheasants), ducks and geese. The bakeries and travelling kitchens furnish bread and cakes, bean-curd and soups; and the restaurants, all the savoury dishes that please the Chinese connoisseur.

There are workers in iron, brass, pewter and the various other metals. Lime-kilns are found in the suburbs. The fur trade in winter, and the fan trade in summer, in this land where the lords of creation take the fan for the walking-cane (something to hold in the hand), and so gracefully use these feminine appendages with literary inscriptions or scenery in gilt on their faces, are both prominent in the marts. There are large establishments for the sale of pottery which is made west of the Great Lake, whence comes also the famous "Soochow bath tub." The city, up to the last few months, has had no large manufacturies, with the smoke curling from the tall chimneys, but here in thousands of shops are made hats, shoes, drums, musical instruments, idols, paper goods for exportation to Hades, and the infinite variety of articles manufactured by the 360 trades into which the artisan class in this venerable country is divided.

As the newly established Imperial Customs will report

quarterly on the market for foreign imports, no mention will be made of this trade in these pages, except to emphasize its rapid increase during the last decade.

Population.

What is the population of Soochow? is a question constantly asked. Only an approximate answer can be given. The Pao K'ia Joh, or Tithing Office, which has charge of the police, taxes, public works, etc., does not take the census so much with a view of obtaining the number of inhabitants, as of accounting for every man in the city. There are five wards within the city, and the two suburbs to the west constitute a sixth. A register is posted on each door and a duplicate kept in their book. The census is taken by families and not by individuals, so if there are two doors, the family counts as two, but the tenement houses, where there are from fifteen to thirty families, often have only one register, so it is likely the numbers are much greater than represented. There are over 90,000 families, and as a family in China consists of "Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives," and all the children and grandchildren (and the Soochow quivers are full), seven is not a high multiple, giving 630,000. But the 2,500 "official residences," with the Mandarin's family, servants and retainers, are not counted, and these contain about 40,000 people. Neither are the large boating population and the large *floating* population included,—probably 30,000 more. The whole population may be safely estimated at 700,000. Whether the opening of the port and the introduction of factories will add a further 300,000 remains to be seen.

A Bird's-eye View.

The fame of Soochow attracts many travellers. On leaving the Customs House the visitor can enter the Foo Men (south-east gate) and go first to the Ink Pagoda, and if the porter is at home, for a few *cash* the gate opens. Next, to the Twin Pagodas. Perhaps he may be able to get into the Examination Hall adjoining. Thence to the Palace, the entrance being on the west, and to the Temple of the Sun,

It is well to visit the City Temple early in the morning to avoid the crowd. This is one of the principal objects of interest in the city. The street in front is perhaps the prettiest in mid-China. It is most convenient next to visit the Manchu Garden, and go from there to the Pagoda. The Great Street runs to the north-west gate, and here are the silk hongs and other large stores. Jade ornaments are found on the bridge outside the gate, and at the Jade-stone Temple. Fine furniture is on the Fan Ch'ong Tsien. This is well worth seeing. Old embroidery and bronze is on the Dragon Street. Here, too, is a fine garden. The tourist will go next to the Beamless Temple. The steps will be found in the east wall, and, though dark, one may ascend without fear. The only available entrance to the Confucian Temple is towards the western side, and through the kitchen, where a small fee may be left. The visitor must not fail to go to the Tiger Pagoda, and to the handsome garden (Liu Yuen) near by.

No paper on Soochow would be complete without a reference to opium. Sixty years ago there were four or five opium-smokers in this city; now, probably, there are 60,000. The opium war was begun in Canton, but it is not a tithe as iniquitous as the opium peace continued in Soochow. The resident here is an eye-witness to the poverty entailed, the suffering accruing, the beggary produced, the bodies emaciated, the lives destroyed, the families ruined, the sons turned prodigal, the fathers becoming wretches, the husbands ingrates, the millions expended. The Chinese consider opium smoking as the ancestor of vices. They speak of its introduction as a crime of the first degree, and denounce all foreigners as the perpetrators of this iniquity. They say with bitterness: "You bring this evil upon the people and now hypocritically exhort us to virtue." When not one in twenty of the British residents in Far Cathay is interested financially in opium, and while outside of India the British nation receives not the most remote advantage from the trade, it is amazing that England, the bulwark of Protestantism

Opium.

and the acknowledged leader in the world's civilization, should tarnish her glory by even the touch of this nefarious traffic. Leaving out the rest of the 1,300 cities in the eighteen provinces, opium has brought enough suffering upon Soochow to cause the vials of Heaven's wrath to be poured out.

