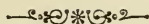


HANLIN PAPERS.



SECOND SERIES.



ESSAYS ON THE HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY,
AND RELIGION OF THE CHINESE.



BY

W. A. P. MARTIN, D.D., LL.D.

*President of the Imperial Tung-Wên College, Peking,
Membre de l'Institut de Droit International,
Mem. Cor. de la Société de la Législation
Comparée, &c., &c.*



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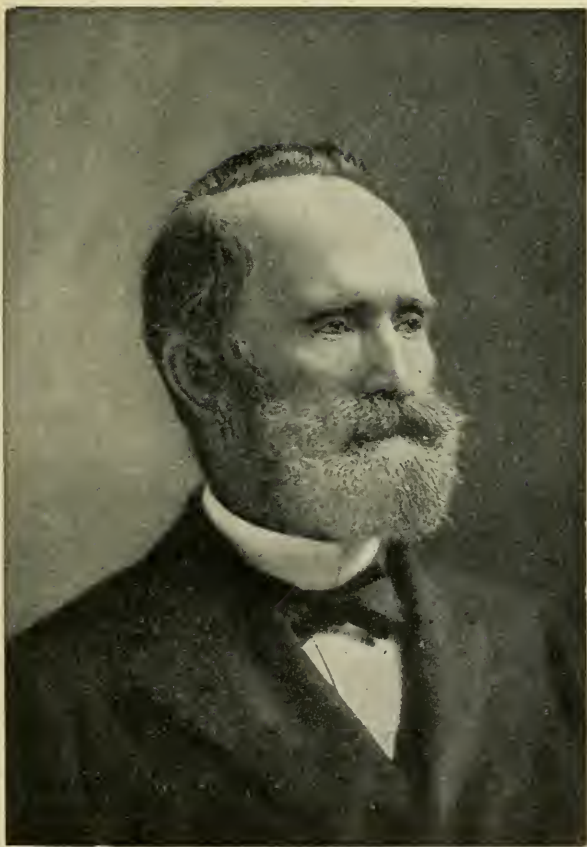
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From the "Lore of Cathay" by courtesy of Fleming H. Revell Company.

REV. W. A. P. MARTIN.

TO SIR ROBERT HART, BARONET, G.C.M.G.,
INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF IMPERIAL MARITIME CUSTOMS,
TRUSTEE AND PATRON OF
THE IMPERIAL TUNG-WÊN COLLEGE, ETC., ETC.,
THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
IN COMMEMORATION OF
A FRIENDSHIP OF FORTY YEARS.

INTRODUCTION.



A Book like this, consisting of a series of Papers,—the slow growth of years,—possesses one conspicuous advantage over a work more hastily written. It is not made to order; but each Essay springs from the spontaneous inclination of the author, and gives the results of his special studies.

The Papers in this volume fall under the general heads of History, Philosophy, and Religion. Some of the topics, such as International Law and Diplomacy in ancient China, are so new that they have never before been treated by any writer, native or foreign. One or two, however, resemble more or less subjects treated in the First Series;* but they will in all cases be found to be characterized by new views or ampler treatment.

* *Hanlin Papers*, Kelly and Walsh, Shanghai, 1880, reprinted by Harper Brothers, New York, as *The Chinese, their Education, &c.*

As many of these Papers originated in the work of the Peking Oriental Society, an extract from a Presidential Address* may be here introduced, to show something of the activity of that young Institution, and especially to point out the *scope of Oriental Studies*, from a Chinese stand-point.

“The last Paper of our Occidental Series was read by an American Minister (Mr. Young). He also, as well as Dr. Edkins and Mr. Rockhill, took a leading part in bringing our Society into its present shape; but it was pre-eminently the hand of the late lamented British Minister (Sir Harry Parkes) that impressed upon it its Oriental character. It was he who gave expression to the wish that its sessions should be something more than an intellectual diversion; and, like a ship drawn from its element to be re-modelled and re-christened, it was he who gave it a new name and launched it on a new career.

We opened our sessions (*i.e.*,—those of the Oriental Series) with two subjects well adapted to connect China with the classical antiquity of the West. The first was on the knowledge of China possessed by the Romans, in the time of the

* Review of 1885-6.

Elder Pliny ; the second brought into juxtaposition many choice passages of Chinese and Grecian literature. These were luckily followed by the production of material evidence of the intercourse between Rome and China, in the shape of a treasure-trove of Roman coins, which were laid on our table accompanied by an exhaustive report. Then came a survey of the immense domain of Chinese history, followed by a study of some of the most characteristic products of Chinese skill in the department of ceramic art. This was succeeded by a Paper which afforded a specimen of those profitable explorations, which it is possible to combine with holiday excursions in the vicinity of Peking. We had, in the meantime, an excursion to the capital of the Grand Lama ; and, by a coincidence not less fortunate than the find of Roman coins, we had the presence of a man who had travelled among the snow-capped mountains of Thibet. Finally, we had two Papers which brought us back to the subject of parallels, *viz.*,—the Folk-lore of Celtic Ireland compared with that of the Chinese, and the Drama of Turkey compared with the histrionic art of China.

The last two Papers, I have said, bring us back to the subject of parallels. Would I be far out of the way if I should say that the chief object

of our Society is the drawing of parallels? Let no one imagine that such an employment affords but meagre scope for our faculties. For is not comparison, as Aristotle has pointed out in his *Art of Poetry*, the source of our knowledge and the fountain of our aesthetic pleasures? Indeed, in no other way can we estimate the culture of the various nations that fall within the sphere of our research. As we began and closed the year with parallels, we shall accordingly go on until we shall have brought every phase of Oriental thought into comparison with our European standards.

What grander conception can we form of the scope of our Society? What better demonstration of the boundless extent of its field of investigation?

At the risk of betraying a secret, let me say that one of our members said to me some time ago:—"Do you not think we are holding too many meetings? Is there not danger that our repertory of subjects will be exhausted?" Exhausted! As well talk of exhausting the oil wells of Baku, or the coal treasures of the British Isles. When of late the cry was raised—"Economise your coal; the supply is giving out,"—what was the answer? "There is plenty of coal to be found by digging deeper!" For us, the same remedy may

be resorted to against an apprehended dearth of topics. When the superficial deposits are consumed, then dig deeper; and sooner will the last ton of coal in British mines be raised to the surface, than the last available subject be reached in the domain of Oriental inquiry.

Situated in the capital of the greatest of Eastern empires, we sweep within our broad horizon the whole of Asia. Here, in the midst of a vast accumulation of undeveloped treasures, we have little reason to envy those Oriental students whose lot is cast on the banks of the Ganges.

To enumerate only a few of the subjects that challenge investigation:—Here is Philology approaching us with a bundle of questions, barbed and bristling like a sheaf of arrows. Of these, the noblest is that of the relation of the Chinese language to the other great families of human speech,—a question towards the solution of which one of our number has led the way.*

It is scarcely a hundred years since the affinity between Sanscrit and the other members of the Aryan group was ascertained. That discovery,

* Rev. Dr. Edkins.

the honor of which is due to Colebrooke more than to any one else, has been described by Professor Max Müller as the birth of Comparative Philology. It not only gave the world a new science, it had the political effect of softening in some degree the prejudice of race by showing the Indians that they and their conquerors are connected by the bonds of a common origin. Now, in the whole range of linguistic science, there is only room for one more achievement of equal grandeur, *viz.*,—the establishment of an earlier and more fundamental relation between the language of China and those of the Indo-European group.

Here too is a Philosophy, original and indigenous, whose speculations are as subtle and daring, and whose literature is as extensive, as those of Greece or Germany. Cicero, when he retired from the fatigues of office to the shades of Tusculum, was accustomed to refresh his mind by discussing questions of philosophy with a chosen circle of friends. May not we obtain an equally efficacious mental tonic, by holding friendly converse with the highest thinkers of the Chinese race? In this department, there is no danger of tiring for want of variety, as there are many hundreds of authors who deal with all conceivable subjects, in the spirit of free speculation.

As to the study of History, I had the honour to address you on that subject not long ago. Of what I said on that occasion I shall repeat nothing, beyond reminding you how vast and how rich are the stores of historic lore that solicit our attention.

Finally, to pass over Ethnology, Geology, and half a dozen other "ologies," all of which find a grand arena in this empire, we come to Poetry,—a fairy land of freshest beauty, in which European hands have only here and there plucked a bud from its "hill of a hundred flowers." As to the extent of China's poetical literature, you may infer something, from the fact that every one of the 5,000 graduates, who were last month immured in the great Examination¹ Hall, was obliged to compose a poem before regaining his liberty. After this, you will not be surprised to hear that a popular collection of poems is called *The Songs of a Thousand Bards*. If some of our members, who possess the gift of versification, would from time to time give us an account of these Sons of Song, accompanied by a poetical rendering of their choicest effusions,* what a delightful entertainment might they not prepare for us!

* Of these the Author has given some specimens in a small Volume entitled *Chinese Legends and other Poems*.

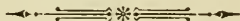
So rich and extensive are these four grand divisions of our Oriental domain that I should seriously propose, if our membership would admit of it, to subdivide ourselves into four sections; one of which should devote itself to Philology, another to Philosophy, a third to History, and the last to Poetry.

The Asiatic Society of Bengal, instituted more than a hundred years ago, is still in active operation. May we not hope that the Oriental Society of Peking, sustained by the best culture of this small but select community, and reinforced by the culture of renovated China, will enjoy an equally long and prosperous career ! ”

I have to thank Mr. R. H. Maclay for having saved me much trouble in carrying this volume through the press.

W. A. P. M.

Peking, April 14th, 1894.



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I.
THE STUDY
OF
CHINESE HISTORY.*

AMONG the various departments into which the literature of the Chinese is divided, that which in my opinion will best repay the attention of European scholars is their History. Yet like their venerated classic, the Book of Changes, of which they affirm that it can never be transported beyond the seas, there is reason to fear that their history is not very well adapted for exportation.

In its native form, it may find translators; but they will not find readers. Its form requires to be transformed; and its very substance to undergo a transubstantiation, in order to adapt it to the taste of our Western public. Beyond a substratum of facts, there is absolutely no part of it capable of surviving a transfer to the Western world.

* Read before the Oriental Society of Peking.

In the West, the Father of History, or some of his editors, prefixed the names of the Muses to the several portions of his immortal work—indicating that the idea of beauty presided over its composition, and consecrating the “art preservative of arts” to the patronage of all the Sacred Nine.

In China, the conception of history is that of a simple record; not that of a work of art.

In one of the Taoist Legends, an old man, who has tasted the elixir of immortality, is asked to tell his age. “I count it not,” he replies, “by years, but by terrestrial cataclysms. As often as a continent sinks into the bosom of the sea, or a new world emerges from the ocean, I drop a little pebble to commemorate the occurrence. The accumulation of pebbles is now so great that they fill eleven chambers of my dwelling.” Here we have an embodiment of the genius of Chinese History—not a Muse stamping on it the impress of divine beauty, but shrivelled age like that of Tithonus, or the wandering Jew, preserving a monotonous record of the changes that occur in the course of an endless life.

The accumulation of counters set forth in this legend is an expressive emblem of the vastness of China’s historic treasure. In this respect, as Hegel has remarked in his *Philosophie der Geschichte*, there is a striking contrast between the two great empires

of Asia—the Chinese having a historical literature more voluminous than that of any other nation on earth, and the Hindus none at all. The explanation of this phenomenon, if we seek for one, will be found in the fact that history is the expression of national life—a tissue resembling that of a living organism knitting the past and present into a substantial unity. Their historical literature, accordingly, more than anything else, unless it be their educational system, affords an index of the greatness of the Chinese people. With them the worship of ancestors is only an exaggerated expression of their sense of solidarity; and history a testament, by which they convey to posterity the legacy of the past.

The precautions which they take to secure and to transmit the record betoken a proud consciousness that their national life is too strong to be swallowed up by the shifting sands of time. No less than three bureaus or colleges, each presided over by learned members of the Hanlin, are charged with collecting and elaborating materials for the history of each reign. The bureau of Daily Record has its representatives always at the side of His Imperial Majesty. Whether in his palace or on a journey, or in so-called retirement, he can no more escape the eye of these official spies than Horace's trooper could outrun the tormentor that mounted behind him.

The Emperor's public acts and public documents constitute the province of the *Shih-lu-kuan*, the Bureau of contemporary History. The *Kuo-she-kuan*, or College of Dynastic History, occupies itself with the archives of the ruling house, and the biographies of those who are supposed to have shed lustre on its reign.

These tribunals form an essential part of the machinery of government, supplying a check on the extravagance of irresponsible power where no other would be available—the dread of being held up to the execration of posterity operating quite as effectually as the remonstrances of a board of censors. The censors indeed are still called by a title (*Yü-she*) which means official historian; and, though no longer employed in the production of history, they are wont to draw their weightiest arguments from the history of the past, and to make their most solemn appeals to the history of the future.

In the palmy days of Chow, when the institutions of the empire were in their infancy, a prince proposed to make an excursion which had for its object nothing better nor worse than his own amusement. One of the censors, after vainly employing other arguments to dissuade him from his undertaking, solemnly admonished him that all his movements were matters of history. The poor prince, startled

at the thought that to him there could be nothing trivial—that his every act was exposed to the “fierce light that beats upon a throne”—heaved a sigh of regret, and desisted from his innocent purpose,—that of fishing on a neighboring lake.

In those days the historian was as stern and inflexible as the Roman *Censor morum*. In the sixth century before our era, there lived in Shantung a General, or *Maire du Palais*, named *Ts'ue Wu-tsze*. Herod-like, he took possession of the wife of another; his sovereign in turn deprived him of the fascinating beauty. The General in revenge killed the prince; and, when the Court Chronicler put on record this chapter of infamies, he put him to death, and tore the leaf from the Archives of State. A brother of the historian renewed the record, and suffered death for doing so. A leaf was again torn out, and a third brother presented himself, pen in hand, to repeat the tale and seal it with his blood. The tyrant, touched by his martyr-like boldness, spared his life, and submitted to the stigma. The incident is handed down as a proof of the unflinching fidelity of ancient historians, and by consequence of the trustworthiness of their narratives.

In later times, the chroniclers were not so fearless. One, Ch'ên Lin, a man of talent, being reproached by Tsao Tsao for drawing his portrait in rather sombre

colours, replied, while he trembled for his life—
“Your Highness will forgive me. I was then detained
in the camp of your enemy, where I had no more
freedom of choice than the arrow shot from his
cross-bow.”

Thackeray says of his pen :—

“It never writ a flattery,
Nor signed the page
That registered a lie.”

With Chinese historians, fear and flattery are influences which, more than any others, deflect their needle from the pole. To guard against these two sources of error, the notes of every day are dropped into an iron chest, which is not to be opened until after the death of the reigning prince. Yet this provision is not always effectual; flattery which, addressed to the living, would be deemed gross and disgusting, falls like music on the ears of their mourning relatives. Hence it was that Octavia paid Virgil so magnificently for his lines on the dead Marcellus; hence too, at the close of the last reign, the Empress mother welcomed with delight a panegyric on the late Emperor, which made him appear as a star of the first magnitude. But was not the Roman Senate accustomed, by solemn vote, to raise deceased emperors to the skies, whenever their relations succeeded to the throne? The writers of

China are neither more nor less truthful than the Romans; and now and then we meet among them with an instance of fidelity worthy of Rome's best days:-e. g.,-Wu K'o-tu, a Censor (and we must not forget that his Chinese title means historian), some years ago protesting against the affiliation of the present Emperor to Hien Fung as an arrangement that leaves his predecessor without the solace of a son to sacrifice to his manes,—in order to give more weight to his remonstrance committed suicide at the tomb of the sovereign whose cause he was seeking to serve. Does not this modern instance almost suffice to render credible the story of the martyr chroniclers of whom we have spoken?

Incedis per ignes

Suppositos cineri doloso;

said Horace to Pollio, when the latter was proposing to write the history of the then recent revolution. Nobody knows better than the Chinese the treacherous thinness of the crust that overlies the lava of a dynastic eruption. With a view to guarding against the perverting influence of fear and favour, they accordingly wait until the last scion of an imperial house has ceased to reign before compiling, or rather before publishing, the history of a dynasty. The history of the Mings was not published until after the accession of the Manchus; and the

commission charged with its preparation devoted no less than forty-six years to the task. Official histories are always corrected by collation with private memoirs, which only wait the sunset of a dynasty to come forth in countless numbers and shed their glow-worm light on the events of the period.

In addition to these ordinary arrangements, there exists an extraordinary provision for purifying the stream of history. It consists in the appearance, at long intervals, of sages with a divine commission to revise the annals of preceding centuries, and post up the doom's-day book of the empire. Of these, four have appeared already, viz:—

Confucius, in the 6th century, B. C ;

Sze Ma Ts'ien, in the 2nd century, B. C ;

Sze Ma Kwang, in the 11th century, A. D ;

Chu Fu Tsze, a century later.

For the advent of the fifth, the world is now on tiptoe.

Each revision reduces, of course, the quantity of material; but, after all their sifting, there still remains an enormous irreducible mass, in which the dead past is buried rather than illustrated.

The historical works of the first of these great editors, as expounded by his disciples, extend to 60 books, or about 20 volumes. Those of the second,

to 130 books. Those of the third reach the portentous figure of 360. And those of the last, though professing to be an abridgement, amount to 55 books.

The twenty-four dynastic histories, taken together, foot up the tremendous total of 3266 books, or 1633 separate volumes.

This is sufficiently appalling, but what shall we say of the mountains of undigested ores that have not been subjected to the fires of the smelting furnace? It may help us to form an idea of the extent of these crude treasures to mention that the history of the last short reign of only thirteen years is spread over no fewer than one-hundred-and-fifty volumes. Then there are collateral histories for that period, which are also official, such as that of the Taiping rebellion in 211 volumes; that of the Nienfei rebellion in 160 volumes; and those of the three several Mohammedan rebellions of Kashgar, Kansuh, and Yunnan, not yet finished, but certainly far more voluminous. If the preceding reigns were only half as prolific in historical writings, the productions of the present dynasty would alone more than suffice to fill the library of the sea-side genius, to say nothing of the twenty-four preceding dynasties.

Nor is this all. To complete the Catalogue, we have still to add topographical histories without

number. Each of the nineteen old Provinces has its official history compiled by a commission presided over by officers of the Han-lin. Each department or prefecture has likewise its proper history; and this gives us 200 more—not volumes, but works; while, descending to cities of the third order, we must reckon a history of from ten to twenty volumes for each of nearly two thousand districts. The sum total makes a quantity so vast that the mind can no more grasp it than it can conceive the distances to the fixed stars. We seek in vain for a unit of measure. If the manuscripts of the Alexandrian library kept the fires of the caliph Omar blazing for three months, how long might the histories of China supply them with fuel! Tamerlane was in the habit of building pyramids of the skulls of his enemies. How high a pyramid, we may ask, might be constructed out of these dry bones of past ages?

In the presence of these enormous accumulations, the question arises what estimate are we to form of their value?

Of their value to the Chinese I need not stop to speak. Their existence is proof of the esteem in which they are held, and the manner in which every species of composition bristles with historical allusions bears witness to the influence they have exerted on the mind of the Chinese. But are these

venerable remains of any value to us? And if so, in what way may they be made to contribute to the literary wealth of the Western world?

In forming an estimate, we must not forget that our standard of value in the criticism of such works differs as widely from that of the Chinese as a golden sovereign does from productions of the native mint. Ours was coined and stamped for us by no meaner hand than that of Lord Bacon, who defines history as "Philosophy teaching by example." It is philosophy, not science, for its data are too indefinite to be made a basis for scientific deductions. Philosophy lays no claim to absolute certainty, though her very name proclaims her a searcher after truth. Her first object is to learn; her second to teach; and if, in the domain of history, she is able to draw lessons from the past, it is because she has first learned the meaning of those great movements which she professes to expound.

Judged by this standard, the Chinese have chronicles, but not histories. They have chronicles composed with studied elegance and abounding in acute criticism of character and events; but the whole range of their literature contains nothing that can be called a Philosophy of History. They have no Hegel, who, after reconstructing the universe, applies his principles to explain the laws of human progress; no

Gibbon or Montesquieu to trace the decay of an old civilisation; and no Guizot to sketch the rise of a new one. They have not even a Thucydides or a Tacitus, who can follow effects up to causes, and paint the panorama of an epoch.

The reason is obvious. Without resorting to the supposition that they are by nature deficient in the philosophic faculty, we find a sufficient explanation of the phenomenon in the faulty model set for them by the greatest of their sages.

With them Confucius, not Sze Ma Ts'ien, is the Father of History. His famous *Spring and Autumn* is not even a book of Annals. It is a diary in which all events, great and small, are strung like beads on a calendar of days. This method, not to speak of the extreme conciseness of his style, makes it difficult for his reader to perceive the connexion of events. Three disciples of his school have come to his aid with commentaries; but all of them follow the order of the text, chapter and verse. His continuators have done the same; and so have all his successors down to our historiographers of the Hanlin, who keep their daily journals and imagine they are writing history.

To have so many pens laboriously employed in taking notes is a good way to collect materials; but those materials require a different kind of elaboration

from any they have ever received at the hands of a native author before they become History, in our acceptance of the term.

That their History has remained in the rudimentary condition in which it began its career is one more instance, in addition to many others, of noble arts which the Chinese originated in ancient times; and which remained ever after in a state of arrested development.

There are men, as Sir Lyon Playfair has lately reminded us, in his presidential address before the British Association, who "cannot see a forest for the trees of which it is composed."

So the Chinese chronicler, bent on classifying all occurrences in the order of time, fails to perceive the trend of colossal movements that sweep over whole nations and long centuries. His work in keeping the minutes of the day is History only in the sense in which the daily noting of the stars is Astronomy. Thousands of diligent observers had recorded their observations with apparently fruitless toil, when the eye of Kepler, sweeping over the mass of facts, deduced from them the ellipticity of the planetary orbits. May we not hope that some master mind will yet arise, who shall be capable of pointing out the reign of law in this limbo of undigested facts?

The historian, who shall do this for China, will be a native; but, in addition to the culture of the Hanlin, he must possess the training of a Western university. The students of history, trained in the native schools, are all near-sighted. They analyze, with more than microscopic penetration, particular events and personal character; but they are utterly incapable of broad synthetic combinations.

In proof of this, I may point to three immense movements, each of which is as indispensable to the understanding of the present condition of China as are Kepler's three laws to the explanation of the solar system. Yet no native writer appears to have grasped the significance, or even formed a conception, of any one of them. They are:—

- 1.—The conquest of China by the Chinese;
- 2.—The conquest of China by the Tartars;
- 3.—The struggle between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the empire.

To the mind of a native, the assertion that China has been conquered by the Chinese would be tantamount to that venerable item of political news that "the Dutch have taken Holland." To him, they have always been in possession, and, so far as he knows, they sprang directly from the soil. But the eye of a foreign scholar, trained to trace the origin of nations, perceives at a glance that the Chinese were

a foreign race, who, clothed with the power of a higher civilization, undertook the conquest of the water-shed of eastern Asia, about the time the Aryan Hindus undertook that of the southern Peninsula. He notes the first seats of their power along the banks of the Yellow River, indicating that they came from the North-west, and followed its course down into the central plain. Whence they came, he may not be able to affirm with certainty; but he finds two-thirds of the empire, even in the classic age of Chow, still in possession of savage tribes, who must be regarded as the true autochthones.