Let us now behold the silver lining to the dark cloud. For years there resided in this city the Provincial Treasurer and Acting-Governor, the late Futai of Yunnan, Governor T'an Kuin Pei (譚鈞培), who stood a giant among the rank and file of Mandarins, and, as a great reformer, set himself as a stone wall against every form of evil. He sought to reform the manners and morals of the people, issuing his proclamations, the size of a counterpane, with forty prohibitions, and caused bad men to tremble. During four or five years he closed every opium den in Southern Kiangsu, except in the "model settlement" Shanghai, and had mounted on every door the number of opium-smokers who lived within. Fearfulness and trembling took hold of this pitiable class, and many broke off from the terrible habit. He demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt, were England to withdraw her protectorate over the vile drug, and permit China to forbid its importation, the Middle Kingdom, with such a Martin Luther, could purge its coasts of the fields of poppy, and the nation, after a score of years of dreadful suffering to individuals, could again be free. All honor to the memory of Sinim's Great Hero !

Situated as Soochow has been, centrally, near the east coast, as Washington in the United States, it has been much exposed to internal struggles. When the latter Kingdom of Wu was overthrown, A.D. 600, Soochow rebelled, and for forty years a new city was built near the hills. In A.D. 1300 the wall was destroyed and the moat filled. Five hundred and forty years ago the city was seriously injured by the insurrection of the "Red Turbaned Thieves." The words of the prophet, "Your cities shall be heaps"—that is, the rubbish of devastations piled up—have been fulfilled, and here and there

Its Reverses.

are little hills to tell the sad tale. The last destruction by the T'aipings, who drove the ploughshare through these streets, is now around us and about us. In the year 1861 they came down the Grand Canal, capturing the city of Changchow, sixty miles north-west, on the 7th; the city of Wusih, on the 10th, reaching Soochow on the 14th of the 4th moon. Seldom in the annals of history has there been a slaughter-week like unto this, for probably a million of the inhabitants of these three cities and the towns along the route lay sweltering in their blood. The people of this city lifted up their eyes and beheld the smoke rising in the great suburb on its west side, which extended five miles, commanded an immense trade, and contained probably a half million people. In one night's conflagration it was entirely demolished. They knew that the horrors of Asiatic war were upon them. From the east gates, in the mud and rain, as witnessed by a missionary, the inhabitants poured forth in living streams of living men and women, many of whose lifeless bodies were soon to float towards the sea on the silent bosom of the sluggish canals. A small-footed lady would carry her child, and then, when no longer able to walk, creep on her knees, till, in a fit of desperation, she would cast the child in the stream, and going on further, broken-hearted at the deed, she would herself plunge into the waters. Wells were choked with the corpses of noble women who feared a worse fate from the looting soldiery. Many of the people crowded to Shanghai and perished in the pestilence. Many died of starvation. Some large families lost three-fourths of their number. Lest the picture seem to be overdrawn, it may be stated that on a corner of the writer's garden, forty years ago, lived a family of thirty persons: after the days of the T'aipings one man was left to tell the tale. A number of the people who had money escaped to the hills and scattered through the country, and in that universal brotherhood of trial, where so much mutual kindness was shown, passed through the severe period. Houses were pulled down for

The T'aipings.

firewood, and weeping Jeremiahs sang, "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations and princess among the provinces!" "Her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer!" Probably 600,000 or 800,000 of the Soochow people perished during these two years filled with horror and bloodshed.

Then in 1863 came Chinese Gordon, leading the "Ever Victorious Army." The rebels were entrenched at Soochow and also at Quensan, twenty-four miles to the east. These cities were connected by a narrow causeway with lakes to the north and south of the canal, and along this causeway the rebel troops continually passed. From the south, in May, Gordon dispatched the little steamer "Hyson" with three guns on her decks, and her sides covered with sheet iron to protect against the rebel bullets, and with a bold attack the fort at Chen-ee was dismantled, communication between the two cities cut off, and the steamer, firing grape and cannister, followed the routed T'aipings, fleeing for their lives, almost to the gates of Soochow, and slaughtered them by the hundreds. At the same time Gordon captured Quensan, and made that city his headquarters, till in September he encamped at Nga-kwô-dong, five miles east of Soochow. At the first of October the force was conveyed on boats to the fifty-three arched bridge, called the Precious Girdle Bridge. The rebels, led by Burgovine with sixty foreigners, came out 200,000 strong (as the number was reported), and attacked them but were driven back. There was continual skirmishing. The "Hyson" had to be sent for reconnoitering to the west of Soochow, and as she could not pass under the bridge, the central arch had to be pulled down, and, when the keystone was removed, the arches to the north all fell in one after the other. Then followed the battle of Wukiang, at which Capt. Howard, one of the first of the Imperial Customs to be sent to Soochow in

Gordon.

1896, distinguished himself for his gallantry and was promoted to Brevet-Major by Gordon on the field.

The foreigners in the service of the T'aipings, seeing their cause hopeless, and tired of the wretched life of suffering they were leading under continual espionage, agreed with Gordon upon a plan of surrender, and, feigning an attack, they fled in a body and leaped upon the decks of the "Hyson," then standing in the Grand Canal. A part of Gordon's force was deceived by the pretence of surrendering the forts at the Wu Lung Giao, or Five Dragon Bridge, three miles south of the concession, and at night in the attack lost sixteen foreign officers, killed and wounded, and 280 men. A few days afterwards these fortifications were captured. There were also battles at Lik'eu and Wangtai, to the north of Soochow. Gordon, armed with his cane, his "magic wand of victory," as it was called, led his troops, always going in person into the thickest of the conflict. He did not command Forward!—he led. The forts at Shü-z-kwan, to the north-west of the city, were also captured and communications cut off from the beleaguered T'aipings. The "Ever Victorious Army" now attacked the fortifications on the east side of the city, but were much annoyed by two Dahlgreen guns, captured by the rebels the year before at Tatsong, when the force under Holland was defeated. These guns are now on the east wall, one on the bastion opposite the Custom House. While the pontoons were being prepared for storming the wall at its north-east corner, the Wongs, who had made Soochow their headquarters and selected the finest mansions for palaces, capitulated and surrendered the city; but one of these, the Mo Wong, objected, and there was heavy fighting among the rebels themselves within the city. The day following, when the Wongs came into the presence of Li Hung Chang, they refused to kneel, and were beheaded on a creek outside the north-east gate; a policy to the captured to whom Gordon had promised protection, in the face of western morality and the laws of nations; but when the treacherous character of the "kings" is considered, their

haughty bearing in the Governor's presence, and the hopefulness of the T'aipings as long as their leaders lived, we must not be too rigid in our judgments, even though we cannot approve, for the traditional policy of the government is "To kill a snake you must cut off its head." Thus ended a great chapter in the city's history. Though there is yet waste ground within the walls, the city was rapidly rebuilt, and new houses are constantly erected on the former ruins.

This brings us in point of time to the commencement of Protestantism in the city. For years the missionaries stationed at Shanghai looked upon Soochow as a great evangelistic centre, and longed for the time when its gates should be opened. Before the city was taken by the T'aipings, young Griffith John, now a veteran, and others visited the place with a view of securing a foothold. Rev. Wm. Muirhead came here in native dress, with a queue which was unfortunately too securely fastened. He was seized, dragged along the streets, and a heavy club on his head made him think the time was short.

Protestant Missions.

The first foreigner to live in this city was Charles Schmidt, under the auspices of the American Presbyterians (North). He came in 1868. He had been an officer of the "Ever Victorious Army," and his extended acquaintance among the military Mandarins secured him an unmolested sojourn. He was a man of wonderful tact in dealing with the people, had a far-reaching acquaintance with Chinese affairs, was a fluent speaker, a gifted preacher, and wrote a most excellent tract. He afterwards withdrew from the mission service.

In 1867, Rev. J. W. Lambuth, D.D., obtained a room with a dirt floor near the Ink Pagoda, and on his regular visits to the city held religious services. He was afterwards aided by a native minister, Rev. C. K. Marshall, who had resided some years in America, in establishing the Southern Methodist Mission, which, now within a half mile of the mustard-seed chapel, has a church,

six foreign residences, two large hospitals, a male college with 120 pupils, a female seminary and a Bible-woman's home. They have, besides these, near the city temple a large chapel with an English school of over 100 pupils; also a ladies' home in a native house.

During the occupation of Nanking by the rebels, Dr. Muirhead visited that place, and passing near the wall heard shrieks and groans. Going upon the wall he found a young lad wounded and ill, who was about to give up his life in despair. He was taken to Shanghai and kindly cared for. In 1872, when Dr. M. came to Soochow and tried to rent a place, a rice-merchant proffered his assistance and secured for him a chapel on the principal street of the city. It was the aforesaid lad, who in this way showed his gratitude. Thus Messrs. Muirhead and Lambuth, *nomina nobilia et clarissima*, were the first regular preachers in this pagan city.