He sees these gradually absorbed and assimilated by the superior race, until the remnants of the aborigines are driven into mountain fastnesses, where they still maintain their independence, and where the conflict of ages is still going on. The first chapter in the history of this conflict is found in the brief account which the *Shu-king* gives us of the subjugation of the *San Miao*, "The three aboriginal tribes," by the Emperor Shun.

The last is not yet written; but a page still wet with blood records the subjection of the Miao-tsze of Kwe-cheo and the extension of Chinese sway in the island of Formosa. What a theme for the pen of a native scholar, if he could only enlarge the range of his mental vision so as to take in a movement of such surpassing grandeur !

The second of the three great movements is, in its origin, almost co-eval with the first, and runs parallel with it through all the ages down to the present day. To the mind of a native, the Tartar conquest suggests only the successful invasion of the Manchus, the now dominant race. To the wider survey of a western thinker, it signifies a persistent attempt, extending through thousands of years, made by barbarians of whatever name on the North of China to gain possession of a country made rich by the industry of its civilized inhabitants.

Its first stage was an advance into the interior, in 771 B.C., far enough to destroy the western capital, near the site of the present Si-ngan Fu, the Emperor and his consort perishing in the ruins. The successor of the unfortunate monarch removed his court eastward, to a safer situation, in the heart of the Empire. At a later period, this eastern capital was also sacked by Tartars. Still later (not to follow the fluctuations of the conflict), when the northern half of the Empire was over-run, the court retired from the banks of the Hoang Ho to those of the Yang-tsze-kiang; whence it removed still further south, in the vain hope of escaping the Tartars, who, under the leadership of Kublai, effected for the first time the conquest of the whole Empire.

After a brief tenure, they lost their grand prize, but it was reconquered by the Manchus; and for two centuries and a half it has remained in their possession.

The Great Wall, stretching from the sea to the desert of Kansu, is a monument of this undying struggle, which, from its first inception, has been essentially one long war, with only here and there a fitful truce.

The successive sackings of Rome by Gaul and Vandal; the conquest of Italy by Barbarians from the North; and the removal of the capital to the East, are parallels that offer themselves to a European student, and suggest a law in the tide of nations, viz., that the hungry hordes of the North manifest, in all ages, a tendency to encroach on opulent regions more favoured by the sun.

In all ages, the Tartar invaders have yielded to the influence of a higher civilization; but, on the other hand, they have made a deep impression, ethnologically as well as politically, on the state of China.

The Chinese have treated this subject only in a fragmentary way; but, taken as a whole, in its philosophy and its poetry, the conquest of China by the Tartars would supply the Muse of History with another of her noblest themes.

The two great movements, which I have now so

hastily sketched, were conflicts of races; the third was a conflict of principles. The contending forces were those of feudal autonomy and centralization. At the dawn of the Chow dynasty, not to go further back in the history, an able monarch succeeded in holding the vassal Princes in check; while, under his weak successors, they threw off all but the semblance of subjection. This struggle for power went on for eight centuries, until both combatants were swallowed up by a new foe,—the Emperor and his vassal Princes being swept from the arena by the new power of Chin, which had grown strong in conflict with the Tartars of the North!

In this signal event, Chinese historians discern nothing but the triumph of vulgar ambition; and they paint its author in the darkest colours, as an impious tyrant who burned the books of Confucius, and slaughtered his disciples. For such unheard-of cruelty, they find no better explanation than a partiality for Taoism, coupled with a desire to destroy the records of the past, in order that he might appear to posterity as the author of a new era. Not one of them has understood the significance of *Shi Hwang-ti*, the august title by which he proclaimed himself the "first" of a new order of "autocratic sovereigns." Not one of them has perceived that his motive for burning the books of Confucius was to obliterate the

feudal system from the memory of China; and that he cut the throats of the Literati to make sure that those books and their political doctrines should never re-appear.

The books did re-appear; but the feudal system, once buried in the sepulchre of the slaughtered scholars, has had no resurrection. It had been to China the fruitful mother of ages of anarchy. Since then she has gone through many revolutions; but, thanks to the genius of *Shi Hwang-ti*, she has witnessed no repetition of the sad spectacle of a family of States discordant and belligerent. His system of centralized power remains the bond of the Empire; and the title of Hwang-ti, which he was the "first" to assume, still survives as its permanent expression.

This conflict, between the centripetal and centrifugal forces, forms the third great subject, which the old historians have not comprehended, and which waits the advent of a writer of deeper insight and more comprehensive grasp. Some future Hallam may show the world that Feudalism, which formed such a conspicuous stage in the development of modern Europe, has played an equally prominent part in the History of China.

Is it objected that, unhappily for the study of Chinese history, its theatre is too remote to awaken

public interest in any high degree? Egypt and Babylon are remote in one sense, but they are not altogether alien. They are only higher up on the stream that expands into the broad current of our western civilization. Ancient India is remote; but it forms a part of the same ethnic system with ourselves, and, on that account, appeals powerfully to the imagination of the European. Chinese history forms a stream apart, which has not, it is said, in any way affected the state of the western world.

But is it true that the two streams have flowed down through the tracts of time in complete independence of each other? Are they not like those ocean currents which bear life and beauty respectively to the Eastern shores of the Atlantic, and to those of the Pacific? The Gulf-stream and the Kurosiwo, though flowing through opposite hemispheres, are not indifferent to each other. They are connected by the pulsations of a common tide. So the civilizations of China and Europe, however widely separated, have each derived from the other influences as real, though occult, as those that throb in the bosom of the ocean. To discover their points of contact, and to exhibit the proofs of mutual reaction, are among the most interesting problems offered to the student of Chinese history.

That the mutual influence of the two civilizations will in the future be far greater than it has ever been in the past, it is easy to foresee. When China, developing the resources of her magnificent domain, and clothing herself with the panoply of modern science, becomes, as she must in the lapse of a century or two, one of the three or four great powers that divide the dominion of the globe, think you that the world will continue to be indifferent as to the past of her history? Not only will some knowledge of her history be deemed indispensable to a liberal education, but, while I am in the spirit of prophecy, I may as well go on to predict that her language and literature will be studied in all our Universities.

But why should the degree of our interest in any field of intellectual investigation be measured by the extent of our commercial intercourse? If the Chinese, instead of living on a globe, the dominion of which they are certain to dispute with our posterity,—if, I say, instead of this rather startling prospect, they were looking serenely down upon us from the surface of the moon, would that be any reason why we should feel no concern in their fortunes? If, by means of some kind of *selenograph* yet to be invented, the moon could convey to us the lessons of experience evolved by such a people in the course of their

existence, would she not be giving us something more substantial than moon-shine?

Of history it may be said, as of fame—

“All that we know of it, begins and ends

In the small circle of our foes and friends.”

To men of science, however, a well authenticated statistical history ought to be welcome, even if it came from the remotest limb of the Universe. The archives of China do not indeed supply us with tabular statements, such as would satisfy the demands of Buckle and Quatrefages, but they give us the nearest approach to these that it is possible to obtain from distant periods of time.

In our modern observatories, the sun is made to take his daily photograph! If we possessed an unbroken series of such pictures, extending back for some thousands of years, what an invaluable aid it would afford towards ascertaining the laws that prevail in that far-off world! Now, to the Chinese chronicler, the emperor is the sun, and he has no other object in writing than to give us his master's daily picture. Happily, other subjects are brought in as accessories that are of more interest to us than the person of the sovereign. The territory is mapped out as his hereditary or acquired estate; the people come into view as his praedial slaves; the signs of heaven,—sun-spots, star-showers, and eclipses, all so-

precious to the man of science,—are recorded as shadows on the dial of imperial destiny.

Casting a hasty glance back over the long concatenation, we are struck by the fact that Chinese society is far from presenting an aspect of changeless uniformity. Nor have its changes been as monotonous as those registered by our sea-side watcher. The men have not always worn the bald badge of subjection to a foreign yoke; nor have the women, from time immemorial, hobbled about on crippled feet. Time was when the gods, that greet us at every corner, had not yet made their advent; when books, ink, and paper, were unknown (but our historians were even then taking notes, for it is they that tell us); and when China was confined to a small angle of the present empire, the rest being occupied by savage races. In those primitive days, even the face of nature was different, the hills being covered with forest, the plains with jungle, and the lowlands with reedy marshes abounding in ferocious beasts.

Numerous as have been the changes through which the Chinese people have passed, they have not been always treading in a vicious circle. History shows them to have made a general, if not a regular, advance in all that constitutes the greatness of a people; so that, in the 76th cycle of their chronology, their domain is more extended, their numbers greater, and

their intelligence higher, than at any preceding epoch in the forty centuries of their national existence.

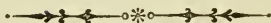
We shall find too that their progress through the ages has been, amid all their fluctuations, confined within the lines of a fixed and well-defined social organization. In the state, a *jure divino* monarchy has, in all ages, formed the nucleus of the government; and the supremacy of letters has been secured by making learning the passport to office. In the family, the kindred principles of unlimited subjection to living parents, and of devout worship to dead ancestors, appear of equal antiquity. These four are the corner-stones on which the social fabric reposes at the present day.

In conclusion:—To those who have the language and the leisure to enable them to explore its original sources, I would commend the study of Chinese History as alike attractive and profitable. With these two conditions, we have access to masses of historic lore, which we may compare, not to virgin mines, but to those heaps of silver slag left by the old Greeks at the mines of Laurium, from which the Germans are now extracting quantities of the precious metal that escaped the cruder methods of the ancients. Or, to vary the figure, we may liken them to the walls of the Colloseum, out of which the mediæval Pontiffs quarried stones to build the churches of Rome.

Be not appalled by the extent of the materials offered to your industry. Instead of seeking distinction, as many do, by writing for the fiftieth time a life of Mary Stuart or Lucretia Borgia, why not appropriate some little corner of this unclaimed territory, and exploit its hidden treasures? The reconstruction of the whole by any one man is not to be thought of. A history, worthy of the grandeur of the subject, cannot be produced otherwise than by the combined efforts of many scholars.



II.
CHINA
VIEWED FROM
THE GREAT WALL.
(*A Historical Sketch*).



TO study the history of Egypt, one should place himself on the top of the Pyramids. For that of China, there is no point of observation so favorable as the summit of the Great Wall. Erected mid-way between the hazy obscurity of early tradition and the restless age in which we now live, it commands the whole of the moving panorama. So colossal as to form a geographical feature on the surface of the globe, its importance to us consists in its epoch rather than in its magnitude. It is to this epoch that our attention will be chiefly directed ; but, from this vantage ground, we shall allow ourselves a few glances before and after, as far as our limit of time* may permit, with the hope of conveying some faint impression of the unity of Chinese History.

* First delivered as an evening lecture.

Not long after the age when Alexander swept the chess-board of Western Asia, and combined its numerous nationalities into one empire, Ch'in-shi, the Builder of the Wall, did the same thing for the states of Eastern Asia. These states constituted the Chinese Empire, a country which at that early period united the wealth of Persia and the culture of Greece. Nominally under the sway of one Imperial House, they had been for some hundreds of years virtually independent, adjusting their mutual relations, and waging internecine wars without interference from their powerless Suzerain. In theory, their relations to each other and to the head of the empire were an exact counterpart of what is called the Feudal System in Europe. The analogy extends even to the five orders of nobility, *Kung, Heo Po, Tse, Nan*; which answer to Duke, Marquis, Earl, Viscount, Baron. From the earliest ages, it had been customary for the founder of a new dynasty to confer these dignities upon his near relatives, and to partition the empire among them. This form of government is so natural that it required no originality for its creation; and there is little reason to suppose that mediæval Europe, in adopting it, borrowed a leaf from the experience of ancient China.

While rewarding the services of kinsmen and coadjutors, this system had the advantage of

diminishing the cares of their overlord, by allowing to them the exercise of home-rule. During the first generation, while personal ties were strong, it worked fairly well; but, when those ties became weakened by time, disintegration followed, and the Suzerain was left with scarcely a shadow of power.

A further retrospect will be necessary, to enable us to understand the period with which we have to deal.

The Builder of the Great Wall was preceded by three dynasties of long duration, viz.,—

That of Hia	^{Hea} 2205-1766 B.C.
„ „ Shang	1766-1122 „
„ „ Chow	1122- 255 „

Looking beyond the first of these, we perceive the golden glow of the morning of history. In the midst of its deceptive haze, we discern two figures which the Chinese have agreed to accept as models of princely excellence. They are Yao and Shun, the Numa Pompilius and Tullus Hostilius of the rising State.

The simplicity of that primitive society is the mother of virtues, public and private. In the state, Yao sets the example of an unselfish ruler; and in the family, Shun is a paragon of filial sons.

Holding that a prince exists for the good of his people, and sensible to the infirmities of age, Yao resolves to adopt a successor, his own son being unworthy of the throne. His ministers recommend

Shun, the son of a blind peasant, who has patiently borne the ill temper of his father, and who by his good example has effected a complete reform in the character of his family. Yao, wishing to subject him to a further trial, gives him his two daughters in marriage; makes him his associate in the government; and, after twenty-eight years, leaves him sole occupant of the throne.

The most notable event of Yao's reign is the so-called "deluge," - a series of unparalleled inundations. "The waters rise," said the old Monarch, "they embosom the mountains, and insolently menace the sky itself. Who is there who will undertake the control of these unruly floods?" Kwen undertook the task, and was put to death either for inefficiency or insubordination. The son of Kwen, known as Ta Yu, was allowed to continue the task; and having succeeded, after nine years of incredible labors, in establishing a perfect system of embankments and drainage, he was rewarded by the Imperial Yellow, Shun giving him the preference over his own worthless offspring. In the *Shu-king*, the most ancient book of history, we find the maxim that "penalties should not descend from parents to children." In this case, not merely is the son held guiltless of his father's fault, but the crime of the latter interposes no obstacle in his way to the throne.

Ta Yu, though deemed a sage, did not continue the unselfish tradition; but, by transmitting the throne to his son, "made of the empire a family estate," as the chroniclers say. The imperial dignity has remained hereditary, with only a solitary vestige of the ancient ideal, viz., that the Emperor has theoretically the power of naming his successor; and in fact often makes the election irrespective of primogeniture.

In the reign of Chung K'ang, the fourth in succession (2159-2146), occurred an eclipse of the sun, which Professor Russell, of the Imperial Tung-wên College, has succeeded in identifying, after a laborious calculation of no fewer than thirty-six eclipses. Professor Knobel, of Cambridge University, has also pronounced in favor of the trustworthiness of these ancient records, on the ground of astronomical data contained in a kind of calendar of the Hia dynasty, fragments of which have come down to our times.

The area at that period, comprehended within the empire, was less than half of China proper, not a foot of territory on the south of the Yang-tse having been brought under its sway. The conquering tribe, which formed its nucleus, seems to have entered the Valley of the Yellow River from the North-west, bringing with it some knowledge of letters and the elements of a civilization, which enabled it to overcome the savage races by whom the country

was occupied. Some they destroyed, others they absorbed; and the process of growth and assimilation went on for ages, until those heterogeneous elements were moulded into one people, the most numerous on the face of the earth.

This process of conquest and assimilation may be regarded as specially the work of the First dynasty, though it was not completed for ages, nor is it wholly complete at the present day.

Under the Second dynasty arose that feudal form of government, which prevailed for more than a thousand years, and came to an end in the epoch of the Great Wall. Of both, the records are exceedingly meagre—scarcely extending beyond dynastic genealogy—the occupants of the throne, with a few brilliant exceptions, being so insignificant that their places in the succession are represented by numerals instead of names.

While the invention of letters dates from a period anterior to the First dynasty, it was not until the Third that literature became an important factor in human life.

King Wên and duke Chow, its founders, set an example of devotion to study; and, later on, cultured statesmen appeared, who strove to aggrandize their native states; and philosophers, who, with broader views, aimed at the reformation of the people.

Of the latter class, the most noted were Confucius (551-479), and Mencius (372-289), both of whom merit a front rank among the teachers of mankind. Besides inculcating virtues of a noble type, they sought by their doctrines to counteract the centrifugal tendency, which was a marked feature in the political movement of their day. They had never known anything better than the feudal system; and, in their view, the only cure for the disorders of the times was to restore it to its primitive purity, - a state of things in which the vassal princes, to use the expression of Confucius, "revolved about the throne of Chow as the constellations do around the pole of heaven."

That system, the Builder of the Wall was bent on eradicating; hence his hostility to the Confucian School, in its principles and its professors.

The family history of this daring innovator is necessary, to explain his personal career. A remote ancestor had founded the petty principality of Ch'in in the North-west. He had won his spurs in conflict with the Tartars; and his small fief, growing into a considerable state, owed its importance to its position as a barrier against the incursions of Northern nomads. Many of those semi-savages became incorporated with its people; and its civilization, being of a ruder type than that of the other states, from a bulwark it became a menace. Through five centuries it

grew steadily in power, advancing with the slow but resistless force of a glacier, perpetually encroaching on its neighbors until it finally absorbed them.

Its history exhibits a remarkable succession of ambitious princes and able ministers. The princes eventually assumed the title of king, which the Wall-Builder laid down in exchange for that of Emperor. They were all barbarous, the practice of human sacrifices, and many other savage customs, surviving among them long after they had become extinct in other parts of China. They were nevertheless animated with one thought, and pursued one policy, viz., the aggrandizement of their country, and the ultimate conquest of the whole empire.

To this end, their barbarism proved a help rather than a hindrance. It exposed them to be treated with contumely by princes of greater refinement; and, burning for revenge, it made them conscious that they could only hope to succeed by the employment of cultivated agents. They accordingly invited men of talent from neighboring states to take office, and establish themselves within their dominions. Six men, all of whom became noted for their share in building up the rising power, were thus imported from abroad, and entrusted with the reins of government. They are known in history as the "Six Great Chancellors of Ch'in."

Forsaken by its vassals, or recognized only under forms of empty ceremony, the house of Chow languished unto 255 B.C. Occupying a district in Honan, which formed the special apauage of the Imperial family, but for a long time exercising no control over its neighbors, and centrally situated, that district was described as *Chung Kwo*, the "Middle Kingdom;" a designation which succeeding dynasties applied to the whole of their dominions. In this year (255 B.C.), provoked by the cabals which found a focus under the shadow of a venerable throne, the King of Ch'in, Great Grand-father of the Wall-Builder, entered the Imperial Capital; and the dynasty of Chow, the most famous in the annals of China, came to an end, after a duration of 867 years.

The conqueror now performed two acts, which asserted his accession to the vacant suzerainty. The first was to remove to his own capital in Shense nine tripods of brass, which represented the *K'in Cho*, or nine districts of the empire, and were revered as the chief emblem of Imperial power. The other was to offer a solemn sacrifice to Shang-ti, the "Supreme Ruler," and to formally assume the character of High Priest in conjunction with that of Emperor, a two-fold character which, like that of Melchizedek, has always been recognized as belonging to the sovereigns of China.

Five of the six great vassals, who ruled over the other sections of the empire, hastened to pay homage to their new Lord; but one of them, the Prince of Wei, being somewhat behindhand, the arrogant King inflicted a terrible punishment, wasting some of his lands and occupying others. The King's ambition was to resuscitate the empire; not to revolutionize its institutions. The vassals of Chow were his vassals; and submission, not abdication, was what he required. Enjoying for five years a dignity to which his ancestors had aspired for many generations, King Chao closed a successful reign of fifty-seven years. After two brief reigns, one of which had lasted only *three days*, his sceptre was transferred to King Chêng, his great-grandson, whom by anticipation we have styled Ch'in-shi, the Builder of the Great Wall.

The young King, only thirteen years of age, succeeded at once to two thrones,—that of Ch'in, the domain of his fathers, and that of Chow, or the empire, which placed him on the highest pinnacle of dignity that any Chinese statesman had ever conceived. Was he satisfied with this double heritage? If he had been, is it not probable that the wheels of the new chariot would have been made to run in the old track? But to credit him with planning the tremendous revolution which he was destined to

achieve would be to allow him a precocity and a genius unexampled in history.

He was fortunate in having for guides two statesmen of rare originality; but even they could not have conceived the entire programme. They possessed the capacity to win in every conflict with his unruly vassals; and he (or his mother and grand-mother, two remarkable women who acted as regents) always encouraged the bold measures of his chancellors. In all great revolutions, the leading minds are more than one, though some one usually comes to be acknowledged as the Master Spirit. In this the Master Spirit was Ch'in-shi, who proved his claim to the title by an eventful reign of forty years; but his two chancellors bore each a leading part in re-casting the destinies of the empire.

One of them was Lū Pu-we, a merchant of Chao, the state with which Ch'in was most frequently at war. Among the vicissitudes attending these hostilities a prince, who bore the expressive cognomen of Yi Jên, or "Rare Man," found himself relegated to the capital of Chao as a hostage for the observance of a treaty. The merchant here met the exile, and, after learning his personal qualities and family history, resolved to attach himself to a fortune that appeared to be at its lowest ebb. Saying to himself in the language of his trade—**此奇貨可居**—"This is a piece of goods that can bide

its time,"—he set himself to bring about the restoration of the prince; and at the same time, to pave his way to the throne. Whether he solicited the embassy, or whether the prince selected him for it, he made his way secretly to the Court of Ch'in, obtained an interview with the consort of the heir-apparent, who, being childless, had to accept for her husband's heir the son of a concubine. The merchant convinced her of the great qualities of his patron; and she succeeded in persuading her husband to adopt as successor the exile who justly bore the title of Yi Jên,—“The Rare.”

The merchant's next move was to procure the return of the hostage. But, before this could be effected, a trifling incident occurred, which, however unsavoury, cannot be omitted, on account of the influence which it exercised on the fortunes of both. The merchant's beautiful wife captivated the heart of the exile; and he, with feigned reluctance, ceded his marital rights. This Chinese beauty, the “Lady of Handan,” is said by malicious chroniclers to have imported into the house of Ch'in the blood of the merchant Lü, as Livia carried that of Claudius Nero into the family of Augustus Cæsar; with this difference, however,—that, while Augustus acknowledged the debt, the Prince of Ch'in ignored his obligations for the child, though he never forgot his debt for the surrender of the wife. Nor was the wife herself

unmindful of what she owed to the complacency of her merchant husband;—for twenty years she proved herself a main prop to his growing influence.

Succeeding his father, whose reign was perhaps the shortest in history, Yi Jên, "The Rare," ruled his two-fold realm as *kaiser-könig* for six years. The Merchant of Chao became his prime-minister and field-marshal. Not merely planning campaigns, but executing them in person, the quondam Merchant humbled refractory vassals, raised the prestige of Ch'ín, and confirmed its hold on the supreme power. So essential did he render himself to a state not rich in native talent that the son of the "Lady of Handan," on mounting the throne, continued him in his double office, conferred on him a marquisate of "ten thousand families," and added the title of *Chung-fu*, "My Second Father."

Native courtiers, envious of his honors, at length profiting by the intimacy of his relations with the dowager-empress, his former wife, trumped up an accusation of shameless impropriety. The young emperor, who neither suspected such a thing, nor believed it, felt compelled to remove his chancellor from court, in order to shield the reputation of his mother. (The story of his blood-relationship to the merchant statesman is doubtless a fiction of a later age, and had never reached his ears). He accordingly

issued a decree banishing his powerful minister, and the latter took his disgrace so much to heart that he swallowed poison, or in Chinese phrase "took a short cut" to the other world.

He had been to the young prince what Menzikoff was to Peter the Great; and, to complete the parallel, the tongue of slander connected each in a similar manner with the elevation of an empress.

Of the many services rendered to his prince by this able minister, the most signal was to provide a worthy successor in the Chancellorship. This was Li-sze, a native of Chu, whom he had employed as a subordinate; and who, though at first another was elevated to the vacant post, soon after took possession of the helm.

Endowed with consummate tact and sublime self-confidence, Li-sze was just the man required to convert a dynastic change into a social and political revolution. In sagacity and courage, he was the Bismarck of his day; and the task he had to perform was not unlike that which fell to the lot of the eminent German, the consolidation of the power of a new Imperial House, and the unification of a dissevered Empire. As we shall see, he accomplished it with a thoroughness unattainable by the German chancellor.

It cannot be affirmed that he was superior in talents to his predecessors in office; but he was

happier than they in being called to play the last act in a long drama. Most of them had acted the part of innovators. One had changed the tenure of land, another had reformed the mode of collecting revenue, a third had remodeled the army; and all, by introducing foreign methods and employing foreign agents, had drawn on themselves the hostility of the natives, who were naturally jealous of foreign influence. The wave of opposition reached its height in the days of Li-size, and a petition was laid before the throne demanding the expulsion of all foreigners.

The premier was equal to the occasion. Recounting in a counter-memorial the great services rendered by his foreign predecessors, he showed how his enemies, to satisfy their petty spite, would force their country to abdicate its destiny.

"The Tai-shan," he said, "is a great mountain, because it does not spurn the grains of sand that add to its height. The Hwang-ho is a great river because it does not reject any rivulet that offers to swell its volume." And he went on to apply these parallels with such force that he not only stemmed the tide of opposition for that time, but left on record for all time a masterly argument for the employment of men of all nations who are able to bring superior gifts to the service of the State. In that day, "foreigners" were those who lived on the opposite

side of a river, or of a mountain range; to-day the word means those who dwell beyond the ocean. The eloquent plea of Li-sze, even at this distance of time, has had some influence in preparing the reigning House to welcome foreigners, who by new arts and new sciences contribute to the well-being of the empire.

When, in the 26th year of his reign, the emperor had destroyed the last of the hostile states, he resolved to signalize the event by changing the imperial title. Instead of *Tien Wang*, the Heaven-appointed King, a title made venerable by the usage of nearly a thousand years, he substituted that of *Hoang-ti*, Autocratic Sovereign; proudly prefixing the syllable *Shi*, "The First," that he might be remembered as the founder of a new order.

The change of title implied a change of policy. This was nothing short of the complete abolition of the feudal system, a system consecrated by immemorial usage. When the hostile princes had been dethroned, two of his ministers besought him to install his own kindred in the forfeited dignities. Li-sze, being asked for his opinion, replied that a "system which had brought about the destruction of the empire must itself be destroyed if the new empire was to be permanent." Instead of restoring the fallen powers under altered names, he recommended that their

very boundaries should be obliterated, and that the whole empire should be divided into thirty-six provinces, whose governors should be appointed by the central throne, and hold office for a limited term. His suggestions were adopted, and at the same time the new title was proclaimed, as expressive of the altered policy.

If the overthrow of the rival principalities had cost centuries of conflict, the extirpation of their traditions was not likely to be attended with less difficulty. The scholars of the Confucian School were without exception devoted to the ancient régime, and plotted incessantly for its restoration. They deemed the feudal partition of the empire as sacred as a law of nature; and the heavenly bodies were meted out and distributed among the vassal states. The books, in which that order of things was consecrated, were, as Li-size pointed out, sufficient to call it into existence again. To obviate that danger, he proposed they should be committed to the flames; and so effectually was the order carried into execution that very few escaped.

It was soon found that learned men, whose minds were stored with the ancient classics, were teaching them from memory; they might at any time reproduce them in writing; and many of them were known to be active in sowing the seeds of dissension.

"Away with them," said the tyrant; and four hundred-and-sixty of the most eminent were put to death, lest, through them, the old land-marks should be made to re-appear on the new map of the empire.

Never was a political reformer more grimly in earnest; nor has anyone, in the pursuit of a great idea, ever shown himself more reckless of human life. In these respects, he resembles the apostles of "liberty, fraternity, and equality," who made use of the guillotine—rather than any monarch in the pages of history. In some points, his consolidation of the Chinese empire recalls the unification of Germany,—Ch'in being the Prussia of China; and her princes and chancellors the Fredericks and Bismarcks, who slowly prepared, and eventually accomplished, a mighty revolution. But the analogy is not complete. The Hapsburgs have been dispossessed, and the Hohenzollerns set up in their place; but the great vassals remain.

The unification of Italy offers a juster parallel,—the rise and growth of Sardinia answering fairly well to those of Ch'in; and the incorporation of Naples, the Duchies, and the Papal States, corresponding to the abolition of the feudal principalities in China. The unceasing efforts of the clergy to bring about the resuscitation of the temporal power completes the resemblance.

Having as he supposed stamped out the embers of sedition within his dominions, the Tyrant, as we may fairly call him, now turned his attention to the dangers threatening his empire from without. On the West, the Mountains of Thibet formed a natural barrier; on the South, the river Yang-tse held back the barbarous tribes who inhabited its right bank; on the East, the sea was a safe-guard, as the age of maritime warfare had not yet arrived; but the North was a quarter from which the Kings of Ch'in had learned by sad experience to expect their most troublesome, though not their most powerful, enemies.

A strange idea now came into the head of the Autocrat,—that of walling them out. To have attempted this before the states were united under his sway would have been futile, as the discontent or negligence of a neighbor would always enable an invader to enter by a flanking movement. At this epoch, he had no neighbors. The whole empire, from the desert to the sea, was his; and he resolved to construct a wall, not to supersede vigilance or valor, but to render them effectual in securing repose.

A million of men were sent to the frontier, some laboring as masons, others serving as guards; and in ten years time the work was accomplished.

The length of this huge structure is 1550 miles, its height and breadth varying with the necessities of the ground. On the plain, it presents an imposing appearance; but on mountain sides, where it has the aid of natural fortifications, it often dwindles to a mere embankment.

The Wall may be said to have fulfilled its purpose, notwithstanding the fact that subsequent ages have seen more than one dynasty of extra-mural Tartars on the throne of China. Its object was not to withstand conquest, but to prevent the marauding incursions of border nomads. With this view, it continues to be garrisoned, though the reigning house is Tartar in origin, and extends its sway to both sides of the Wall.

If the erection of this bulwark be criticised as absurd, as well may we criticise the Roman Wall, whose remains are still to be seen on the North of the Tweed.

This work completed, the Imperial Builder was not content to end his days in idleness. He had extinguished war and smothered politics. What was he to do for excitement?

He betook himself to travel; and, among other places, visited the sacred mountain Tai-shan, in Shantung, offering on its summit sacrifices to Shang-ti, the God of Heaven, in imitation of the founders of ancient dynasties.

He was superstitious rather than religious. Persecuting Confucius on political grounds, he favored the rival sect of Tao, which peopled land and sea with gods and fairies. Its professors invented alchemy, and pursued the search for the elixir of immortality. Among their traditions was a belief that there were islands in the eastern sea where the herb ambrosia grew, a curious counterpart of the notion prevalent at that time in Europe, which placed the Isles of the Blessed in the Western Ocean. By the advice of a Taoist, he despatched a fleet manned by three thousand boys and maidens to seek the herb in those islands. Some say that, deterred by storms, the fleet turned back; others, that it arrived in Japan, where those youths and maidens mingled with the natives, importing Chinese blood and Chinese culture.

While he was on his travels, an aerolite fell to the earth, which, when discovered, bore an inscription foretelling the death of the tyrant and the overthrow of his family. Seeing in this only a device to excite revolt, he ordered all educated men in the vicinity to be slaughtered, sure thereby of bringing to punishment the authors of the inscription.

The prediction was not slow in being fulfilled. Death overtook the proud monarch before he could regain his palace, 209 B.C., when he had worn his new title about twelve years. His throne fell to an

imbecile son, who in a short time lost it, together with his life, being succeeded in 206 B.C. by Liu Pang, the Founder of the Dynasty of Han.

Under this dynasty, the books that had been burned rose from their ashes, and a faint attempt was made to resuscitate the feudal states; but, though then and later they were employed by political agitators as "names to conjure with," the system was dead. Its spirit was extinct. The people chose to be devoured by one lion rather than by a gang of jackals; and the sovereign, finding himself in possession of autocratic power, was loth to part with it. The system of centralization exists to this day; and three monuments remain to remind all generations that Ch'in-shi, the son of the Lady of Handan, was its author. These are,—

- 1.—The Great Wall of China, which he built;
- 2.—The title *Hoang-ti*, for Emperor, which he was the first to adopt;
- 3.—The name China, which is obviously derived from the House of Ch'in, which made itself famous by absorbing the other feudal states.

There is no man in Chinese history whose memory is execrated like that of Ch'in-shi. He is remembered as Builder, Burner, and Butcher, rather than as Founder of the Empire. The blood of the scholars whom he butchered has given birth to sixty generations of

enemies, who never cease to misrepresent his motives, and to blacken his name. As he styled himself "The First," they accuse him of destroying the books that his pretensions might not be exposed. As a follower of Tao, they charge him with seeking to reduce the people to a state of ignorance, in order to govern them with facility, in accordance with a maxim of Lao-tse,—“fill their bellies, and empty their heads.” The books have risen from their ashes, but the many-headed hydra which he slew has never re-appeared. Tyrannical and unscrupulous he undoubtedly was; but there is no denying that he was a statesman of far-reaching views, original in plans, and unflinching in execution.

If the dynasty of Ch'ín has the honor of giving to China the name by which it is known in other lands, that of Han, which is next in order (206 B.C.—203 A.D.), has bequeathed to the People the designation by which they prefer to describe themselves. Nothing but widely extended sway, coupled with long duration and brilliant achievement, could have impressed them to such an extent as to make them proud to call themselves the “Sons of Han.”

The name points to a district where the new power sprang into being,—the banks of the River Han, in the heart of the kingdom of Chu. That kingdom, the greatest of the feudal states, had been for many

generations a formidable rival to the ambition of Ch'in; and, when the latter succumbed to the unpopularity consequent on the destruction of those states, the butchery of scholars, the burning of books, and the building of the Great Wall, the old rival naturally came forward to claim the succession. A scion of the House of Chu was called out of the obscurity into which his family had sunk and decorated with the new title of *Ti*,—Emperor,—with the prefix *Yi*, the Just or Rightful.

A figure-head and nothing more, the young Pretender was supported by two generals of great ability. One was Hiang Yu, a man of such influence that he could handle his sovereign like a puppet, and known in history as Pa Wang, the Dictator. The second was Liu Pang, a bosom-friend and protégé of the first.

Born of poor parents in the North of the present province of Kiangsu, young Liu, with prescient instinct, made his way to the Court of the new Claimant, rather than attach himself to the fortunes of a falling House. Welcomed by the powerful Hiang Yu, and acting under his orders, he soon rose to distinction.

It fell to his lot, while leading an expedition into Ch'in, for the purpose of reducing to submission that disorganized region, to receive the insignia of empire

from the grand-son of the Wall Builder. The ill-fated Prince came to his camp with a rope about his neck, and with all his retinue in the garb of humiliation and mourning. Some counselled Liu Pang to put him to death; but, replying that it was "a shame to slay an enemy who surrendered voluntarily," he treated him kindly, and set him at liberty. Others counselled him to place the abdicated crown on his own head. The temptation was great, and few soldiers of fortune would have perceived its perils. Whether Liu saw them, we are not informed; but, obeying the promptings of an honest heart, he kept the regalia for him whom he had saluted as the Rightful Emperor.

Before they had time to reach the capital of Chu, the young Prince had fallen a victim to the ambition of Hiang Yu. He was again urged to assume the Yellow. Again he refused, but his patron's treason had absolved him from further allegiance; and he made a long stride towards the throne, when he resolved to break with the traitor.

Doubting his ability to make head against his redoubtable antagonist, he took counsel with the astute Chang Liang. "Do nothing in your own name," replied the famous politician, whose advice was as unerring as that of Alithophel. "Proclaim yourself the avenger of your murdered Lord, and the empire will rally to your standard."

Clothing his army in the weeds of mourning, he marched against his quondam friend. The usurper was the better general, but Liu had the juster cause. Fortune did not favor him at the outset, but he was never disheartened.

On one occasion, he was attacked while crossing a river, and his forces scattered to the winds; yet so powerfully did his cause appeal to the loyalty of the people that in a short time he found himself powerful enough to besiege the usurper in a fortified city. The latter got possession of Liu's family, and sent him word that, unless he raised the siege, he would roast his father alive. "My father," replied Liu, "is yours by adoption; if you choose to roast your father, send me a piece of the flesh as proof of your parricide." The usurper, finding it impossible to intimidate him, abandoned the city, and let the captives go free.

Beaten in a great battle, Hiang Yu put an end to his own life; and Liu, having no longer a rival in the field, consented to assume the title of Emperor. He is known as Kao Tsu, the High Ancestor, or Founder of the House of Han.

He said of himself,—“I owe my success to three men, and each is my superior in some conspicuous talent. In statecraft, I am not equal to Chang Liang; in commissariat and finance, I am not to compare

with Siao Ho; in the management of troops, I confess the superiority of Han Sin. Where, then, is my strong point? It is in the faculty of making use of others. These three heroes I, and I alone, have been able to employ as tools to build my throne."

From the Great Wall, looking down the stream of time, we observe in the foreground the dynasty of Han; and farther away, in diminishing perspective, the numerous dynasties that have followed each other to the present day. Some have been brief, and others partial in extent. Five of them have extended their sway over the whole of China, and held possession from one to three centuries. Each of these periods offers to the view some salient feature,-something built into the frame-work of Chinese life, and forming a permanent addition to the inheritance of the Chinese people.

The Han period, as might be expected, stretching over 469 years, is peculiarly rich in monuments of intellectual activity. It is emphatically an era of reconstruction, when the Chinese people, delivered from the anarchy of the "warring states," and emancipated from the tyranny of Ch'in, enter on a new career. Two things concur to make it forever memorable,-the revival of letters, and the introduction of Buddhism.

Amid the clash of arms and the strife of factions, there had been small place for the cultivation of learning. But when, after two or three turbulent reigns, Wên Ti, a pacific prince, found himself in undisputed possession (179 B.C.), a search was instituted for the lost books. One after another the missing works began to come from their hiding places. No copies being found of the *She* and *Shu*, the Books of Poetry and History, they were taken down from the recitation of old men, who still retained a verbatim recollection of their contents. Those who remembered portions of the Odes were comparatively numerous; but the Book of History, consisting of the relics of high antiquity edited by Confucius, was reproduced by one man. This was Fuh Sêng, a venerable scholar, who was so enfeebled by age as to be unable to present himself at court; and a commission of scribes repaired to his house, to write it out from his lips. Many of its obscurities are supposed to be due to slips of memory and errors of hearing.

The high premium placed on lost literature naturally suggested its fabrication. Spurious classics appeared in great numbers. Some of them were works of genius, and posterity has thought fit to preserve them, though reposing no more confidence in their genuineness than we do in the poems of Ossian.

司馬遷
Next to the resurrection of the sacred texts, the thing which sheds the most lustre on this epoch is the revival of History. In this, the way was led by Sze Ma-ts'ien (100 B.C.). Historiographer by official appointment, he had the advantage of following in the footsteps of a father, who had filled the same office and amassed valuable materials. The great work, which has procured him the title of the Herodotus of China, was approaching completion, when a General, for whose fidelity he had made himself responsible, surrendered to the Khan of Tartary. Sze-ma, in accordance with the barbarous usage of those times, was called on to undergo the penalty of death or mutilation. Rather than consign past ages to oblivion and leave future ages in ignorance, he chose the latter; lived to complete his great undertaking, and enjoys a well-earned immortality.

Pan Ku, who, two centuries later, held the same office, is celebrated as the author of a history of the first half of the Han dynasty. Dying before the completion of his work, his accomplished sister Tsao-Ta-ku, then a widow, was entrusted by the Emperor with the task of bringing it to a conclusion. In learning, not behind the most eminent men of her age, this lady is held up as a model for Chinese women, by whom she is much admired, but only sparingly imitated.

The invention of paper by Tsai Lun, in the second century B.C., contributed greatly to the multiplication of books. It was itself a result of the revival of learning, which created a demand for cheaper writing materials. Till then, silk or bamboo tablets had been in use.

From the advent of the Wall Builder, Taoism had been dominant, and Confucianism under a cloud. By the revival of letters, Confucianism was again raised to honor, without, however, any immediate repression of the rival creed, which, throughout the Han period, continued to be, with occasional fluctuations, in great favor. In the year 67 A.D., under the Emperor Ming Ti, the triad of religious creeds was completed by the introduction of Buddhism from India. No doubt the apostles of Buddhism had found their way to China at an earlier date, and by this time they had attracted sufficient attention to lead to an embassy in quest of competent teachers. Such an embassy was a natural outcome of the unsettled state of the Chinese mind, agitated by the contentions of rival schools of religious thought. The Emperor is said to have been prompted to this measure by a dream, in which he saw an image of gold representing a man with a bow and two arrows. In the Chinese name for Buddha, the radical is man, and the phonetic a bow and arrows; and it is evident that the analysis of the character gave birth to this legend. It is

curious to speculate what might have been the effect had Ming Ti's ambassadors gone further west, and met with disciples of the young and vigorous Christianity of that day.

Buddhism has profoundly affected the Chinese mind, as we have shown in another paper; but it is a mistake to reckon the whole population of China as adherents of the Buddhist faith. It has absorbed Taoism, but the educated classes, almost without exception, adhere to Confucius; and even the uneducated profess allegiance to the Great Master of China. The truth is that, while each religion has a hierarchy of its own, the faith and practice of the masses rest on a mixture of all three.

In the T'ang dynasty (618-905), poetry, which appeared in the rudest ages, attained its highest pitch of perfection,—Li Po and Tu Fu being the Pope and Dryden of an age of poets. Chinese poetry comprehends every variety, except the epic, its place being filled by semi-poetical romances.

The Chinese theatre now secured for the first time the honor of Imperial patronage, a stage being erected in a pear-garden, whence actors are still described as "Children of the Pear-garden."

The Hanlin Yuan, or Imperial Academy, which crowns the culture of the whole empire, dates from this period.

The Sung dynasty (960-1278) was marked by three things:—

- 1.—By the rise of speculative philosophy, the thinkers of that period being both acute and profound;
- 2.—By expositions of Chinese texts, the most noted expositor being Chu Fu-tse, from whom it is heresy to dissent;
- 3.—By the reorganization of the civil service examinations, which then received their final form.

The Yuen, or Mongol, dynasty (1260-1341) is celebrated as the first dynasty of Tartar origin which imposed its authority on the whole of China. The dominions of Khublai were probably more extensive than those of any monarch of ancient or modern times. The completion by him of the Grand Canal, from Peking to Hangchow, a distance of 700 miles, as a monument of enterprise, stands alongside of the Great Wall.

The intellectual character of the Ming dynasty is chiefly marked by the formation of encyclopædic collections, and the codification of the laws.

Under the Manchu Tartar dynasty of Ts'ing, now on the throne, the population of the empire has attained its maximum, about 382,000,000, or China alone having more than eight times that of the T'ang period, when it was only 45,000,000.

The formation of encyclopædias and codifications, begun under the Mings, has been vigorously carried forward. Literary criticism is much cultivated, and the refinements of style are carried to a higher point than in any previous age.

Another characteristic is the cultivation of western science, which was introduced under the last rulers of the Ming, favored specially by the earlier sovereigns of the Ts'ing, and is now actively propagated in the developed form which it has attained in our day. Christianity, introduced along with science, promises to make at least as deep an impression on the Chinese mind as that which was made by the introduction of Buddhism.



III.
TARTAR TRIBES
IN
ANCIENT CHINA.*

THE Great Wall, which forms the northern boundary of China proper, tells of a conflict of races. Extending for fifteen hundred miles along the verge of the Mongolian plateau, it presents itself to the mind as a geographical feature, boldly marked on the surface of the globe. Winding like a huge serpent over the crests of the mountains, it seems (to adapt the words of Emerson) as if —

“O’er it bent the sky
As on its friend with kindred eye,
And granted it an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.”

It divides two stages of civilization to-day, as it did two thousand years ago. On one side are vast plains unbroken by the plough, and occupied only by tribes of wandering nomads; on the other are fields and gardens, rich with the products of agricultural industry.

*From the Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. xi, No. 2, 1885.

Between the two, a state of perpetual hostility is inevitable, unless restrained by the power of some overshadowing government. This natural antagonism has never failed to show itself at every point of contact, the world over. Schiller hints—not in his poems, but in a course of historical lectures—that this endless strife of shepherd and cultivator was foreshadowed in the conflict of Cain and Abel. History, unhappily, supplies us with an abundance of illustrations. Egypt fell a prey to the shepherd kings; and in Asia, as in Europe, the inhospitable North has always been ready to disgorge its predatory hordes on lands more favored by the sun.

The Chinese of the border provinces were in the earlier ages compelled to divide their time between war and work, under pain of losing the fruits of their labors. Like the pioneers of the Western continent, they never allowed themselves to be parted from their defensive weapons, and enjoyed life itself only at the price of perpetual vigilance. Experience proved that a line of military posts, no matter how closely they might be linked together, afforded no adequate security against the incursions of homeless wanderers. The Great Wall was built, not as a substitute for such posts, but as a supplement to them. That it served its end, there can be no reasonable doubt. So effectually indeed did it protect the

peaceful tillers of the soil, that an ancient saying describes it as the ruin of one generation and the salvation of thousands.

From time to time, however, the spirit of rapine, swelling into the lust of conquest, has swept over the huge barrier, as an earthquake wave sweeps over the artificial defenses of a seaport. It was not intended or expected to guarantee the whole empire against the occurrence of such emergencies. Twice has the whole of China succumbed to a flood of extra-mural invaders:—the Mongols, under Genghis Khan, having been aided in passing the Great Wall in the province of Shansi by the treachery of Alakush, a Tartar chief, whose duty it was to defend it; and the Manchus, who are now in possession of the throne, having entered at its eastern extremity, on the invitation of Wu San-kwei, a Chinese general, who sought their aid against the rebel Li Tsze-ch'êng, who had subverted the throne of the Mings.