The American Presbyterians (North) have had for years their residences, with a church and high school annexed, in the "South Garden"—a euphonious title for the paddy fields—and also outside the Chang Men they have have erected a large woman's hospital. The Southern Presbyterians began work in 1872 at the Yang Yoh Hong, and have now residences near the Great Pagoda and the Twin Pagodas, with a ladies' home at the Foo Men. The new hospital, with its capacious wards and physician's house, is outside the north gate. The Southern Baptist chapel and manse are in the north-eastern part of the city.

There are now twelve male missionaries and twenty-four female missionaries (including the wives) in Soochow: also six homes for the unmarried ladies. There are fifteen chapels; in several of these daily preaching. The large audiences and the attention they give to the speakers has made this a prominent feature of evangelistic work. There are twenty day-schools with about 500 pupils, and the instruction of these occupies the time of several of the ladies. Ready access is had to the women in their houses, and they come in numbers to the homes of the missionary families. Six or eight hundred thousand tracts or Scripture-portions have

been sold in and around the city. There are one or two dispensaries, besides the four hospitals. The people entertain the kindliest feelings towards the American residents, who have lived so long among them and identified themselves with the city's interests.

The New Port.

As a result of the Japanese-Chinese war, Soochow was opened as a foreign port in the beginning of 1896. The Japanese Consul-General was the first representative of a foreign power to come to the city. It was the desire of the officials that the settlement be located three miles to the south, at the Fifty-three Arch Bridge, mentioning "deep water" as one of the special attractions. The Consul assured them that "it was a fine place to plant rice and hunt pheasants." A site for the concession was agreed upon directly to the south of the city and opposite the wall. It has a frontage of one and one-third miles on the Grand Canal, which affords a commodious harbor for thousands of small craft. The autonomy of the western part of the settlement, with the exception of the Bund, has been given to the conquering Japanese, while the eastern portion, facing on two sides the Grand Canal, is the general foreign concession.

The Custom House, opposite the south-east corner of the city, is a large and commanding structure, having more the appearance of a huge dwelling than of a public building. The Commissioner's Mansion, with its two-acre garden, is said to be the handsomest residence occupied by any Chief of Customs in Cathay. Next to this is the Police Station, containing a large and airy dwelling for the Captain-Superintendent, the "Municipal Hall," offices for the staff, and cells for the prisoners. These three buildings, with the Likin Club, constitute the eastern wing of foreign Soochow. The English and Japanese Consulates await appropriations from their respective governments.

The "Horse Road," when completed to the *Liu Yuen*, the celebrated garden of the famous railway magnate, Sheng Taotai, will be five miles in length. It will connect with the railway station.

The Chinese are an astute people. They succeeded in putting the concession in a quiet locality, then turned the line of progress to the native centre of trade, so that for years, it may be, the vacant territory allotted to Europeans and Japanese may afford fine pasturage. A little city has sprung up outside the P'an Men, which, with its cotton mill, filature and tug offices, presents the appearance of a busy mart, and the Chinese will probably unite it by a line of shops with the Ch'ang Men.

The Italians, however, are erecting a large silk filature on the eastern portion of the settlement, and as it is stated as a fact that on account of the fresh, soft water around Soochow, the silk brings a better price in the market than that from the filatures on the Hwangpoo, in a few years factories by the score may be built. The concession is laid out with great regularity, and with broad avenues shaded by the elm and poplar may in time become one of the most beautiful places occupied by foreigners.

The Imperial Post Office is in new quarters near the centre of the city. Fifty or sixty tugs, which tow native boats and also those specially built for canal traffic—all of these packed with Chinese—ply between this place and Shanghai, Hangchow and Chinkiang. The natives are fully alive to their opportunity. The immense hoards of silver within the walls seeking investment, the magic sound in a Chinese ear of the name Soochow, the wide-spread belief that now the provincial capital is to attain its former commercial importance, its position in the centre of the silk district, the influx of population from the surrounding country, the right given under the new treaty to foreign capital to open factories at the ports, and its prospects as the centre of the Shanghai, Hangchow and Nanking Railway system, give promise of a most successful future to the new city, which, with the wisdom of mature years, and the vigor of young manhood, commences its twenty-fifth century.

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