Besides the three and a half centuries of Tartar* domination under these two great dynasties, we find, prior to the first of them, three periods of partial conquest. From 907 A.D. to 1234, a large portion of the northern belt of provinces passed successively

* The name Tartar is incapable of very precise definition. Throughout this paper, it is applied in a general sense to all the wandering tribes of the North and West.

under the sway of the Ch'í-tan and Nu-chên* Tartars; and, from 386 to 532, an extensive region was subjected to the Tartar hordes of Topa, under the dynastic title of Pei Wei. How or where these invaders passed the barrier, it is not worth while to pause to enquire; the foregoing examples being sufficient to show that, in a time of anarchy, some friend or ally can always be found to open the gates. *Chung chih ch'êng ch'êng*,† says the Chinese proverb, "Union is the best bulwark." Without exaggerating the strength of the Great Wall, which, through a large part of its extent, is far from being the imposing structure which we see in the vicinity of Peking, we may still affirm, in the light of history, that, had it been backed by forces untainted by treason and unweakened by faction, it might have proved sufficient to shield the country from conquest. Wanting these conditions, the wall was powerless for defense; and, notwithstanding its towns and garrisons, we have before us the astounding fact that the Chinese of these northern provinces have passed seven, out of the last fifteen centuries, under the yoke of Tartar conquerors.

*女真 女直, Nu-chen or Ju-chih—also called Kin Tartars. The Manchus claim them as their ancestors, the reigning house having *Aischin* = *kin* (gold) for its family name.

†衆志成城, "United hearts form the best of bulwarks."

Ascending the stream of history to the dynasty of Han, which ruled China from 202 B.C. to 220 A.D., i. e. for more than four centuries, we find ourselves in presence of the same conflict. The names of the opposing parties are changed; but the parties remain, and the war goes on. The empire is not conquered by the foreign foe; but it is kept in a state of perpetual terror, by an assemblage of powerful tribes who bear the collective name of Hiongnu. Bretschneider says they were Mongols *nomine mutato*; but Howorth, in his learned *History of the Mongols*, pronounces them Turks, or more properly Turcomans, the ancestors of the present occupants of Khiva, Bokhara, and Constantinople. From the resemblance of this name to *Hunni*, they were formerly supposed to be the progenitors of the Magyars. So strong indeed was this conviction that, a good many years ago, we had the spectacle of a follower of Louis Kossuth coming to China in search of his "kindred according to the flesh;" actuated apparently by the hope of inducing them to repeat the invasion of Europe, and deliver their brethren from the yoke of the Hapsburgs!

The numerous tribes occupying the vast region extending from Lake Balkash to the mouth of the Amoor—diverse in language, but similar in nomadic habits—were in the Han period combined under the

hegemony of the Hiongnu, forming a confederation, or an empire, rather than a single state. The Chief was styled in his own language Shanyu, a word which the Chinese historians explain as equivalent to Hwangti; and there can be no doubt that the haughty emperors of the family of Han were compelled to accord the sacred title to their barbarous rivals. In recent times, their successors (more properly successors of the Shanyu) have hesitated to concede it to the sovereign of at least one European empire. During the negotiation of the Austro-Hungarian treaty, the Chinese Ministers objected so strenuously to the assumption of *Hwangti*, that the heir to a long line of Kaisers had to content himself with the first syllable of the title, on the principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread." Had his Minister been well versed in Chinese history, what an advantage he might have gained! He would have required no other argument than the fact that the full title had been given to the Chief of the Hiongnu to insure its extension to the lord of their modern representatives. For, in China, a precedent is good for more than two thousand years; and the supposed connection, though not admitted by ethnology, is, or was, sufficiently reliable for the purposes of diplomacy.

During the Han and succeeding dynasties, the Hiongnu were held in check mostly by force of

arms; but the weaker emperors, like those of Rome, were accustomed to send their sisters and daughters across the frontier, instead of generals; flattering the vanity of the barbarians, and replacing military armaments by the sentimentalities of family alliance. The incidents connected with these transactions have supplied rich materials for poetry and romance. For instance, a popular tragedy is founded on the fortunes of Chao-keun, one of the many fair ladies who were offered as victims to preserve the peace of the borders. The Khan of Tartary, hearing of her beauty, demanded her in marriage. The Emperor refused to surrender the chief jewel of his harem; so the Khan invaded China with an overwhelming force, but he retired to his own dominions when the lady was sent to his camp. Arrived at the banks of the Amoor, she threw herself into its dark waters, rather than endure a life of exile at a barbarian court. The wars of those times would furnish materials for a thrilling history. The battle-ground was sometimes on the south of the Great Wall, but generally in the steppes and deserts beyond.

As illustrations of the varying fortunes attending the wars of the Hans and the Hiongnu, we may mention the names of Li-kwang Li-ling, Sze Mach'ien, and Su-wu. The first of these led the armies of his sovereign against the Hiongnu for many years,

in the latter part of the second century B.C. He had, it is said, come off victorious in seventy battles, when, in a final conflict, disappointed in his expectation of capturing the Khan, he committed suicide on the field of battle, though, if we may believe the record, that battle was also a victory. This gives us a glimpse of the style of Hiongnu warfare. They were like the Parthians, "most to be dreaded when in flight." That a General, contending with such a foe, should destroy himself from chagrin at the results of his seventy-first victory, affords us a fair criterion for estimating the value of the other seventy.

Li-ling, the second of the four whose names I have cited, was son* of the ill-fated Li-kwang, and appears to have been born under still less auspicious stars. Appointed to succeed his father, he suffered himself to pursue the flying enemy too hotly, when, falling into an ambuscade, his vanguard, consisting of a division of five thousand men, was cut to pieces before the main body could come to the rescue. Li-ling, with a few survivors, surrendered at discretion. His life was spared; but, to take his own description, contained in some of his letters which are still preserved, it was little better than a living death. In addition to the privations incident to a state of captivity among savage foes, he had the bitter

* Mayers says grand-son.

reflection that, on account of his supposed treachery, his nearer relations had all been put to death; and that a noble friend, who had guaranteed his fidelity, had been subjected to an ignominious punishment.

That noble friend was no other than the great historian, Sze Ma-ch'ien. Required by a cruel decree to pay the forfeit of Li-ling's alleged treachery, the historian chose to submit to a disgraceful mutilation, rather than lose his life; not, as he himself says, that he held life dear or feared death, but solely to gain a few years for the completion of his life task, the payment of a debt which he owed to posterity. He lived to place the last stone on his own imperishable monument; and for twenty centuries he has had among his countrymen a name "better than that of sons and daughters."*

Su-wu, the last of the four unfortunates, was a diplomatic envoy. Having, while at the court of the Grand Khan, attempted by undiplomatic means to compass the destruction of an enemy, he was thrown into prison, and detained in captivity for nineteen years. A tender poem is extant, which he addressed to his wife on parting, at the commencement of his perilous mission.† Whether she survived

* He had become a father prior to this disgrace.

† For this and other poems relating to the Tartar Wars, see the last Chapter of this Volume.

to welcome his return, we are not informed; but, in that case, she must have died with grief, to see him accompanied by a Turkish wife.

We cannot pause longer among the romantic episodes so thickly scattered through the literature of the Hans. We must travel back another thousand years, to arrive at the last and the principal division of our subject,—the Tartar Tribes in Ancient China.

We find ourselves at the rise of the third dynasty, the famous dynasty of Chow, which occupied the throne for over eight hundred years (1122 B.C. to 255 B.C.). We are at the dawn of letters; at the dividing line which separates the legendary from the historical period. The Great Wall has no existence, but the hostile tribes are there;—not Manchu or Mongol, not Hiongnu, Hweku, or T'ukuih, but the ancestors of all of them, under different names, hovering, like birds of prey, on the unprotected frontiers of a rich and tempting country. At this epoch, the Chinese people, who had originated somewhere in Central Asia, were few in number, and occupied a territory of comparatively limited extent. They were distinguished from their neighbors chiefly by a knowledge of letters, and by the possession of a higher civilization. This incipient culture gave them an immense advantage over the barbarous tribes who surrounded them on every side and

opposed their progress. These tribes are grouped under several comprehensive terms:—those on the east are called Yi; those on the north, Tih; those on the west, Jung or Ch'iang; and those on the south, Man. The original sense of these names seems to be as follows:—The Yi were famous archers, and were so called from their “great bows.” The northerners used dogs in hunting and herding, and depended on fire to temper the cold of their rigorous winters; “dog” and “fire” are therefore combined in the ideograph by which the Tih are designated. The Jung were armed with spears, and this their weapon furnished the symbol for their ideograph. The ideograph Ch'iang is made up of the head of a goat and the legs of a man, and so denotes to the Chinese imagination hideous monsters, the reverse of the Greek conception of Pan and the Satyrs; it at the same time means “goat-men,” “goat-herds,” or “shepherds,” and identifies them essentially with the Tih, or dog-using nomads of the north. The character for Man combines those for “worm” and “silk,” and implies that the barbarians of the south, even at that early day, were not ignorant of silk-culture.

These names and characters all became more or less expressive of contempt, but were without doubt less offensive in their original sense. Marco Polo, who followed the Tartar usage, applies the word

Man, in the form Manzi, to the whole of the Chinese people. They were so called as being "southrons" with respect to the people of Mongolia, and at the same time objects of contempt to their conquerors.

All the tribes of the south and the east, *i. e.* the Man and the Yi, save certain aborigines called Miao-tsze, were conquered and gradually absorbed and assimilated by the vigorous race whose progeny peoples modern China proper. The Miao-tsze have been able to retain their independence to the present day, by taking refuge in the inaccessible fastnesses of mountain chains.

The barbarous tribes of the north and west, however, the Tih and the Ch'iang, were never permanently subdued. This was simply because their lands never invited conquest. Their storm-swept pastures offered the Chinese no adequate compensation for the toil and danger involved in such an undertaking. On the contrary, as we have seen, it was the wealth and fertility of northern China that tempted constantly, throughout the eight hundred years of the Chow dynasty, the fierce and hungry tribes of the north and west to make their overwhelming incursions. These are the quarters from which conquering armies have once and again risen up, like the sands of their own deserts, to overwhelm parts or the whole of the empire. To

repel the aggressions of these troublesome neighbors was the chief occupation of the Chinese armies in the earliest times, as it has continued to be down through all the ages. The oldest extant Chinese poetry, older than any history, shows us the Chinese warrior, like the magic horseman of Granada, with the head of his steed and the point of his lance directed always towards the north as the source of danger. History shows that the princes who were employed to hold these enemies in check generally held in their hands the destinies of the empire. And in this way the northern tribes exercised for centuries, throughout the third or Chow dynasty, an indirect but important political influence.

To give only two examples, both from the most ancient period of authentic history:—The house of Chow, the most illustrious of the twenty-four dynasties, rose from a small warlike principality in the mountains of the north-west; they were made strong by conflict with their savage enemies, and their Chief was regarded as the bulwark of the nation. Si-po,* the Lord of the West, or Wên Wang, as he is now called, excited by his growing power the jealousy of his suzerain, the last emperor of the second or Shang dynasty, and was thrown into prison by the tyrant,

* Mencius says that T'ai Wang, the grand-father of Si-po, paid tribute to the Tartars.

who did not dare, however, to put him to death. In the panic caused by a sudden irruption of the north-men, Wên Wang was set free, and invested with even greater power than he had ever possessed before. To the day of his death, he remained loyal; but his son, Cheo-fa, or Wu Wang, employed his trained forces, like a double-edged sword, not only to protect the frontier and drive back the invaders, but also to overturn the throne of his master, the last Shang emperor.

After the lapse of over eight hundred years, the house of Chow was replaced by the house of Ch'in which had been cradled among the same mountains and made strong by conflict with the same enemies. During the Chow period (1122 B.C. to 255 B.C.), the barbarians never cease to be a factor in the politics of the empire; not merely making forays and retiring with their booty, but driving the Chinese before them, occupying their lands, and planting themselves in the shape of independent or feudal States, as the Goths and Vandals did within the bounds of the Roman empire. The analogy does not stop here. Like the Roman empire, China had, in the early part of the Chow period, two capitals, one in the west, near Si-ngan Fu (about one hundred miles south-west of the great bend of the Hoang-ho), in Shensi; and another in the east, near the present K'ai-fung Fu, in Honan.

The former was sacked by the Tartars in 781 B.C., just as Rome was by the Goths in 410 A.D.

The story, as given by Chinese writers, is as follows:- The emperor Yiu Wang had a young consort on whom he doted. One day it came into his head to give a false alarm to the armies surrounding the capital, merely to afford her an amusing spectacle. Beacon fires, the signal of imminent danger, were lighted on all the hills. The nobles came rushing to the rescue, each at the head of his retainers. Finding there was no real danger, they dispersed in a state of high indignation. The young empress had her laugh; but they laugh best who laugh last, as the proverb has it. Not long after this, the Tartars made a sudden attack. The beacon fires were again lighted; but the nobles, having once been deceived, took care not to respond to the call, lest they should again be making a woman's holiday. The city was taken, and the silly sovereign and his fair enchantress both perished in the flames. However much of the legendary there may be in this narrative, the one stern fact that lies at the bottom of it is the presence of a ferocious enemy whom we call by the general name of Tartars.

After this calamity, the heir to the throne removed his court to the eastern capital, leaving the tombs of his fathers in the hands of the barbarians. In the heart of the central plain, and surrounded by a

cordon of feudal States, the imperial throne was thought to be secure. But the irrepressible foe was forcing his way to the south and east, with the slow but resistless motion of a mountain glacier. A hundred and thirty years later (about 650 B.C.), we have the spectacle of a barbarian horde in actual possession of the eastern capital, and the emperor a refugee, pleading for re-instatement at the hands of his vassals. As might be expected, the blame of the catastrophe is again charged on a woman. That woman was a barbarian, and the fact throws a strong light on the position of the contending parties.

Her tribe had established itself in the rich alluvial region on the southern bend of the Yellow river. As enemies, they were a standing menace to the capital; as friends, they might serve as its janizaries. In order to win their favor and secure their fidelity, the emperor took one of their princesses into his harem. Captivated by her charms, he subsequently raised her to be the partner of his throne. An ambitious kinsman, desirous of supplanting the emperor on the throne, began by supplanting him in the affections of his barbarian wife. Her infidelity being discovered, she was sent back to her kindred, where she was joined by her paramour, who stirred up the powerful clan to avenge an insult done to them in her person. The emperor was easily put

to flight; but, wanting the support of the nobles, the usurper's tenure of the capital was of short duration.

Subsequently the barbarians menaced the capital frequently, if not constantly; and the Son of Heaven was more than once compelled to appeal to his vassals for succor. On one occasion, his envoys even turned against him, and went over to the enemy, apparently deeming it better to serve a growing than a decaying power. About forty years earlier than the flight of the emperor above mentioned, another barbarian beauty, named Li-ki, played a conspicuous and mischievous role at the court of Tsin-wên, the greatest chief of the vassal States. Taken in battle, she captivated her princely captor, and maintained by her talents the ascendancy which she at first owed to her personal attractions. She induced the prince to change the order of succession in favor of her offspring, sowing the seeds of a family feud that brought the princely house to the verge of destruction. Thus, by the cupidity of the Tartars, the treachery of envoys, and the intrigues of Tartar ladies, the throne of one emperor after another was menaced and shaken, until the dynasty was brought to its fall.

Of these immigrant Tartar tribes, no fewer than five or six are mentioned in the Confucian Annals as having succeeded in establishing themselves in the

interior of China. Two of them (called Red and White,—probably, like the Neri and Bianchi of Florence, from the color of their clothing, or of their banners) were settled within the bounds of the present province of Shansi; one in Honan; one in Chihli; and two in Shantung. How they effected a settlement is not difficult to understand. In an age of anarchy, when rival States were contending for the hegemony, the great barons found it to their interest to secure the aid of troops of hardy horsemen from the northern plains, rewarding their service by grants of land. The emperor sought in the same way to strengthen himself against his unruly vassals. And so, at last, by too great dependence on foreign auxiliaries, the empire became unable to shake off its helpers.

How deeply seated was the antagonism between them and the Chinese may be inferred from one or two examples. The emperor being about to despatch a body of those hired auxiliaries to chastise a disobedient subject, one of his ministers warned him against a measure which would be sure to alienate his friends, and strengthen the hands of the common enemy. "If," said the minister, "the prince finds his moral influence insufficient to secure order, his next resort is to make the most of the ties of blood. But let him beware of throwing himself into the arms of

a foreign invader." This counsel reminds us of the remonstrance of Lord Chatham against the employment of savages, in the conflict with the American colonies. We may add that India and China both came under the sway of their present rulers through the mistaken policy of depending on foreign auxiliaries.

With the Chinese, it was a practical maxim that no faith was to be kept with those invaders; and a terrible vengeance was sometimes taken for the insults and perfidy to which they were subjected.* When one of the barbarian States desired to enter into an alliance with Tsin, doing homage as a vassal, the king at first objected, exclaiming, "the Jung and the Tih have no ties or principles in common with us. We must treat them as our natural enemies." He yielded with reluctance, when one of his ministers had shown him five good reasons for a contrary course.

Another fact may be cited, which shows at once the power of the barbarians and the horror in which they were held. In the sixth century B.C., the rising civilization of China was on the point of being overwhelmed by them, when a deliverer was raised up in the person of Duke Hwan, of Ch'í, who turned

* 大國不可欺 "A great State is not trifled with," is the warning given by a barbarian Chief to the Prince of Tsin.

the tide at the critical moment, as Theodoric did the onslaught of the Huns under Attila. How imminent was the peril of the empire, and how eminent the merit of the victor, is apparent from a reply of Confucius to some one who supposed that he had spoken disparagingly of Duke Hwan. "How could I disparage Duke Hwan?" he exclaimed; "but for him we should all have been buttoning our coats on the left side,"—*i.e.*, have been subject to the Tartars.

Thus far, we have occupied ourselves with what we may call an outline of the political relations of the Chinese with the northern tribes in war and in peace. The ethnography of those tribes now claims our attention, if only to show the impossibility of arriving at any satisfactory conclusion. The doubts expressed by the best authorities as to the ethnological relations of the Hiongnu have already been referred to. Conspicuous as they are in history for many centuries about the commencement of the Christian era, it has been much disputed whether they were Turks, Mongols, or Huns. How much greater is the difficulty of identification as we travel back to a period where the torch of history sheds but a feeble ray, or disappears in the vague obscurity of legendary tradition.

In those remote ages, the guiding clue of philology fails us. And, while a few names that appear in the

less ancient literature, such as Hwe-ku and T'u-kuih,* suggest the identity of the tribes that bore them with the Ouigours and Turks, there is absolutely nothing to be made out of the names that meet us most frequently in the earlier records. The vague terms of Jung and Tih, under which were grouped peoples as diverse as the tribes of North American Indians, are always accompanied by some mark of contempt; the character for dog being prefixed to the one, and incorporated with the other. Hien-yuen, another name of frequent occurrence, has the dog radical in both its parts, and appears intended to confound the people who bore it with a tribe of dog-like apes. It would hardly be expected that writers, who deny their neighbors the attributes of humanity, should take an interest in depicting their manners or studying their language. Accordingly, we search in vain in the earlier Chinese literature for any such precious fragments of those northern tongues as Plautus, in one of his plays, has preserved of the Carthaginian. They themselves possessed no written speech; and, had they possessed it, they have left us no such imperishable monuments or relics of

* Hiongnu, T'ukuih, Hweku, Hienyuen, Huen-yu, Pei Hu, Tah-tah (or Tata = Tartar), Sien-pi, Su-shên. These are only some of the names that are given in a way more or less vague to the nomads of the North and West.

handicraft as, at this day, are throwing fresh light on the origin of the Etruscans.

A vast amount of undigested information is to be found in the pages of Matoanlin, relating to the border tribes of the middle ages. But outside the circle of the classics, the only descriptive geography that has reached us from the Chow period is the *Shan-hai-king*, a kind of Chinese Gulliver, which peoples the world with monsters of every form and fashion. The older writers, in confounding numerous tribes under one or a few terms, were no doubt influenced by the fact that to them they all appeared under one aspect,—that of wandering hunters or shepherds, equally rude and equally ferocious.

No one who gives attention to such subjects can fail to be struck with a two-fold process that takes place in the life of all nations, and most of all in that of nomadic tribes. The first is what we may call the stage of differentiation, through which they pass, when, small and weak, they keep themselves isolated from their neighbors; and even their languages diverge in a short time to such a degree as to be mutually unintelligible. The second is the stage of assimilation, when, brought into the collisions of war or the intercourse of trade, each gives and receives impressions that make them approximate to a common type. Thus the barbarians on the north of

China present in the earlier ages a boundless variety, which tends, with the lapse of time, to give place to uniformity of manners, and even of physical features.

Rolling over the plains, as the waves over the sea, their blood has been commingled; and, though their names have often changed, their physical type has probably remained unaltered. It is natural to raise the question,—What was that physical type? It has not been handed down either in painting or sculpture, and yet I think it is possible for us to recover it. It stands before us to-day, stamped on their descendants of the hundredth generation. As the Manchu and Mongol are to-day, such were the Jung and the Tih, co-eval with Assyria and Babylon. The beautiful Aleuta,* the hapless consort of the late emperor, was a Mongol; and more than two thousand years ago,

* The story of this unfortunate Princess might furnish material for a romance. Her grand-father, the Grand Secretary Sai Shang-a, having failed to suppress the Tai-ping Rebellion, was thrown into prison and condemned to death. His son, Ch'ung Ch'i, begged to share his fate, and tenderly served him in his confinement,—an act of filial piety which was subsequently rewarded by his elevation to the dignity of *Chuang-yuen*, or Scholar Laureate of the Empire. So eminent is this grade that his daughter was deemed a fit consort for the late Emperor T'ung Chih. For two short years she enjoyed her brilliant position, when, the Emperor dying, she refused food and followed him into the world of spirits.

The grounds now occupied by the *Tsung-li Yamên* and the *Imperial Collie* formerly belonged to her grand-father, and were confiscated on his fall. Whether the hapless Empress was born there is uncertain.

other princes were captivated by the beauty of the daughters of the desert. The barbarians of those times were probably not inferior to the Chinese in form, feature, or natural intelligence, as their descendants are not inferior in any of these respects. Indeed Chinese, Manchus, and Mongols, as we see them in the city of Peking, are not distinguishable except by some peculiarity of costume.

Were they originally of one mould, or have the lines of distinction become gradually effaced by the intercourse of ages? The latter is, we think, the correct hypothesis. The primitive Chinese type, that imported by the immigrants who founded the civilization of China, is, we believe, no longer to be discerned. In the southern and central regions, it has everywhere been modified by combination with the aboriginal inhabitants, leading to provincial characteristics, which the practiced eye can easily recognize. It has undergone, we think, a similar modification in the northern belt. It met here with tribes akin to those of Mongolia, and gradually absorbed them, and to this combination are probably due the height and the stalwart physique of the Northern Chinese.

This process was going on in pre-historic times. History, at its earliest dawn, shows us the unassimilated fragments of those tribes; and, at the same time, discloses a vast movement southward, all along the

line, checked for a time by the Great Wall, only to be renewed on a more stupendous scale. We have seen how small bodies infiltrated through every channel; we have also seen how, organized into great States, they established in China a dominion enduring for centuries. We are inclined to believe that they have stamped their impress on the people of this region as thoroughly as the Saxons have theirs on the people of England, or the Vandals theirs on that part of Spain which still bears their name in the form of Andalusia.

The former have made the language of the English essentially Germanic; and the language of northern China has been profoundly modified by Tartar influence. Hence we are told by Dr. Edkins that the ancient Chinese pronunciation is only to be found in the Southern provinces, where in fact we should look for it, in the region least affected by the tide of invasion.

If you inquire for the influences to which the invaders have in their turn been subjected, we answer that, in all ages, they have exchanged barbarism for such civilization as they found among the more cultivated race.



IV.
A HERO
OF THE
THREE KINGDOMS.



The subject of our inquiry falls nearly at the middle point of the long course of Chinese history; *i.e.*, between the second and third centuries of the Christian Era. In the earliest authentic records, we meet the Chinese people, then few and feeble, on the upper waters of the Yellow River in the North-west. Whence they came, and where they obtained that civilization which secured to them the conquest of Eastern Asia, we know not; but we can trace their subsequent progress down that noble stream, and into the heart of the great central plain. Like the river itself, they gather strength as they advance, until, in the epoch of which we are treating, they have brought under their sway the greater part of what we now know as China Proper. Like the river, their progress has neither been direct nor tranquil. From time to time they encounter thundering

cataracts, or, bursting their banks, flow on for a season in divided currents, bearing different names and subject to different rulers.

Such a period of division is the one at which they have now arrived.

For four hundred years they have been united under the sceptre of the family of Han, under whose sway the empire reached an extent never before attained, and rose to a pitch of splendor eclipsing that of all preceding dynasties. But if Kao Tsu was Augustus, Hien Ti, his degenerate successor of the twenty-eighth generation, was the Augustulus of his illustrious house.

The fall of the empire began in the penultimate reign, with disorders in the palace and rebellions in the provinces; and it crumbled to fragments in the hands of the imbecile Hien Ti. Gradually the jarring elements gravitate to three centres, viz:—Lo Yang, the capital of the Hans, near the present city of Honan Fu; Nanking, on the River Yang-tse, which now for the first time appears as the seat of empire; and lastly, Ch'êng-tu, at present capital of the great province of Szechuen. These are the seats of the "Three Kingdoms,"—Wei, Wu, and Shu,—whose fortunes form the history of China for about sixty years. Tsao Tsao founded the first; Sun Chuen, the second; and Liu Pei, the third.

To relate how the last of these potentates emerged from a petty district in the vicinity of Peking, and fought his way up to the throne after an eventful struggle of more than thirty years, is the object of this discourse. The first of the trio is confessedly the most accomplished master of statecraft in the annals of China; and the second combined the qualities of soldier and statesman in a high degree; but so distinct and commanding is the personality of our hero that he is in no danger of being cast into the shade by the subtle genius of the one or the bold courage of the other.

His career divides itself into three portions, which, for the sake of distinctness, we may describe geographically rather than chronologically, as his life in the North, in the East, and in the West;—Cho Cheo, forty miles from Peking, being the scene of his childhood and youth; Shantung and the borders of Kiangsu, the field of his earlier and unsuccessful wars; and the western provinces of Hupei and Szechuen, the arena of his later conflicts and final triumph. The region which he watered with the blood of his foes and his friends is half as large as the Continent of Europe; and, if few warriors of any age have acted on a vaster theatre, those who have fought more battles or experienced more vicissitudes are fewer still. For the facts of the narrative, we depend on

the History of the Three Kingdoms, by Ch'ên Sheo; but, in sketching character, we sometimes take a hint from the Romance of the same name, by Lo Kwan-chung.

I.

About the year 170 A.D., when Ling Ti sat on the throne of China, and when Marcus Aurelius swayed the sceptre of the Cæsars, a lad of ten summers might have been seen in the streets of Cho Cheo, peddling rush matting and straw sandals. This paltry merchandise was the work of his widowed mother; and its sale scarcely sufficed to procure a livelihood for mother and son. Their lot was not harder than that of thousands of their countrymen, but the recollection of ancestral glories made them feel its bitterness. The young widow could not forget that her child was of princely lineage, nor did she suffer him to be ignorant that he was an off-shoot of the Imperial House. This one domestic lesson, repeated from day to day, implanted in the bosom of the boy a spirit of discontent and restless aspiration. It proved at once the source of his fortunes and of his misfortunes. The boy had the bearing of a prince, and a face which, to the eye of a Chinese Lavater, revealed a perspective of infinite possibilities.

One day a rich citizen, to whom he was offering

his wares, was struck by his noble and intelligent countenance. "What is the name of your family," asked the citizen. "Liu," replied the boy. "The same as my own," said the rich man; "we are kinsmen, both of us scions of the House of Han." The rich man, whose name was Liu Tê-jan, thereupon assumed the charge of Liu Pei's education, sending him to school along with his own son. In later life, several prominent men belonging to the clan of Liu gave him a lift for the sake of his family name, notably Liu Piao, the semi-independent satrap of King Cheo.

At school, Liu Pei displayed but a moderate fondness for books, though it is certain, from the acquaintance which he subsequently manifested with military history, that his genius had led him to read much in that direction. He found small pleasure in the moral apothegms of Confucius and Mencius, and cared still less for their pictures of the peaceful times of Yao and Shun; but he dwelt with pride and admiration on the exploits of Han KaoTsu (Liu Pang), who, emerging from obscurity, laid the foundation of the then reigning dynasty; as also on those of Han Kwang Wu, who restored its falling fortunes, and gave it two more centuries of life.

This last, the founder of the Eastern Han, was the model which, in after years, he proposed for his own

imitation, in so far as it was possible to shape his career in accordance with any historical pattern. The mere fact of a grand achievement is often sufficient to inspire a desire to repeat the performance, where anything like imitation is impossible.

"Liu Pei," says the historian, "who as a lad had not been fond of study, on arriving at manhood, manifested a passion for dogs, horses, and fine clothes. In stature above the medium height, his arms were so long that he could touch his knees without stooping; and his eyes so prominent that he could see the tips of his ears without the aid of a mirror." He adds a few touches to the picture that are less grotesque and far more significant of potential greatness. "Liu Pei was sparing of speech; and, while his words served to conceal his thoughts, his features were a mask for his emotions. He was withal modest in demeanor, and uncommonly successful in winning the favor of his superiors."

This last characteristic, as we shall find, stood him in stead in many a dark hour. It appears indeed that for Liu Pei, as for Alcibiades, it was only necessary to obtain an interview with friend or foe, in order to plant himself securely in his confidence. But, like all the politicians of his day, he sometimes betrayed such hasty confidence when the interest of the cause to which he was devoted appeared to require it.

Nor was it solely towards his superiors that he displayed this marvellous power of winning friends. His school-fellows were devotedly attached to him; and not merely his sworn brothers Kwan Yu and Chang Fei, but multitudes of his companions in arms were ever ready to die for his sake. Sure mark of an imperial nature, this trait did more than his martial prowess to raise the huckster of Cho Cheo to the throne of his ancestors.

Once out of school, Liu Pei found himself again under the necessity of exerting himself to earn a living. His fondness for horses suggested the choice of an occupation. Rich friends advanced the requisite capital, and he scoured the country in search of fine animals and liberal purchasers. To him this was a kind of knight-errantry. He had set his heart on a military career, and, in the growing disorders of the period, he perceived that opportunities for gaining distinction would not be slow to present themselves.

In order to make his debut in a character higher than that of private trooper, he attached to himself a following of young bloods, like himself impelled by personal ambition, yet animated by a sincere and loyal patriotism. Of these, the most noted were Kwan Yu and Chang Fei, the inseparable companions of his perils and his triumphs. The heroism and unselfish devotion of the former has caused him to

be deified as the God of War, and he now figures as the tutelar deity of the Reigning Dynasty.

A romantic story is told of the manner in which these three men, on a casual meeting, each discerned the sterling qualities of the others and promptly bound themselves together by a threefold cord of brotherhood, stronger than death. It is of little consequence whether their hearts flowed together at first sight, as though each had found what he had long sought; nor does it matter whether they solemnized their union by an oath and sealed it by the sacrifice of a white horse, surrounded by the fresh bloom of a peach garden. The fact that their souls were knit together for "high emprise" has been sufficient to impress the imagination of succeeding ages. Not David and Jonathan, not Orestes and Pylades, nor any other pair of sworn brothers, will afford a parallel. The only fit analogy is found in the patriotic trio, who met in the Vale of Grütli, to concert measures for the deliverance of Switzerland from the yoke of Austria:—

"The patriot three that met of yore,
Beneath the midnight sky;
And leagued their hearts on Grütli's shore,
In the name of liberty."

Does anyone suggest that Tell and his confederates were inspired by a nobler sentiment than that which

fired the bosoms of the sons of Han? Was it not alike the love of country, whether its object was to deliver their land from a foreign yoke, or to uphold the throne of a rightful sovereign and to rescue the people from anarchy?

II.

For Liu Pei and his brethren, the Emperor Ling Ti was the embodiment of all that was sacred. Their first campaigns were in his service, directed against a body of Taoist insurgents, whose badge was a yellow turban.

That magic arts and religious motives were both employed to overturn the throne in 186 A.D., shows how closely the China of seventeen centuries ago resembled the China of to-day. In any chance number of the Peking Gazette, you may read accounts of the trial and execution of just such conspirators as Chang Kio, Chang Liang, and Chang Pao. The belief that magic arts have power to convert bits of paper or bags of beans into soldiers is as firmly rooted now as it was then. Nothing but the diffusion of science can remove this source of perpetual danger.

Liu Pei, now at the age of twenty-seven, hastened to the scene of conflict at the head of his little band, and offered his sword to the General in command of the Imperial forces. He was accepted, and took an active part in several engagements, in one of which

he encountered the first in his long series of misfortunes. Being struck from his horse and trampled under the hoofs of the enemy's cavalry, he escaped death by feigning it. For his sufferings and gallantry, he was rewarded by appointment to the command of a district garrison. Here an inspector of posts having treated him with insolence, he is said to have caused the haughty official to be bound hand and foot and to have inflicted on him a chastisement of two hundred blows. The loss of his commission followed, of course. In the popular romance of *The Three Kingdoms*, this act of insubordination is ascribed to Chang Fei; and, to say the truth, it appears more in keeping with the temper of one who earned for himself the epithet of *Méng*, "the impetuous," than with the calculating sagacity of Liu Pei.

In 190 A.D., Hien Ti succeeds to the throne. A minor in years, he is held as a puppet in the grasp of Tung Cho, who has made himself Mayor of the Palace, or Regent of the Empire. To overthrow the usurper and liberate the sovereign, Tsao Tsao now takes arms. Liu Pei, with loyal heart, solicits a share in this meritorious enterprise. In later years, when he turns against his patron, it is from the same motive. Detecting in him another usurper, he obeyed the imperial mandate to compass his destruction:—

"Not that he loved Cæsar less, but Rome more."

We are anticipating a little for the sake of finding a key to his conduct; and now we must turn back to the time when Tsao Tsao dispatches him against a portion of the forces of Tung Cho. He is defeated, but, as we shall see, he becomes accustomed to defeat; and, like Frederick the Second, he learns generalship in the school of adversity.

Kung Sun-tsan, an old school-fellow, mindful of their boyhood friendship, supplies him with fresh troops, and sends him against Yuen Shao, who held the southern section of the province of Chihli. In this expedition, Liu Pei achieves his first brilliant success, and is raised to a conspicuous command.

Here occurs an incident, which shows what a magic influence he was able to exert over the minds of men. An assassin, hired to kill him, risks his life to save him, and reveals to him the plots of his adversaries. We may remark in passing that, in an age when assassination was much in vogue, Liu Pei seems always to have scorned to invoke its aid. One day, while hunting in the Imperial preserves, Kwan Yu, it is said, begged to be permitted to send an arrow to the heart of Tsao Tsao, and rid the world of a second usurper. Liu Pei refused, and, at a later day, when reproached by Kwan Yu for not taking his advice, he justified his course.

By this time, the growing power of Tsao Tsao has thoroughly aroused the opposition of the great barons in the outlying districts. Loyalty to the imprisoned monarch, jealousy of the usurping general, the dread of seeing such a parasite as the Shogunate of Japan fastened on the institutions of the empire, and still more the contagion of example, led many of them to raise the standard of revolt. Aiming at independence, they generally professed to be scheming for the liberation of the Emperor from the power of an evil spirit, which had taken possession of his person, speaking by his mouth and acting by his hand.

Of these, the most powerful was Sun Chuen, who had established himself at Nanking, and who ultimately succeeded in making good his claim to a third of the disintegrated empire. Tsao Tsao, in the name of the Emperor, held the northern division, which, after the abdication of Hien Ti, he transmitted to his family. The remaining third, lying in the West, was reserved by the Fates as an apanage for our hero, who was still in comparative obscurity, and still an adherent of Tsao Tsao.

The wars of this period resemble those that followed the two Triumvirates, which terminated the Roman Republic; save that their tendency was in a converse direction, the Roman wars leading from trinity to unity, the Chinese from unity to trinity.

As in most revolutions, the aspiring heads of the hydra,—a necessary stage in the transformation of the dragon,—were very numerous; the more conspicuous being Yuen Shao, already mentioned, Liu Piao in Hupeh, and Tao Chien in northern Kiangsu. Tsao Tsao sought to strike them down in detail.

Tao Chien, Lord of Sü Cho, north of the Yellow river, exposed to attack from so formidable a foe, implores, in the name of loyalty to the House of Han, the aid of Kung Sun-tsan, or rather of Tien Kai, one of his captains. The latter commissions Liu Pei to give the needed succor. Liu Pei sets out at the head of a little over a thousand troops. He is joined *en route* by a strong body of Tartar cavalry, belonging to one or more of those wild tribes who had from time to time, even at this early age, effected a settlement in China, and were scattered here and there like *enclaves* in the provinces of the North. In his further progress (and this is a melancholy feature of the times), he is unexpectedly reinforced by several thousands of starving peasants, who, like the Tartars, follow him in expectation of food and booty.

The display of force was sufficient to hold the invader at bay. The Lord of Sü, grateful for this timely assistance, first gave Liu Pei a considerable district on the West, where he was to serve as a

bulwark against further invasion ; and, dying shortly after, named him successor in what was virtually an independent principality. Liu Pei declined the honor as Cæsar declined a crown ; but, when reminded of a saying that "Heaven's gifts once spurned are never repeated," he accepted the exalted but perilous post.

He was now one of the most prominent among the rival chiefs who were contending for power, and so conspicuous was his ability that Tsao Tsao made overtures for reconciliation. He could easily forgive Liu Pei for what appeared like treachery towards himself, because it was covered by at least a pretext of loyalty to the throne. Accepting his terms, Liu Pei was created a titular baron and regarded by the powerful Regent more as an ally than a subordinate.

Instead of bringing him peace, this alliance exposed him to attacks from fresh foes, the chief of whom was Lü Pu, one of the most picturesque knights on the chess-board of that day. Handsome, brave, and unscrupulous,—a man who with his own hand had slain the previous Regent,—he was in deadly feud with the present Regent because himself an aspirant for his place.

This man, at the head of a body of cavalry, taking advantage of the absence of Liu Pei, swooped down on the city, which he had made his headquarters, then in charge of the valiant Kwan Yu. The surprise was

complete, Liu Pei's family and their brave defender falling into the hands of the enemy.

With the lioness and her cubs in his possession, Lü Pu knew well how to entrap the lion. The menace of death and of nameless indignities to those whom he loved more than life, sufficed to bring him to the feet of their captor. Under such circumstances, his allegiance could not by any possibility be cordial. He seized the first opportunity to go over to the Regent, who forgave his defection, and welcomed his return. But few weeks had elapsed before Lü Pu tracked them to their refuge, and once more pounced upon his prey.

Read, in the Book of Samuel, the affecting chapter which depicts the grief of David and his men on returning to Ziklag and finding it "burned with fire," and their wives and children prisoners in the hands of the Children of Amalek, and you have a picture of what Liu Pei and his followers experienced, when they saw the ashes of their desolated homes. Spending but little time in fruitless tears, Liu Pei begged of the Regent a body of the fleetest horsemen, and pursuing the foe, like David, he had the satisfaction of spoiling the spoiler and recovering his captives.

Thus far, Liu Pei's disasters had outnumbered his successes; but the skill with which he had often been able to turn defeat into victory,—suddenly creating

new armies as though he possessed the Cadmus-gift of causing them to spring from the bowels of the earth,—had brought him into dangerous prominence. He knew that his fame and talents would expose him to the jealousy of the Regent, and, like David in the land of the Philistines, he feigned madness, or rather stupidity, in order to disarm suspicion. Withdrawing from the public eye, he passed his days in cultivating cabbages and peanuts.

While he is thus engaged, a kinsman of the Emperor appears, bearing a robe and girdle as gifts from the hand of Majesty. These gifts were accompanied by a secret decree, commanding him to take the life of the Regent. Appealed to as the only hope of the throne, his loyalty, the passion of his life, left him no room to hesitate. If he had followed the fortunes of the Regent, it was because he had persuaded himself that they were identical with the interests of the House of Han; and, if he had at one time turned against his benefactor, it was because he viewed the growing power of the Regent as dangerous to the State. Of this he is now convinced more than ever by the piteous appeal of the Emperor.

Scarcely had the messenger departed when he received a still more startling tribute to his growing influence in the form of an invitation to an interview with the Regent. If his heart had known the

sentiment of fear, he must have felt it then, believing that the fatal secret was either known or suspected. During the interview, a thundercloud descended nearly to the earth, assuming some of those fantastic shapes in which Chinese recognize a manifestation of the dragon. The two men, leaning over a balcony, contemplated the play of the lightning.

"The dragon," said Tsao Tsao, "is the emblem of a heaven-sent hero. Now tell me who, in your opinion, are the heroes of the present day?"

After some stammering, Liu Pei proceeded to name Yuen Shao and a few others.

"Heroes!" exclaimed the Regent; "do you call such men heroes;—men limited in their mental vision, and incapable of great achievements?"

"Who, then, are heroes in your estimation?" asked Liu Pei.

"There are none but two," said the Regent, "and they are not far to seek," he added, pointing significantly to himself first, and then to his guest.

Liu Pei was thunderstruck. It was not the language of compliment to which he had been listening. He had been called to this interview by the most powerful man in the empire, for the purpose of soliciting his co-operation; and, from this speech, it was evident that, though regarded as an ally, he must in the end be treated as a rival. The effect on

his mind was the opposite of that intended. If he had hesitated for a moment what course to pursue, he vacillates no longer. He resolves to strike the first blow.

Before his plans come to maturity, he learns that his plot has been discovered by the Regent, and that some of his fellow conspirators have been put to death. Henceforth there is a blood feud between them, which admits of no reconciliation.

Flying to his province to put it in a state of defence, he is hotly pursued by the Regent, and defeated in a great battle. Their place of asylum being carried by assault, his family and Kwan Yu, their guardian, become a prey to the victor. Wicked the victor was, but mean he was not; and in this instance, with a generosity heightened by the apparent perfidy of his antagonist, he restored wives and children to the fugitive chieftain, retaining Kwan Yu, and endeavoring to win him over by splendid gifts.

In this extremity, without a foot of territory, alone, unfriended, Liu Pei seeks refuge with Yuen Tan, one of his early comrades. The latter, who holds the city of Tsing Cho, goes out to meet him with as much ceremony as if he were still at the head of an army. He recommends Liu Pei to his father, Yuen Shao, who is still in possession of a considerable state, and the powerful satrap marches two hundred

li to welcome the unlucky fugitive. Does not this remind us of Hannibal flying from court to court, everywhere welcomed by the enemies of Rome? In strategy, Liu Pei was no Hannibal; but it may be doubted whether the Carthaginian general bore adversity with more patience, or displayed equal ability in re-organizing his shattered forces. It is all but incredible what a weight his single sword could throw into the scale of contending factions. A character which made him a king of men, and not military skill, is the key to the enigma.

While absent on a distant expedition, Liu Pei learns that his patron, Yuen Shao, has been crushed by his implacable enemy, the Regent.

This closes the second period of our hero's adventurous life.

III.

For seventeen years he has been fighting incessantly in the three provinces of Honan, Shantung, and Kiangsu. His partizans have been scattered, his allies destroyed, and now with a handful of followers he strikes across the great central plain and finds in King Cheo, on the borders of Hupeh, a refuge with Liu Piao, a chief of his own name, and perhaps a distant kinsman. Did he see beyond this temporary resting-place, and divine the kingdom yet to be carved out among the mountains of the west?

Beginning anew at the age of forty-four, in a new arena, after so many years of fruitless toil, what can he be expected to accomplish? A subordinate, a guest, in a condition of absolute dependence, what room is there for the formation of great designs? Or, in case he were wild enough to indulge his fancy, what possibility is there of his dreams being converted into realities?

Yet, like Æneas, when he fled from burning Troy and laid the foundations of the Roman State; or rather, like Napoleon, who, when by English intervention an Oriental empire had been snatched from his grasp, returned home in a single galley to make himself the master of Europe;—so Liu Pei proceeded to found in the West a state which is admitted in history as the legitimate successor of the dynasty of Han. The steps, by which he advanced to this result, I shall not attempt to trace, except in the faintest outline.

Liu Piao dying, his son Liu Tsung submitted to the Regent; his principal officers with the men of their several commands chose, however, to follow the fortunes of Liu Pei, who found himself once more on the top of a rising wave. With him, life was a perpetual ebb and flow; and on this occasion, the ebb succeeded with startling suddenness.

Encamped at Fan Chéng, on the east bank of the

river Han, he heard that the army of the Regent was approaching, and crossed to the other side with all speed. The Regent was at his heels. His celerity of movement so often took his enemies by surprise as to give rise to the proverb:—

“Speak of Tsao Tsao as an object of fear,
And while you are speaking will Tsao Tsao appear.”

Liu Pei had already dispatched Kwan Yu with a strong flotilla down stream, towards the river Yang-tse. The soldiers who remained were mostly raw recruits, ill-armed and undisciplined. With such material, he dared not face about, and engage the veteran battalions of his enemy. In this extremity, he abandoned his army and his family to the mercy of his pursuer, and, escorted by a small body-guard, pushed across a bend in the river to join the fleet of Kwan Yu. This is the fourth time the family of Liu Pei have fallen into the hands of his enemies; but it is the first occasion on which he is chargeable with deserting them. Why could he not stand by them, and perish in their defence? Such ignoble conduct, we are tempted to exclaim, deserves nothing better than perpetual defeat. But Liu Pei was not impelled by craven fear. For him, it required more courage to consent to live than to meet death. If he chose to live, it was for a purpose which he believed to be in the highest degree patriotic,—the destruction of

the Regent; and, in addition, the gratification of his thirst for vengeance.

The event justified his election. Through Chu Ko-liang, the brightest genius of the age, who had now become his confidential counsellor, he had succeeded in forming an alliance with Sun Chuen, the Lord of Nanking. The two fleets were combined for a supreme effort, like that of the Greeks at the battle of Salamis. The Regent came down upon them, with a naval force that might well be compared to that of Xerxes. They met at a point on the Great River between Han Yang and Wu Chang, known as the Crimson Palisade. Boat grappled boat, -no fighting at long range; the sword and spear had to do their bloody work. The issue hung long in doubtful scales; but Liu Pei's fleet, getting to windward, sent fire-ships into the midst of the enemy, and a strong breeze soon wrapped their flotilla in flames, and—

“Tsao Tsao in a single bark

Where late a thousand ships were dark ”

made his way to the shore, where he fell into the clutches of Kwan Yu, who allowed him to escape, in return for the like generosity experienced more than once at his hands.

The discomfiture of Tsao Tsao is the subject of a fine poem, called *The Red Palisade*, by Su Tung-po, written on visiting the battle-ground.

Rendered master of Hupeh by this victory, Liu Pei now turned his attention to the greater province of Sze Chuen. Fortune was no longer fickle; the hero had been proved like steel in the fires of adversity, and he was now permitted to move steadily on to the completion of his conquest. He met, however, with two misfortunes that touched him to the quick, in the death, successively, on far distant fields, of his faithful brothers-in-arms, Kwan Yu and Chang Fei. Their prowess and fidelity had stood him in good stead, in many a dark and stormy hour; but his throne was now so firmly established that its props might be withdrawn without endangering its stability. For some years, he modestly styled himself the Prince of Shu, and owned allegiance, as he had always done, to the Emperor, who was held like a caged eagle in the grasp of his inveterate enemy.

When at length the captive, broken in spirit, renounced his throne in favor of the son of the Regent, meanly appealing to Yao and Shun for justifying precedents, Liu Pei assumed the imperial title, as Restorer of the House of Han.

After this brief narrative of his checkered life, it may still be asked whether Liu Pei was really a great man? To this we reply that success is often a safe criterion of greatness. It is not, if it comes

suddenly in the shape of an unearned triumph; but, if it crowns a series of wanderings like those of Æneas, or labors like those of Hercules, it seals its tardy favorite for immortality. Mencius says—"When Heaven designs to confer the highest of offices on the object of its choice, it first proves him by hardship and disappointment." Never was there a more conspicuous illustration of this maxim than the career of Liu Pei.

Of Robert Bruce it is related that six times he failed in his attempts to win the throne of Scotland, when, seeing a spider succeed in attaching its thread after as many unsuccessful efforts, he cast the die again, and came out victorious. If in this he displayed an element of greatness, who shall deny that quality to Liu Pei, whose unsuccessful essays were seven times seven?

His life was a series of flights, though, as we have seen, they were like those of the Parthians, sometimes ruinous to the pursuer. A legend, as well known as that of Bruce and the spider, relates that on one occasion he owed his safety to a beetle which waked him, when sleeping on the ground, just in time to make good his escape. Irritated by the sting, he snapped the insect in two, and threw it on the ground; but, seeing the service it had rendered, he stopped long enough to reunite the fragments, and

Heaven, whose humble messenger it was, caused them to grow together in such a shape as to preserve a record of the incident.

When Liu Pei was approaching the walls of Ch'êng-tu, one officer of the garrison said to another—"What can this man do against us? He has no skill in the conduct of troops; and, whenever he fights, he is sure to be beaten." "Liu Pei," replied the other, "is generous, humane, and capable of grand enterprises. He has, moreover, the faculty of making men offer their lives as a willing sacrifice. He has at command the subtle brain of Chu Ko-liang to plan his campaigns, and the valiant arms of Chang Fei and Kwan Yu to execute them. These three men are each the chief among thousands; and, with such agents, how is it possible that he should fail of success?"

The success of Napoleon has been ascribed to his marshals. It might as well be ascribed to his horse. Was not the man who made the marshals, and controlled them, greater than any one, or than all, of them? And is not the fact that those three heroes were attached to Liu Pei, as firmly as his head and hands, a proof of his inborn imperial power? Taking him all in all, I am inclined to concur in the estimate given by Tsao Tsao, viz,—that *in the whole empire, there were but two heroes of the first order, and that Liu Pei was one of them.*

Inferior to his rival in military genius, he had the advantage of being a better man. Dying speeches are always to be received with suspicion, for, as Tsêng Fu-tse has said,—“When the swan is dying, its voice becomes musical; and when men are about to die, their words are virtuous.” The finest maxim in the proverbial literature of China was bequeathed to his successor by Liu Pei. “My son,” said he, calling him to his bedside, “consider no good act so small that you may neglect it; and no bad act so small that you may do it.”

If he had not been great, he would have had no throne to bequeath; and if he had not been good, he never could have left behind him such a rule of conduct.

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POSTSCRIPT:—Two men referred to in the preceding pages call for further notice. The first, Kwan Yu, has had the fortune to be made a god. He was a model of fidelity, courage, and all martial virtues. Receiving full justice at the hands of history, Fiction also selected him for her favorite, when, in the 13th century, the Wars of the Three Kingdoms were made the subject of a romance in eighteen volumes. Canonized in the 12th century, a thousand

years after his death, the growing popularity of this work has contributed to enhance the glory of its blameless hero. Kwan Yu is now worshipped as the God of War, and tutelar Divinity of the Reigning Dynasty.

The other, Chu Ko-liang, stands high as the type of a scholar. Living alone in a straw-thatched cottage, he buried himself in the study of political and sometimes scientific problems. Liu Pei, hearing of him, paid three visits to his lowly abode, and then, exclaiming that he felt like a "fish that has found water," he engaged him as military adviser.

Tradition credits Chu Ko-liang with the invention of automatic machines to do the work of oxen and horses. They were, it is sometimes hinted by native scholars, steam engines, which were tried in China many ages ago, and consigned to oblivion, as noxious to society!



V.

INTERNATIONAL LAW
IN
ANCIENT CHINA.*

THE recent treaties, by which China has been brought into closer relations with the nations of the West, and especially the establishment of intercourse by means of permanent embassies, have led Chinese statesmen to turn their attention to the subject of international law.†

For them, it is a new study, involving conceptions which it would hardly have been possible for their predecessors to form at any time in the course of the last two thousand years; though, as we shall endeavor to show, they possessed something answering to it in their earlier history.

* Read at Berlin, before the Congress of Orientalists ; reprinted from the *International Review*, January, 1883.

† The works of Wheaton, Woolsey, Bluntschli, and others, on this subject, have been translated for their use by the author of this Paper.

Their modern history commences two centuries before the Christian era; and, for our purpose, it may be divided into three periods. The first, extending from the epoch of the Punic wars down to the discovery of the route to the Indies by the Cape of Good Hope; the second, comprehending three centuries and a half of restricted commercial intercourse; and the third, commencing with the so-called "opium war," in 1839, and covering the forty years of treaty relations.

During the first, the Chinese were as little affected by the convulsions that shook the western world as if they had belonged to another planet. During the second, they became aware of the existence of the principal States of modern Europe; but the light that reached them was not yet sufficient to reveal the magnitude and importance of those far-off powers. Within the last period, the rude experiences of two wars have made them acquainted with the military strength of European nations; and the opening of the Suez Canal has brought them into what they regard as a dangerous proximity to formidable neighbors.

These unwelcome discoveries have led them, not only to push forward their defensive armaments, but to seek in fact, if not in form, to put themselves as much as possible under the ægis of what may fairly be called the public law of the civilized world.

Such are the steps by which China has been led to accept intercourse on a footing of equality with nations which, for three centuries, she had been accustomed to class with her own tributaries.

Her tributaries included all the petty States of Eastern Asia. Attracted partly by community of letters and religion, and partly by commercial interest, but more, perhaps, by the moral effect of her national greatness, they rendered a voluntary homage to the master of a realm so vast that, like Rome of old, it has always called itself by a title equivalent to *orbis terrarum*. These vassal States had few relations with each other, and it was not to be expected that China, acknowledging nothing like reciprocity in her intercourse with them, should learn from them the idea of a community of nations possessed of equal rights.

For twenty centuries she had presented to her own people, as well as to her dependent neighbors, the imposing spectacle of an empire unrivaled in extent, whose unity had been broken only by rare intervals of revolution or anarchy. During this long period, it was no more possible that an international code should spring up in China than it would have been for such a thing to appear in Europe, had the Roman empire remained undivided until the present day. The requisite conditions were wanting. Where they exist,

a code based upon usage, and more or less developed, comes into being by the necessities of the human mind.

These conditions are:—

1st.—The existence of a group of independent States, so situated as to require or favor the maintenance of friendly intercourse;

2nd.—That those States should be so related as to conduct their intercourse on a basis of equality.

If these conditions were conspicuously absent under the consolidated empire, they were no less obviously present in the preceding period, accompanied by every circumstance that could favor the development of an international code.

The vast domain of China proper was at that epoch divided between a number of independent principalities, whose people were of one blood, possessors of a common civilization already much advanced, and united by the additional bond of a common language.

These conditions concurred in ancient Greece, and the result was a rudimentary code, culminating in the Amphictyonic Council,—a provision for settling international disputes, which suggests comparison with the concert of European powers recently employed in settling the question of the Greek frontier.*

* This was the latest achievement of the "concert," when the first draft of this paper was written in Paris (1881).

In ancient China, the conditions are similar, but the scale of operation is vastly more extended. There is, moreover, another important difference; and, with reference to the object of the present essay, it deserves to be marked with special emphasis. The Chinese States were not, like those of Greece, a cluster of detached tribes who had together emerged from barbarism, without any well-defined political connection; they were the fragments of a disintegrated empire, inheriting its laws and civilization, as the States of modern Europe inherited those of Rome.

The period during which they rose and fell was the latter half of the dynasty of Cheo, pretty nearly corresponding to that extending from the birth of Solon to the close of the first century after the death of Alexander, which in China, as in Greece, was an age of intense political activity. The normal form of government for the empire was the feudal, the archetype of that which prevailed in Japan until swept away by the revolution of 1868. The several States were created by the voluntary subdivision of the national domain by the founder of the dynasty, who, like Charlemagne, by this arrangement planted within it the seeds of its destruction.

The throne of each State being hereditary, a feeling of independence soon began to spring up. The emperors were at first able to preserve order

by force; and, even when shorn of their power, their court, like that of the Holy See in the Middle Ages, continued for a long time to serve as a court of appeal for the adjustment of international difficulties. But at length, losing all respect for authority, the feudal princes threw off the semblance of subjection, and pursued without restraint the objects of their private ambition. This age is called by the native historians *chan-kuo*, or that of the "warring States;" and that which preceded it, characterized by orderly and pacific intercourse, is described as *lie-kuo*, or the family of "co-ordinated States."

A family of States, with such an arena and such antecedents, could hardly fail to develop, in the intercourse of peace and war, a system of usages which might be regarded as constituting for them a body of international laws.

Accordingly, if we turn to the history of the period, in quest of such an indigenous system, we shall find, if not the system itself, at least the evidence of its existence. We find, as we have said, a family of States, many of them as extensive as the great States of western Europe, united by the ties of race, literature, and religion, carrying on an active intercourse, commercial and political, which, without some recognized *Jus gentium*, would have been

impracticable. We find the interchange of embassies, with forms of courtesy, indicative of an elaborate civilization. We find treaties solemnly drawn up and deposited for safe keeping in a sacred place called *méng-fu*. We find a balance of power studied and practised, leading to combinations to check the aggressions of the strong and to protect the rights of the weak. We find the rights of neutrals to a certain extent recognized and respected. Finally, we find a class of men devoted to diplomacy as a profession, though, to say the truth, their diplomacy was not unlike that which was practised by the States of Italy in the days of Machiavelli.

No formal text-book, containing the rules which for so many centuries controlled this complicated intercourse, has come down to our times. If such writings ever existed, they probably perished in the "conflagration of the books," which sheds such a lurid light on the memory of the builder of the Great Wall. The *membra disjecta* of such an international code as we have supposed are, however, to be found profusely scattered over the literature of those times,—in the writings of Confucius and Mencius; in those of other philosophers of the last five centuries B.C; in various historical records; and particularly in

the *Cheo-li*, or *Book of Rites*, of the dynasty of Chow.

The day may perhaps come when some Chinese Grotius will gather up these desultory hints as carefully as the illustrious Hollander did the traces of international usages in Greece and Italy. To make even a partial collection of the passages in Chinese writers relating to this subject, would neither come within the scope nor the compass of the present Paper. All that I propose to myself, in addition to indicating, as I have done, the existence between the States of ancient China of a peculiar system of consuetudinary law, is to make a few citations confirmatory of the views expressed, and throwing light on some of the more interesting of the topics to which I have adverted.

The clearest view of the public law which was acknowledged by this group of States, after they became independent, is undoubtedly to be sought for in their relations to each other while subject to a common suzerain.

The greater States were twelve in number, and for ages that distribution of territory was regarded as no less permanent than the order of the heavenly bodies. It was consecrated by the science of astronomy as it then existed, and an ancient map of the heavens gives us a duodecimal division, with the stars of each

portion formally set apart to preside over the destinies of a corresponding portion of the empire.*

Confucius appears to allude to this in a beautiful passage in which he compares the emperor, or the wise man—for the words have a double sense—to the polar star, which sits unmoved on its central throne, while all the constellations revolve around it. Could anything be devised more effectual than this superstitious alliance of geography and astronomy, to place the territorial rights of the several States under the safeguard of religion? More picturesque than the Roman method of placing the boundaries under the care of a special divinity, it was probably more efficacious, and contributed in no small degree to maintain the equilibrium of a naturally unstable system, during a period which, in the West, witnessed the rise and fall of the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek empires, entailing the complete obliteration of most of their minor divisions.

These twelve States had a great number of lesser principalities dependent on them, the whole constituting

* The names of the twelve great States are inscribed on the horizon of an azimuth instrument, made under the Mongol dynasty, circa 1320, and still preserved in the Observatory of Peking. What can better illustrate the depth of the sentiment connected with this territorial division than the fact that such a souvenir, associating it with the unchanging heavens, should be reproduced in the construction of an astronomical instrument fifteen centuries after the last of those States had ceased to exist!

a political organization as multifarious and complex as that which existed in Germany under the sway of the "Holy Roman Empire." As in mediæval Europe, the chiefs of these States were ranked with respect to nobility in five orders, answering to duke, marquis, earl, viscount, and baron, the inferior depending on the superior, but all paying homage to the Son of Heaven, a title which was even at that early period applied to the Emperor, who had a right, for the common good, to command the service of all. In the annals of Lu, we find the following curious entry:—

"In the ninth year of his reign, the Duke met in conference at Kwe-chiu the Duke of Cheo, the Marquis of Chi, the Viscount of Sung, the Marquis of Wei, the Earl of Chèng, the Baron of Hū, and the Earl of Tsao."

We note here the presence of all the five orders. The commentary of Tso, we may add, states the object of the meeting as "the formation of a league and the promotion of friendly relations in accordance with *authorized usage*."

The authorized usages here referred to constituted the basis of the international law of the time. They were contained in part in the *Cheo-li*, or *Book of Rites* of the Cheo dynasty, published by imperial authority about 1100 B.C., and, in a somewhat

mutilated form, extant at the present day. This Code defines the orders of nobility; prescribes a sumptuary law for each, extending even to their rites of sepulture; regulates the part of each in the public sacrifices; and lays down a form of etiquette to be observed in all their public meetings. It gives in detail the hierarchy of officers, civil and military; indicates their functions; fixes the weights and measures, the mode of collecting the revenue, and the modes of punishment;-and all this mixed up with an infinitude of ceremonial detail which to us appears the reverse of business-like, but which was no doubt as well adapted to the character of the ancient Chinese as was the ritualistic legislation of Moses to that of the Hebrews.

Primarily obligatory on the immediate subjects of the imperial house, this Code was secondarily binding on all the vassals of the empire, by all of whom it was adopted in the minutest particulars, with the single exception of the State of Ch'ín, in the extreme north-west, a State which obstinately adhered to the ritual and etiquette of the earlier dynasty of Shāng, and, cherishing a spirit of alienation, became the secret foe and ultimately the destroyer of the imperial house.

With this exception, the laws and usages of the several States were so uniform—all being copied from a common model—that there was little occasion

for the cultivation of that branch of international jurisprudence, which in modern times has become so prominent under the title of the "conflict of laws."

Ideas derived from the feudal system were so interwoven with every part of this complicated legislation that its general acceptance formed the mainstay of the imperial throne. The great princes styled themselves vassals; though as independent as Annam and Nepal are at the present day, and, like these latter, paying formal homage only once in five years.* They accordingly looked up to the emperor as the fountain of honor, and the supreme authority in all questions of ceremony, if not in questions of right.

Of this moral ascendancy, for which we can find no parallel better than the veneration which, in the Middle Ages, Catholic sovereigns were wont to show to the Holy See, we have a remarkable example in the *Kuo-yu*. The emperor, Siang-wang, 651 B.C., being driven by a domestic revolt from his territories—a small district in the center of the empire, which may be compared to the Pontifical States recently absorbed by the kingdom of Italy—was restored to his throne by the powerful intervention of the Duke

* Since this was written, Annam has become subject to France, and has ceased to send tribute to China.

of Tsin. In recompense for such a signal service, the emperor offered him a slice of land. The duke declined it,* and asked, instead, that he might be permitted to construct his tomb after the model of the imperial mausoleum. The emperor, viewing this apparently modest request as a dangerous assumption, promptly refused it, and the duke was compelled to abide by the recognized Code of Rites.

The possession of this common Code, originating in the will of a common suzerain, contributed to maintain for nearly a thousand years among the States of China, discordant and belligerent as they often were, a bond of sympathy in strong contrast with the feelings they manifested toward all nations not comprehended within the pale of their own civilization. When, for instance, the Tartars of the north-west presented themselves at the court of Tsin, requesting a treaty of peace and amity, and humbly offering to submit to be treated as vassals of the more enlightened power,—“Amity,” exclaimed the prince, “what do they know of amity? The barbarous savages! Give them war as the portion due to our natural enemies.” Nor was it until his minister had produced five solid reasons for a pacific

* According to some of the histories, he finally accepted it, when balked in his loftier aspirations.

policy that the haughty prince consented to accept them as vassals.

In the history of those times, the curtain rises on a scene of peaceful intercourse which, in many ways, implies a basis of public law. Merchants are held in esteem, one of the most distinguished of the disciples of Confucius belonging to that class; and a rivalry subsists between the several princes in attracting merchants to their States. Their wares are subjected to tolls and customs; but the object is revenue, not protection.

The commerce of mind reveals relations of a still more intimate character. The schools of one State are often largely frequented by students from another; and those who make the greatest proficiency are readily taken into the service of foreign princes. Philosophers and political reformers travel from court to court, in quest of patronage. Confucius himself wanders over half the empire, and draws disciples from all the leading States.

A century later, Mencius, with the spirit of a Hebrew prophet, proclaims in more than one capital his great message that "the only foundation of national prosperity is justice and charity."

It was to this kind of intercourse that Ch'in, the rising power of the North-west, was indebted for the ascendancy which it slowly acquired in the affairs of

the empire, and which eventually placed its princes in possession of the imperial throne.

The Duke Hiao (368 B.C.), conscious of the backward state of his people, made proclamation to the effect that any man, native or foreign, who should be able to devise a new method for promoting the prosperity of his dominions, would be rewarded by a grant of land and a patent of nobility. Shang-yang, a native of a neighboring State, a young man of noble family, who, the historian says, "had given much attention to legal studies," presented himself, and requested an audience. The duke, charmed by the clearness and originality of his ideas, gave him *carte blanche* for putting them in practice. The reforms effected were of the most thorough character, and the seed was then sown of triumphs achieved a century later. Further on we find Li-sze, another foreigner, at the helm, in the same principality. At this time, so great was the influx of strangers that the natives, as in other lands, became jealous, and made a movement to expel them. The prince was disposed to yield, when the minister averted the blow by laying before the throne a masterly plea for freedom of intercourse. This notable document, whose good effect did not cease with the emergency that gave it birth, begins by showing that the ancestors of the prince had for four generations admitted foreign

statesmen to the rank of confidential counsellors, and concludes by comparing their policy with their own majestic river, the Hoang-ho, which owes its greatness to the rivulets that combine to swell its volume.

The personal intercourse of sovereign princes forms a striking feature in the history of those times. Their frequent interchange of visits indicates a degree of mutual confidence which speaks volumes for the public sentiment. Confidence was, indeed, sometimes abused, as it has been in other countries; but such intercourse was always characterized by courtesy, and mostly by good faith.

On one occasion, when a powerful prince came with a great retinue to visit the Duke of Lu, Confucius, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs, adopted such precautions, and conducted the interviews with such adroitness, that he not only averted what was believed to be a danger, but induced the foreign prince to restore a territory which he had unjustly appropriated.

A visit of the Duke of Tsin to the Duke of Lu may be mentioned, as illustrating the freedom and familiarity which sometimes marked this princely intercourse. The host accompanied his guest as far as the Yellow River. The latter, learning during a parting entertainment that the former had not yet

received the *Kwan-li**—a rite answering somewhat to the conferring of knighthood—offered, then and there, to confer it. It was objected that the means were wanting for performing the ceremony with due solemnity; and the capital of Wei being nearer than his own, the Duke of Lu proposed to proceed thither for the purpose. They did so, and the rite was celebrated with suitable pomp in a temple borrowed for the occasion.

General meetings of the princes for the purpose of forming or renewing treaties of alliance were of frequent occurrence. Embracing what were then regarded as all the leading powers of the earth, these meetings present a distant, but not faint, parallel to the great congresses of European sovereigns.

The more usual form of friendly intercourse between the States of China was, as elsewhere, by means of envoys.

The person of an envoy was sacred; but instances are not wanting of their arrest and execution. In

* *Kwan-li*—literally the “cap ceremony”—the formal assumption by a youth of a kind of cap distinctive of mature age. Now completely disused, this was formerly one of the “four great rites,” and the references to it in the ancient books remind us of the pomp with which the *toga virilis* was assumed by patrician youth at Rome. Still, as between nobles, I can think of no better analogy than that given in the text.

the latter case, they were regarded as spies, and the punishment inflicted on them was considered as a declaration or act of war. In the former, the violence was sometimes defended on the ground that the envoy had undertaken to pass through the territory into a neighboring State without having first obtained a passport, his visit being at the same time held to have a hostile object. Ordinarily, an envoy was treated with scrupulous courtesy, the ceremonial varying according to his own rank, or that of his sovereign. Questions of precedence, which often arose, were decided according to settled principles; but the rules were by no means as clear and simple as those enacted by the Congress of Vienna.

A dispute of this kind arising between the envoys of two duchies at the court of Lu, one claimed precedence on the ground that his State was more ancient than the other. The minister of the latter replied that his sovereign was more nearly allied to the imperial family. The difficulty was happily terminated without bloodshed, which was not always the case with such quarrels in Europe prior to 1815. The master of ceremonies reminded the litigants that the placing of guests belongs to the host, and gave preference to the kinsman of the emperor.

Insults to envoys were not unfrequently avenged by an appeal to arms. Of this, a notable instance

was an insult given by the Prince of Chi, at one and the same time, to the representatives of four powers.

These envoys arriving simultaneously, it was observed by some wag (the court fool, perhaps) that each was marked by a blemish or deformity in his personal appearance. One was blind of an eye; a second was bald; another was lame; and the last was a dwarf. It was suggested to the duke that a little innocent amusement might be made out of this strange coincidence. The prince, acting on the hint, appointed as attendant or introducteur to each ambassador an officer who suffered from the same defect. The court ladies, who, concealed by curtains of thin gauze, witnessed the ceremony of introduction and the subsequent banquet, laughed aloud when they saw the blind leading the blind, and the dwarfs, the bald, and the lame, walking in pairs. The envoys, hearing the merriment, became aware that they had been made involuntary actors in a comedy. They retired, vowing vengeance, and the next year saw the capital of Chi beleagured by the combined forces of the four powers, which were only induced to withdraw by the most humiliating concessions on the part of the young prince, who, too late, repented his indecent levity.*

* This story is derived from a comparison of the three leading historians of the period, who differ only in unimportant details. In an amplified form, it is to be seen on the boards of Chinese theaters at the present day. The Chinese theater, like that of Greece, is, for an illiterate public, the chief teacher of ancient history.

In the history of Tso, we find a rule for the sending of envoys, which has its parallel in the diplomatic usage of modern nations. Speaking of a mission to a neighboring State, he adds:—"This was in accordance with usage. In all cases where a new prince comes to the throne, envoys are sent to the neighboring States to confirm and extend the friendly relations maintained by his predecessor."

The highest function of an envoy was the negotiation of a treaty. Treaties of all kinds known to modern diplomacy were in use in ancient China. Signed with solemn formalities, and confirmed by an oath,—the parties mingling their blood in a cup of wine, or laying their hands on the head of an ox to be offered in sacrifice,—such documents were carefully treasured up in a sacred place called *Mêng-fu*, the "Palace of Treaties."

We are able to give, by way of specimen, the outlines of a treaty between the Prince of Chêng and a coalition of princes who invaded his territories in 544 B.C.

PREAMBLE:—The parties to the present Treaty agree to the following Articles:—

Article I.—The exportation of corn shall not be prohibited.

Article II.—One party shall not monopolize trade to the disadvantage of others.

Article III.—No one shall give protection to conspiracies directed against the others.

Article IV.—Fugitives from justice shall be surrendered.

Article V.—Mutual succor shall be given in case of famine.

Article VI.—Mutual aid shall be given in case of insurrection.

Article VII.—The contracting powers shall have the same friends and the same enemies.

Article VIII.—We all engage to support the Imperial House.

CONCLUSION:—We engage to maintain inviolate the terms of the foregoing Agreement. May the gods of the hills and rivers, the spirits of former emperors and dukes, and the ancestors of our seven tribes and twelve states, watch over its fulfillment. If any one prove unfaithful, may the all-seeing gods smite him, so that his people shall forsake him, his life be lost, and his posterity be cut off.

The outline of a similar convention is given by Mencius. On this occasion, the great barons were called together by Siao-po, Prince of Ch'i, for the purpose of effecting needful reforms in 651 B.C. Being a century earlier than the other, it is instructive to compare the two documents. While in that of later date the Imperial authority is so far gone that the barons engage to uphold the Imperial House, in this the authority of the Suzerain is fully recognized,—each article of the convention being styled an “Ordinance” of the Emperor.

That his hold on his vassals was already much weakened is, however, evident from the provisions that they are not to exercise certain powers of sovereignty in the way of rewards and punishments without at least formal reference to the "Son of Heaven."

The stipulations are partly in favor of good morals, and partly to facilitate intercourse, and to raise the character of the official hierarchy.

Article I.—To punish the unfilial; not to change the succession to the throne (of each state); and not to raise a concubine to be a wife.

Article II.—To respect the virtuous and cherish talent.

Article III.—To honor the aged and to be kind to the young, and not to neglect strangers.

Article IV.—Officers not to be hereditary; proxies not to be permitted. Suitable men to be sought and found. Death not to be inflicted on nobles without reference to the Emperor.

Article V.—Not to divert water-courses, nor obstruct the transport of grain. Not to grant land in fief without reference to the Emperor.

CONCLUSION:—All we who are parties to this Covenant agree to be at peace with each other.

"These five rules," adds the philosopher, "are openly violated by the nobles of our day."

In addition to the rites of religion by which such engagements were ratified, they were usually secured by sanctions of a less sentimental character. As in

the West, hostages or other material guarantees were given in pledge; sometimes also they were guaranteed by third parties, who, directly or indirectly interested, engaged to punish a breach of faith. We have, for instance, one prince, demanding the mother of another as a hostage. The case is instructive in more than one of its aspects. The Prince of Tsin, calling on the Prince of Chi to recognize him as his chief, and to surrender his mother as a pledge of submission, the latter replies that his State was created the peer of the other by the will of the former Emperors, and that one who would despise the patent of an Emperor was not fit to be the head of a League. As to the demand for his mother as a hostage, that was a proposition so monstrous that, rather than submit to it, he would meet the enemy under the walls of his last fortress.

At this point, the affair takes a turn which serves to illustrate a procedure of frequent occurrence in the history of those times. The princes of two neighboring States come forward as mediators, and bring about an accommodation on less oppressive conditions.

The more enlightened writers of Chinese antiquity condemn the practice of exchanging hostages, as tending to keep up a state of *quasi* hostility and mutual mistrust; and no writers of any nation have

been more emphatic in insisting on good faith as a cardinal virtue in all international transactions.

Says Confucius:—"A man without faith is like a wagon without a coupling-pole to connect the wheels." Speaking of a State, he says:—"Of the three essentials, the greatest is good faith. Without a revenue and without an army, a State may still exist; but it cannot exist without good faith."

It remains to speak of the intercourse of war. "*Inter hostes scripta jura non valere at valere non scripta*"—is a principle that was as well understood in ancient China as among the ancient nations of the Western world; and war in China was, to say the least, not more brutal than among the Greeks and Romans.

The command of Alexander to spare the house of the poet Pindar, if it shows a degree of literary culture, indicates, on the other hand, that moral barbarism which asserts a right to the spoils of the conquered. In China, we find the same state of things; *vae victis* is the sad undertone in every narrative of military glory, relieved, indeed, by brilliant instances of generosity and mercy. We find an invading chief enjoining, under penalty of death, respect for the very trees that overshadow the tomb of a philosopher, and at the same time setting a price on the head of a rival prince.

Every military leader proclaims, like Achilles, that "laws are not made for him;" yet we do not despair of being able to show that laws existed in war as well as in peace, even though they were systematically trampled on. With this view, we shall call attention to the following facts:—

First:—In the conduct of war, the persons and property of non-combatants were required to be respected.

This we infer from the praise bestowed on humane leaders, and the reprobation meted out to the cruel. In Chinese history, the example of those who have achieved the easiest and most permanent conquests is always on the side of humanity.

Second:—In legitimate warfare, the rule was not to attack an enemy without first sounding the drum, and giving him time to prepare for defense.

The following instance goes beyond this requirement, and reminds us of the code of chivalry which made it infamous to take advantage of an antagonist. The Prince of Sung declined to engage a hostile force while they were crossing a stream, and waited for them to form in order of battle before giving the signal to advance. He was beaten, and, when reproached by his officers, he justified himself by appealing to ancient usage. "The true soldier," said he, "never strikes a wounded foe, and always

lets the gray-headed go free ; and in ancient times it was forbidden to assail an enemy who was not in a state to resist. I have come near losing my kingdom, but I would scorn to command an attack without first sounding the drum."

We are not surprised to learn that the captains of that age "laughed at the simplicity of the unfortunate prince."

✓ *Third*.—A war was not to be undertaken without at least a decent pretext.

These words, in fact, are almost a translation of an oft-quoted maxim, *She ch'uh yiu ming*,* "For war you must have a cause," which indicates that passion and cupidity were held in check by public opinion pronouncing its judgment in conformity with an acknowledged standard of right.

Another maxim, equally well known, makes the justice of the cause a source of moral power which goes far to compensate the inequality of physical force.

"Soldiers are weak in a bad cause, but strong in a good one," said the ancient Chinese, assigning as high a place to the moral element as our own poet, when he says,—"Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just."

Fourth.—A cause always recognized as just was the preservation of the balance of power.

This principle called to arms not merely the States immediately threatened, but those also which, by their situation, appeared to be remote from danger.

Not to speak of combinations to resist the aggressions of other disturbers of the public peace, we find, 320 B.C., six States brought into line to repress the ambition of Chin. This powerful coalition, the fruit of twenty years' toil on the part of one man, who is immortalized as the type of the successful negotiator, was, we may add, after all destined to fail of its object. The common enemy succeeded in detaching the members of the league, and in overcoming them one after another. The arch of States which protected the throne of their suzerain being destroyed, the conqueror swept away the last vestige of the house of Cheo, which for eight hundred years had exercised a feudal supremacy over the princes of China. Proclaiming himself instead, under the title of Shū Hwang-ti, the "first of the universal sovereigns," he abolished the feudal constitution of the empire, at the same time that he completed the Great Wall. His successors to the present day are called *Hwang-ti*, and the system of centralized government which he inaugurated is as firmly established as the Great Wall itself.

Fifth.—The right of existence, prior to the revolution just noticed, was, in general, held sacred for the greater States which held in fief from the Imperial Throne.

This right is often appealed to, and proves effectual in the direst extremity; *e.g.*,—the Prince of Chi, at the head of a strong force, enters Lu, with an evidently hostile intent. Chan-hi, a minister of Lu, is sent to meet him, in the hope of arresting his progress. “The people of Lu appear to be very much alarmed at my approach,” said the prince. “True,” replied the minister, “the people are alarmed, but the ruler is not.” “Why is not the ruler also,” inquired the invader, “when his troops are in disorder, and his magazines as empty as a bell? On what does he repose his confidence that he should affect to be superior to fear?”

“He rests on the grant which his fathers received from the ancient emperors,” said the minister. He then proceeded to vindicate the rights of his master, under what was recognized as the traditional law of the empire, with such force that the prince desisted from his purpose, and withdrew without any further act of violence.

A similar instance, it will be remembered, has been cited already in another connection,—the case in which a prince, after urging in vain this same

plea,—the sacredness of the imperial grant was saved from humiliation or extinction by the mediation of neighboring powers, who recognized and were determined to uphold the principle.

A third example of the kind is one in which the existence of the now feeble remnant of the imperial domain was itself at stake. The Prince of Chu, after a victorious campaign against other foes, crossed the Rubicon and entered the territories of the house of Cheo, with the evident intention of seizing the imperial throne. The emperor, unable to oppose armed resistance, dispatched Wang Sun-man, one of his ministers, to convey a supply of provisions to the invading army, and to ascertain the designs of its leader. The latter veiled his purpose in figurative language, asking to be informed as to the “weight of the nine tripods,”—insinuating that if not too heavy he intended to carry them away. The minister, without answering directly, gave the history of the tripods, relating how they had been cast in bronze by Ta Yu, the founder of the first great dynasty, and emblazoned with a chart of the empire in relief; how for fifteen centuries they had been preserved as emblems of the imperial dignity; and, exposing in a masterly manner the necessity of respect for that venerable power to the order of the several States, he concluded by saying—“All this being true, why

should Your Highness ask the weight of the tripods?"

The chief, struck by the force of his arguments, which, like the most effective on such occasions, were purely historical, renounced his nefarious purpose, and retired to his own dominions.

Sixth.—Finally, the rights of neutrals were admitted, and to a certain extent respected.

It has been remarked that, in the wars of Greece, there were no neutrals; those who desired to be such, if they were so situated as to be of any weight in the conflict, being always compelled to declare themselves on one side or the other. This was not the case in China. The neutral frequently rejected the overtures of both parties, and his territories interposed an effectual barrier in the way of the belligerents. We have numerous instances of passage being granted to troops without further participation in the conflict, and one case in which a wise statesman warns his master against the danger of such an imprudent concession. "In a former war," said he, "you granted it to your detriment; if you do so again, it will be to your ruin." His chief failed to profit by the warning; and the prince thus unjustly favored, after destroying his antagonist, turned about and took possession of the territory of his friend.

CONCLUSION.

It is, as we have intimated, quite possible that

text-books on the subject of international relations may have existed in ancient China, without coming down to our times, just as the Greeks had books on that subject, of which nothing now survives but their titles. Whether this conjecture be well founded or otherwise, enough remains, as we have shown, to prove that *the States of ancient China had a Law written or unwritten, and more or less developed, which they recognized in peace and war.* The Book of Rites and the histories of the period attest this.

Of these histories, one was acknowledged as constituting in itself a kind of international code. I allude to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, edited by Confucius, and extending over two centuries and a half. Native authors affirm that the awards of praise and blame expressed in that work, often in a single word, were accepted as judgments from which there was no appeal, and exercised a restraining influence more potent than that of armies and navies.

Chinese statesmen have pointed out the analogy of their own country at that epoch with the political divisions of modern Europe. In their own records they find usages, words, and ideas, corresponding to the terms of our modern international law; and they are by that fact the more disposed to accept the international code of Christendom, which it is no utopian vision to believe will one day become a bond of peace and justice between all the nations of the earth.

VI.
DIPLOMACY
IN
ANCIENT CHINA.*



INTERNATIONAL diplomacy is an art new to the Chinese, but one for which they evince a marvellous aptitude. From the inquiry on which we are about to enter, it will, we think, be made apparent that with them it is rather the revival of a lost art,—an art in the creation of which they can claim the distinction of precedence over all existing nations.

Under that famous dynasty of Chow, when sages were born, and when those books were produced which rule the thought of the empire, diplomacy took its rise. Akin to the spirit of war, it flourished most in that period when the central power had lost

* Read before the Oriental Society of Peking.

its control, and vassal states engaged in ceaseless struggles over the division of their patrimony.*

Diplomacy may be defined as the art of conducting the intercourse of nations. It supposes the existence of states who carry on their intercourse on a footing of equality. This makes it evident why it flourished in the period referred to, and why it disappeared for two thousand years, to re-appear in our own day, like a river that, after flowing for a time underground, rises to the surface with an increase of volume. As etiquette is the outgrowth of a society of individuals, so diplomacy springs from a society of states. Robinson Crusoe, spending his life on a lonely island, can hardly be supposed to occupy his thoughts with the rules of good breeding, and, although "Monarch of all he surveyed," he had no use for diplomacy.

* There are three well known works that relate to this period, viz :—

The History of the Warring States 戰國策.

The National History of Sze-ma 史記.

A *Romance* founded on the former, called 列國志,
an expanded history of the feudal ages.

As an authority, the *Romance* is of no value. The *National History* derives its materials chiefly from the same source; but, as they have been passed through the seive and weighed in the balance of the great author, I have taken it for my guide so far as facts are concerned, reserving to myself always the right of interpretation.

The triumph of Ch'in, by which these numerous States, "discordant and belligerent," were swept from the arena, was the death-blow of diplomacy.

The empire was thenceforth one and indivisible, from the desert of Tartary to the borders of Burmah, and from the foot of the Himalayas to the shores of the eastern sea.

No rival, no equal was known to exist on the face of the globe. Envoys no longer sped on secret missions from court to court.

Alliances ceased to be formed, because there was none whose friendship could bring strength, or whose opposition could occasion danger. The outside world was synonymous with barbarism, and the "inner land" comprised, for the Chinese, the whole of human civilization. Inferior states came with tribute, and went home laden with patronizing gifts. Diplomacy in any proper sense was impossible. All that the Chinese of later ages could know of it was a legend of the past, which connected itself with a few illustrious names.

The best way to treat the subject on the present occasion is, no doubt, to take up those "names," and evoke from them the busy actors in a slow but momentous revolution.

The revolution, which some of them endeavoured to further, while others strove in vain to arrest it,

was the rise in the north-west of an ambitious, aggressive, semi-barbarous power, which eventually swallowed up its rivals, and remained sole master of the field.

To trace the steps by which a petty principality, the guardian of a remote frontier, advanced to such eminence that all the older and more civilized states combined to check its progress, forms one of the most instructive chapters of Chinese history; but it does not belong to the subject of this paper. Of the early stages of the unfolding drama, we can only remark that, as in the later stage, the principal actors on the side of the growing power appear to have been foreigners. The princes of Ch'in, rude and uncultivated as they were, displayed for the most part that element of greatness, which consists in the choice of the fittest instruments. These they sought both at home and abroad, attracting to their court men of talent from neighbouring countries by the public offer of high office and great rewards.

One instance out of many will suffice to illustrate the effect of this policy. A young man by the name of Shang-yang, who had devoted himself to the study of political science, came to the court of Wei, in quest of employment. The prince was struck by his talents, but hesitated to take him into

his service. "Kill him then," said an old minister, "but by no means allow him to give his great abilities to the service of a rival state." The prince did neither, and Shang-yang proceeded to the court of Ch'ín, where he was invested with high office, and reformed everything, from army discipline to land tenure. It was largely through his influence that his adopted country attained such power as to threaten the independence of its neighbours.

It was then that diplomacy came on the stage as a leading factor in deciding the destiny of states. In more tranquil periods, it had occupied itself with matters of ceremony,—missions of compliment to express felicitation or condolence; or, if negotiation was engaged in, it seldom rose higher than the arrangement of the terms of a marriage. But now the diplomat became the most conspicuous figure of the age, rising above the general, because generals marched as he directed; more influential than princes, because the prince decided in accordance with the far-sighted views of his diplomatic adviser. Jove sat wrapped in his pavilion of clouds, and Mercury engrossed the scene as he sped back and forth on winged sandals.

If we follow some of these envoys, we shall not only obtain an impression of the importance of their functions, but get a clearer view of the history of the

period than any other stand-point can afford us.

The scene is that portion of China lying to the north of the Yang-tse-kiang; the period of time, that in which Alexander and his successors were extending their conquests in western Asia.

The first diplomats to challenge our attention are Su-ch'in and Chang-i. They are not, like Talthybius and Eurybates,* mere heralds or post-boys, whose duty it is to carry a message, and blow a trumpet. They are statesmen, full of self-acting energy; and each opposed to the other in a conflict that ends only with life. As in Greece, there was a school of statesmanship in which they acquired their arts, and above all the art of persuasion. The Academus to which they resorted was a wild gorge in the mountains of Honan, and the master to whose instructions they listened is known to posterity by no other name than that of Kwe-ku-tsze, "Philosopher of the Devil's Hollow."

I have read the books ascribed to his pen, but find in them nothing that can account for the eminence of his disciples;—nothing even that could have afforded them a suggestion of the career which they pursued with such wonderful success. The fact is, this lover of solitude was not a

* Compare this latter name, meaning "one who walks abroad," with 行人, "walkers,"—ancient Chinese for "envoys."

diplomatist, but an educator. Books were few in those days, existing only in manuscript copies; and the knowledge of letters, very restricted. It follows that the influence of the teacher was greater than it now is, when books are cheap, and libraries accessible to all.

Emerging from seclusion with the full consciousness of superior intelligence, Su-ch'in thought only of carrying his wares to the most promising market. That market was the court of the rude, rising power of the north-west, whose princes welcomed all who had anything to teach, and rewarded them with unexampled munificence. He was a native of the central state, and born under the immediate sway of the suzerain; but he did not scruple to point out, to a great vassal, the way in which he might crush all lesser rivals, and possess himself of the throne of his imperial master. "My wings," replied the Prince, "are not sufficiently grown for so high a flight;" and so he dismissed the dusty traveller, who sought prematurely to embroil him with his fellow princes.

Mortified by ill success, Su turned homeward, vowing that the Prince of Ch'in should repent the blunder of suffering him to escape, after having rejected his advice. Arriving in rags, his wife and his brothers' wives treated him with ill-concealed disrespect. They looked on him as stark mad when,

instead of applying himself to something profitable, he resumed his former studies with fresh ardour.

Su not only took pains to improve his style of speaking and writing, so that his argument would come with force from tongue or pen; he studied the history of each of the feudal states, acquainted himself with the *personnel* of their courts, drew maps of the empire, made estimates of the population and military strength of its several parts, and sketched plans of hypothetical campaigns.

After two years of intense application, he set off for the court of Yen, with a mind better furnished than on the occasion of his first abortive attempt. The capital of Yen is supposed to be represented by Peking, the city where we are now assembled; and here it was that Su entered on a career of successful diplomacy, which extended over more than twenty years, and made him for all time the type of a Chinese diplomatist. His patience, with him a leading virtue, was still to be sorely tried. Without money or influence, he found no ready way to open the doors of the great; and, for a whole year, he danced attendance on numerous courtiers, before he could induce anyone to procure him an interview with the Prince.

That interview was decisive. Su was not the only one who saw the danger to which the other states

were exposed by the aggressions of Ch'in, but he was the only one who saw how it could be averted. In eloquent terms he set forth the urgency of immediate action, and showed that the only hope of successful resistance lay in the formation of an alliance, which, diverting the forces of the six states from the mad work of mutual destruction, would turn their united strength against their common foe.

The Prince was delighted. The feasibility of the scheme was no longer doubtful; and, by carrying it into execution, he would secure the honour of taking the lead in a patriotic movement of unparalleled importance. Investing Su with the rank of envoy, he despatched him with general credentials to the courts of the other five powers,—a precedent which the Chinese ministers of our day recalled when they sent Mr Burlingame on a mission to the great powers of the two worlds,—a precedent which they still follow in accrediting a single envoy to half the courts of Europe.

Taking in order the courts of Chao, Han, and Wei, and then moving eastward to the court of Ch'i, Su exposed to each his plan of mutual defence, obtaining from each a pledge conditioned on the adhesion of all the rest. Further south, on the banks of the middle Yangtse, which then formed the southern limit of the empire and of civilization, was a power whose definite acceptance of the plan was

essential to its success. This was the kingdom of Ch'ü, occupying nearly the ground of the present province of Hupeh.

Flattered by the cunning envoy with the hope of becoming head of the league, the Prince of Ch'ü entered into it with great zeal, and sent Su on his return journey, loaded with fresh honours. The last link was thus added to a chain which he had been long and patiently forging,—a chain strong enough to keep an unscrupulous aggressor within bounds, and to secure in a great measure the blessings of peace to a family of states hitherto in perpetual conflict.

The achievement was one, the difficulty and grandeur of which it is not easy to over-estimate. The man who conceived the plan, and, with steady purpose, carried it through, deserved all the honours that were heaped upon him. Like Prince Bismarck, who, to the chancellorship of the empire, added that of the kingdom of Prussia, Su held a duplicate or rather a multiple office. His chief dignity was that of President of the Sextuple Alliance; and, in order that he might render it effective, each of the six powers conferred on him the seal of a separate Chancellorship.

Turning northward with a strong escort and immense retinue, he came to the border of his native

state, which years before he had quitted in the guise of a palmer, staff in hand. Here he was met by messengers from the Emperor, who offered him a banquet, and gave him a welcome on behalf of their master, who, says the historian, "was alarmed at the power and magnificence of his quondam subject." A better explanation would be a generous acknowledgment of the success of Su-ch'in; or, better still, a desire to make use of Su's diplomatic triumphs to restore the sinking prestige of the empire, menaced by the growing power of Ch'in.

What wonder that the members of his own family, who had treated him so shabbily, should now meet him with demonstrations of respect! "How comes it," he said to his elder brother's wife, who was throwing herself at his feet, "that you treat me so differently to-day from the time when I came home from the first journey?" "Because," said she with naive candor, "you are now a great officer and have plenty of money."

Su was kind to his poor relations, and, distributing money with a lavish hand, proceeded to the Court of Chao.

There it was that he fixed his head-quarters; not that the kingdom was great, or the prince influential, but because its geographical situation was such as to make it, to borrow a scientific phrase,

the centre of political pressure. "From this point," says the historian, "by the hand of a herald, he launched at the Prince of Ch'in a copy of the six-fold League." Imagine the satisfaction with which he submitted that document to the inspection of a potentate who had rejected his services, and who was now to be confined by it, as with a chain, within his proper bounds! "For fifteen years," adds the historian, "the armies of Ch'in did not dare to show themselves beyond the mountain pass of Hanku."

What proof of success could be more striking! What doubt that, during this long period, Su had occasion to repeat often and again his weary circuit, in order to maintain his hold on the inharmonious elements which he had brought under his control!

On the East coast of Africa, there are places in which, we are told, it is impossible to induce three men to go together on an errand, because each fears that the other two may combine and sell him into slavery. So it was with these "warring states," as they are called in Chinese history. Each one regarded its nearest neighbours with profound mistrust and aversion.

To overcome their centrifugal tendencies, and hold them together for so long a time, required a combination of qualities, rarely equalled, perhaps never surpassed.

The masterly arguments, by which Su had originally conquered that ascendancy, are given *in extenso* in the voluminous work of Sze-ma-ch'ien. They are clear and eloquent, but they read more like genuine state papers than like the speeches that Livy is wont to put into the mouth of his heroes.

How skilfully he adapts his mode of address to the disposition of each ruler! In one he kindles ambition; in another he awakens jealousy, as his strongest passion, and directs it against the mighty foe. He practises on the fears of others, while flattering their pride; and one (the Prince of Han), who was on the point of attaching himself to Ch'ín, he deterred effectually by employing a proverb which, from that fact, has acquired an undying celebrity:—"Better be a chicken's head than an ox's tail,"* or, as Cæsar puts it, "First in a village rather than second at Rome."

Su's brother, Su-tai, was also an able diplomat, and gave him effectual assistance in bringing about the union of the powers. I shall have occasion to refer to him again, and I only speak of him now for the sake of citing a famous apologue, of which he is the author. History has not preserved any of his longer speeches. He was perhaps wanting in that

* 寧爲雞口不爲牛後。

lofty eloquence for which the elder Su was so distinguished, but he was endowed with a certain homely wit that carried conviction. Discoursing with one of the princes on the danger of disunion, he said:—"As I walked on the bank of the river, I saw a bird pecking at an oyster; the oyster closed its shell, and held the bird as in a vice. Just then, a fisherman came along, and captured both." The application was clear; whoever might be represented by the foolish fowl and the equally foolish shell-fish, there could be no doubt as to who was the lucky fisherman. In a concise form, this fable continues to be used as a proverb.* It is one of those shining nuggets which, in China, the departing stream of time has left so plentifully scattered among its sands.

Of the elder Su, I have said enough to establish his claim to transcendent talents. What was the League itself but a creation of genius? And its maintenance for fifteen years, was it not a marvellous manifestation of power? Yet, like other great men, he had his weaknesses. Able in governing others, he was impotent to control his own passions; and to that cause, more than to any other, was due

* When bird and fish quarrel, both fall a prey.

(鷸蚌相持漁人得利).

the final overthrow of the fabric which he had spent his life in erecting.

Through jealousy and anger, he made an enemy of Chang-i, who ever after sought to work his ruin; and, yielding to a more tender passion, he became involved in an undiplomatic intrigue with a princess of Yen, flight and death being the disastrous consequence.

Chang-i, to whom we have just referred, stands next, by common consent, on the list of international statesmen of ancient times. In talent not much inferior to Su-ch'in, his career is wanting in that unity which imparts a kind of grandeur to the achievements of Su. His life was divided between internal administration and external politics.

As administrator and military chief, he served by turns three or four states, always giving a temporary preponderance to the one he served,—unlike his rival who served six at once, and promoted equally the interests of all.

As a negotiator, he effected one or two powerful alliances; but his chief claim to distinction is the skill he showed in sowing discord among the members of the eastern league, to avenge himself for an insult received at the hand of a faithless friend.

That insult was received on the threshold of his career. As Su had made an unsuccessful attempt in the north-west, so Chang began by a fruitless

journey to Ch'u, in the south. In the meantime, his friend had risen to eminence, and he sought to join him at the court of Chao. Su, however, was as yet only forging the second link of his diplomatic chain. Whether he dreaded the disturbing influence of a mind too original to become a tool, or whether he feared that the lustre of Chang-i's talent would obscure the brightness of his own, he treated him with disdain, and found means to send him away from the scene of his own activity. In his eagerness to rid himself of a possible rival, he even supplied him with money and with attendants, to escort him as far as the capital of the north-western kingdom.

Chang saw through the stratagem, and vowed that Su should repent of it. Winning the confidence of the Prince, he rose to the highest positions in the state, being sometimes general, sometimes diplomatic envoy, and more than once clothed with the dignity of prime minister.

As head of the administration, he developed the resources of the state, and prepared the way for its ultimate triumph, and as a leader of troops he was uniformly successful; but it was in a third character,—that of diplomatist,—that he performed the most marvellous feats. Labouring to undo the work of Su, he contrived to keep him in a state of perpetual

anxiety during his life-time; and ultimately to effect the dissolution of the confederacy immediately on the death of its founder.

The most remarkable incidents in his career occurred in the kingdom of Ch'u. On his first visit, which, as we have said, was unsuccessful, he had the misfortune to be set upon by his enemies and badly beaten. Taunted by his wife for his damaged appearance, he opened his mouth and asked her to see if his tongue was in its place. On her answering in the affirmative, he added,—“With this I shall retrieve my fortunes,”—and he kept his word. So great, indeed, were his powers of persuasion that he often disarmed hostility, and sometimes raised himself to power, where he had been menaced with destruction. To cite only one instance:—The Prince of Ch'in engaged in war with Ch'u, stirred up perhaps by his minister's hatred for the state where he had suffered his first great humiliation. The army of Ch'u was defeated, and Ch'in demanded, as the price of peace, the cession of a coveted territory in exchange for another. The worsted Chief replied with a grim joke:—“Give me your chancellor, and I will yield the territory, without asking a foot of ground in exchange.”—The Prince of Ch'in repeated this flattering proposal to his minister, but with no thought of compliance.

To his surprise, Chang-i replied :—" I am ready ; send me to the camp of the enemy."

On arrival he was thrown into prison, and menaced with death ; but he had one acquaintance, whom he could rely on as *amicus in curia*. Through this man, he conveyed to the reigning beauty a hint that the western prince was about to send a beautiful woman as his ransom. The lady took alarm, and procured his release without waiting for the ransom.

Just at that moment, the news of Su's death came to his ears, suggesting the possibility of turning his temporary captivity into a veritable victory. Seeking an interview with the prince, under guise of thanking him for sparing his life, he sought to repay his debt of gratitude by tendering the best advice he was able to offer ; that was that he should abandon the confederacy, and throw in his fortunes with his powerful neighbour. The prince desired to hear the reasons for such a startling proposition ; and Chang set them forth with clearness and force, concluding a discourse, not inferior to Su's best speeches, with a recommendation to cement the peace by accepting his neighbour's son as a hostage, and giving his own in exchange ; and further to consolidate the union, by asking in marriage a princess of Ch'in. No translation can do justice to his masterly argument, because it bristles all over with allusions to places

whose names are strange to European ears, and facts of history which, out of China, have no significance.

But the prince, to whom it was addressed, understood it. Every word took effect;—how deep the effect may be judged from the fact that his kinsman, Ch'ü-yuen, the gifted poet, tried in vain to deter him from following the counsel of Chang-i.

His energetic remonstrance is not too long to give in full. "Your Highness," said he, "has once and again been the victim of Chang-i's deceptions. When your enemy had come into your hands, I took it for granted you would roast him alive. Now if you have relented so far as to refrain from putting him to death, why should you go a step further, and listen to his deceitful advice?"

The prince persisted, and, to make a long story short, the poet, like another Athiopel, went away and drowned himself, his hapless fate being commemorated by the annual festival of dragon boats.

On his way home, Chang visited the court of Han, and succeeded in detaching the prince of that country also from the confederacy.

Arriving at the capital of Ch'in, picture to yourselves the glory of his triumphal entry. He had gone forth alone and unattended, a voluntary peace-offering, to be sacrificed to the resentment of

a hostile state. He returned leading in his train the envoys of that state, and those of another hereditary enemy.

The Prince of Ch'in was duly sensible of the value of this service, and conferred on the hero the lordship of five cities. So well had Chang-i succeeded in his attempt to detach Ch'u and Han, that he resolved not to desist from his undertaking until the confederacy should be utterly demolished. At his request, his master commissioned him to proceed successively to the capitals of Chao, of Yen, and of Ch'i. The histories tell us what he said to each prince; how he tempered menace with flattery, so that, on reading each several discourse, we are not surprised that the prince, to whom it was addressed, should feel impelled by ambition, as well as by prudence, to follow the policy so powerfully advocated.

Thus, one by one, all of the states which Su had so laboriously arrayed against Ch'in, Chang-i had the satisfaction of seeing at the feet of his master, humbly acknowledging the hegemony of the north-western power. Recall the long negotiations that were required to bring the petty states of Greece to accept the hegemony of Sparta or Athens, and you can appreciate the greatness of Chang-i's diplomatic triumph.

For three centuries, the leadership among the

feudal states had been the great object of ambition. Four of them had enjoyed it in succession, feeling satisfied with that distinction without dreaming of the imperial yellow.

Ch'in was the last to erect the standard of leadership, and Chang-i's diplomacy was the proximate influence that led the other states to rally round it. A century was yet to elapse before Ch'in became bold enough to usurp the imperial throne,—an event which followed naturally on the destruction of the most of its feudatories. But that is a history into which we have no time to enter. Nor have we time to pursue the fortunes of this consummate master of diplomatic intrigue further than to say that, losing power through the death of his patron, he returned to his native state, where he was invested with the honours of prime minister, and died the following year.

After the death of Chang, the eastern states, one by one, broke away from their allegiance to Ch'in. Kung Sun-yen, who all along had opposed the policy of Chang-i, now that the latter was dead, exerted himself to resuscitate the confederacy, and succeeded in doing so, as Chang had succeeded in dissolving it, on the death of Su. Through his efforts, five of them were formed into a phalanx, with hostile spears pointing to the North-west.

Kung-sun, as successor to Su, received the grand seal of chancellor of the union. This ephemeral success, easier far than the untried enterprise of his predecessor, causes him to be ranked among the noted diplomatists of that troubled period. We dismiss him with this brief notice, merely calling attention to him as chancellor of the second Eastern league.

In this second league, the principality of Chao took a leading part, as it had done in the first. In command of the gate of the west, its strategic position was imposing; but it owed its influence in the league to its good fortune in possessing the ablest general and the most gifted statesman of the age. The general was Lien P'o, and the statesman Lin Siang-ju, of whom we shall speak only in his character of envoy and negotiator.

Two incidents in his history will serve to throw light on the times in which he lived. His prince possessed a gem of great value, and, like the *koh-i-noor*, unique,—the envy of neighbouring potentates. The Prince of Ch'in sent an embassy to offer fifteen cities in exchange for it. Its owner was afraid to refuse, and equally afraid to comply, lest the other party should not act in good faith. Lin, then a young official in the household, said to his master:—"You need not fear the loss of the gem; send me

with it, and, if the cities are not surrendered, I will be answerable for its safe return."

Arriving at the court of Ch'in, and appearing in the presence of the prince for the purpose of offering the gem, he discovered that the prince was inclined to play him false, by detaining the gem, and withholding at least a part of the price. On perceiving this, Lin stealthily slipped the gem into the bosom of a trusty servant, who, following an unfrequented path, conveyed it safely home. Lin of course remained at court, and, when the fact became known, he offered to give his life, if required, in lieu of the gem. The prince, appreciating his courage and fidelity, let him go unharmed. On reaching home, he was raised to high honours; and one hopes the faithful domestic was not forgotten. It is related of one of the crown jewels of Russia that, in a time of trouble, it was once given to a servant to convey to a place of safety. The servant said as he departed:—"If I should be slain by the way, you will find the jewel in my body." He was slain, and his master, recovering his body, found the jewel in his stomach.

The other incident in the life of Lin relates to a ceremonious meeting of two princes. They met on the common frontier, each accompanied by his diplomatic adviser. In a festive humour, the prince of Ch'in asked his brother prince to favour him with

a specimen of the music in which he was known to be a proficient. The request was unsuspectingly complied with, but Lin saw in it a design to treat his master with indignity. "Now," said he to the prince of Ch'in, "it is your turn; please beat the tabour after the manner of your country." The prince hesitating, he added:—"If you refuse, I shall spatter my blood on your royal robes, as a protest against the affront you have put upon my master." Hearing this, the guards rushed upon him, and were about to cut him down; but his fearless bearing held them in check, and the haughty prince, not wishing to bring the conference to a tragic ending, gave a few beats on the tabour. The princes parted on equal terms; and Lin was raised to the highest rank in the state, for having saved the honour of his master.

When Bismarck lighted his cigar in the diet at Frankfort, a privilege regarded as belonging exclusively to the ambassador of Austria, all Germany was astounded at his audacity. Not less were the states of China, at the boldness of Lin, in compelling the mightiest prince of the empire to keep time to his master's music. In either case, a trivial act was clothed with a grave political significance, and it required diplomatic talent of the highest order to turn it to account.

Previous to this occurrence, the famous general

Lien P'o had enjoyed the first rank in his state. He felt it as a personal outrage that a man, whom he looked on as an upstart, should suddenly be raised above him,—forgetting that the statesman is above the soldier, and that good diplomacy requires the highest kind of statesmanship. He let it be known that, wherever he should meet his rival, he would insult him to his face. Lin, hearing of this threat, took pains to avoid a meeting. The general, remarking this, sent him a half contemptuous message, asking an explanation of his strange and undignified conduct, which he was not at liberty to impute to fear, after the proofs he had given of personal courage. Lin replied:—"If I avoid an encounter, it is because your life and mine are indispensable to the safety of our country. If Ch'in refrains from attacking Chao, it is on account of us two. The Prince of Ch'in would be delighted to see us fall by each other's hands."

The general was so struck with this patriotic answer, and particularly with Lin's moral courage in exposing himself to a suspicion of cowardice rather than bring a calamity on his country, that he frankly confessed himself in fault, in the ceremonious fashion then in vogue. Coming to Lin's door with a rod in his hand, instead of using it on Lin, he begged that it might be applied to his own back. The two rushed into

each other's arms, swore to be brothers, and sealed the covenant by drinking a cup of wine, mingled with blood drawn from the veins of both. Who, on hearing this, can fail to recall the manner in which Aristides and Themistocles laid aside their deadly feud,—how, when Xerxes was threatening the liberties of Greece, knowing that union is strength, they dug a pit and formally buried their enmity, not to be resurrected until the danger was past?

If I have followed the career of particular statesmen with considerable detail, it is because I have thought I might in that way present a more vivid picture of the diplomacy of the period. Viewed from a moral standpoint, that diplomacy was not above criticism. It reminds us of the instructions given by Louis XI to his ambassadors, when despatching them to neighbouring states,—“If they lie to you, you must lie still more to them,”—and bears little resemblance to the transparent candour and immaculate integrity, which characterize the European diplomacy of our own day;—for has not diplomacy, like everything else, risen above the level of former ages? Is it not a recognized maxim, in our enlightened times, that honesty is the best policy? Is it not equally a maxim that the advantage of each is found in the prosperity of all? What representative of a European power ever disguises the truth, or thinks of taking advantage

of the ignorance or weakness of the power with which he is called to negotiate? In fact, what is diplomacy, as we understand it, but another name for philanthropy? *

Chinese statesmen of the period under review had (alas!) not yet attained to this sublime conception; **各爲其主** "let every man do his best for his own master," was the maxim they openly professed,—a maxim often quoted to excuse deviations from rectitude.

Envoys went and came on all occasions calling for felicitation or condolence, and I will not assert that they were too high-minded to improve the opportunity to spy out the nakedness of the land; or that custom forbade them, while professing peace, to make preparation for war.

There existed a code of recognized rules for the regulation of intercourse by means of diplomatic envoys. I have touched on these in a paper on *Traces of International Law in Ancient China*; and I do not propose to repeat what I have there said. My object has been rather to show diplomacy in action, than to set forth either rules or theories. Permit me, in conclusion, to make one or two observations:—

* Several of our diplomatic representatives were present at the reading of this Paper.

1.—Among the privileges of ambassadors, as laid down in the ancient books of China, we find no trace of that convenient fiction known as extra-territoriality.

The hospitable Spaniard, in Buenos Ayres, sends you a card of invitation to come to "your own house," in such and such a street. So, western peoples have agreed that a diplomatic envoy, as guest of the nation, shall be considered as living and moving on his own ground. It is a little singular that the Chinese never thought of expressing their sense of the inviolable sanctity of such envoys in a similar manner, especially as their language is not wanting in similar fictions, dictated by courtesy or flattery.

As a principle, the sanctity of an ambassador was fully admitted; but in practice, it was frequently violated. Nor is that to be wondered at, in a state of society in which ambassadors regarded it as their main business to mingle in court intrigues.

2.—In the diplomacy of ancient China, there was no such thing as a minister plenipotentiary.

The sovereign always held himself free to disavow the acts of his representative, whenever it might suit his policy so to do. When the Chinese were first confronted with that term, in their negotiations with the west, they expressed some surprise, and declined to accept it. "There is only one plenipotentiary in the empire," they said; "that is the Emperor."

How their scruples were overcome, I shall not pause to explain further than to say that it required nothing less than the storming of his forts to induce the Emperor to grant the title.

3.—In the diplomacy of ancient China, there was no such thing as a resident minister; they were all *envoyés extraordinaires*.

But they found occasion to prolong their stay for months or years; and, in many cases, they were kept going back and forth so frequently as to accomplish all the purposes of residence, together with the additional advantage of frequent conference with their chiefs.

As an example of the kind of reports they were expected to make, I may mention that Su-tai, the brother of the more noted Su, of whom we have spoken, was once sent as ambassador to Ch'i. On returning, his master desired him to report on the state of that country, and the character of its prince, with particular reference to the question whether he was aspiring to the hegemony, or had any prospect of attaining it.

As an instance of frequent and prolonged missions, I may cite the case of Ch'en-chen. Being frequently sent on missions to Ch'u, he was accused by Chang-i of enriching himself without benefitting his chief. Charged with drawing emoluments from two states,

and making himself a *persona grata* at the foreign court without, in any way, improving the state of foreign relations, he defended himself successfully; and I only cite the case as an illustration of the point in hand.

Instances are not wanting, in which an envoy enlisted in the service of the foreign state, in order the better to serve the policy of his own country. The final stage in the career of the elder Su may be cited as an example in point. Finding himself under the necessity of leaving the court of Yen, to escape the consequences of a *liaison* which he had formed with a princess, he begged the prince to send him on a mission to the kingdom of Ch'i, alleging that he could there promote his interests much better than by remaining at home. Arriving there, he entered the service of the foreign state; and subsequently, his intrigues against its welfare being detected, he was bound between two chariots and torn to pieces,—a melancholy emblem of the empire of that day, rent asunder by the opposing forces represented by the Leagues of the East and West.

Su's conduct in the kingdom of Ch'i finds a pretty close parallel in that of Chetardie at the court of Russia, who narrowly escaped a like hideous fate.*

*In a note to the *Guide Diplomatique* of de Martens, Volume I, page 83, we have a brief account of the incident alluded to. I cite here one or two lines only:—

“La Chetardie, ambassadeur de France, avait eu la principale part à la révolution qui placa Elisabeth sur le trône de Russie”

“La Chetardie s'était immiscé dans les intrigues de cour
Il ne tarda pas à s'en repentir.”

4.—The political relations of the great states of ancient China afford a remarkable analogy to those of the states of modern Europe. In the former, the diplomacy of the period turned on the question of furthering or checking the progress of one power, which appeared to aim at universal dominion. Who shall say that the situation in Europe may not be described under the same formula? Reversing the points of the compass,—a political map of the one might serve, *mutatis mutandis*, for that of the other. And who shall blame the Chinese for reading the wars and alliances of modern Europe in the light of their own ancient history? When they read how for centuries the eyes of Russia have been fixed on the imperial city of the Bosphorus; how the first Napoleon, on the eve of his disastrous expedition, predicted the danger of Europe becoming Cossack; how, in 1854, the advance of Russia was checked by another Napoleon, in concert with England; and how, in 1878, she was compelled, by a conference of the Powers, to relinquish her prey when fairly within her grasp;—will they not believe that their great cycle has come round again, and that their own old drama is being repeated on a new and grander theatre?



VII.

NOTES

ON

THE CONFUCIAN APOCRYPHA.*



ASTRONOMERS tell us that, though Venus is so much nearer than Mars, it is impossible to obtain a clear view of her surface, on account of her dazzling brightness. Do we not experience a similar difficulty in contemplating the great luminaries of the human race? In their case, an atmosphere of myth always gathers round the nucleus of history, concealing and distorting their features.

This was the case with Him to whom the Western world owes its deliverance from the darkness of heathenism. Outside of the authentic records left us by the Four Evangelists, there was extant for a long time a floating mass of fable which it cost no

* Read before the Oriental Society of Peking.—October, 1892.

little labor to expose and suppress. It was so with the wisest of the sages of Greece. How different the aspect which Socrates presents in the simple narrative of Xenophon from that which he is made to assume in the voluminous Dialogues of Plato!

In the latter, we know that we are not reading history; yet they do contain historic elements,—many of the doctrines and much of the manner of propounding them being derived from Socrates, even if the words in which they are clothed belong wholly to his eloquent disciple.

Such, too, is the case of Confucius. So great was the ascendancy to which he attained, within the five or six centuries succeeding his death, that it became the fashion to invoke his name for any document for which his followers desired to conciliate popular favor.

Especially was this the habit with that large class of writers, the *Po-tsze* (百子), whom we may describe as the Sophists of China. Take up a volume of *Leih-tsze* or *Chuang-tsze*, and you meet with anecdotes, apologies, and discourses, put forth under the name of Confucius,—all of which are so evidently fictitious as to suggest a query whether they were ever intended to be taken as historical. These writers deal in a similar way, and some of them to a much greater extent,

with the name of Hwang-ti, the Yellow Emperor,—a personage who belongs altogether to the realm of myth.

It is no disparagement to the pains-taking and conscientious authors of the *Lun Yu*, the *Confucian Memorabilia*, to say that they must share with writers of fiction the honor of propagating the fame of their Master. They have made the world familiar with the Sage, who always spoke with deliberation, and acted with dignity; who had such a weakness for ginger that he was “never tired of eating it;” and who was so scrupulous as to petty proprieties that he “never sat down if his mat was awry.” To these trifling details they add that, at home, he wore a tunic with one sleeve shorter than the other, and slept in a night-gown fifty per cent longer than his body; that, on going to bed, he ceased to talk; and, not to cite other traits of aspect and carriage, the conviction is forced upon us that we have here glimpses of a real man.

But turn to the outline of biography, familiar to every Chinese school-boy. Passing over the supernatural portents connected with his birth and death, we find the statement that Confucius was prime minister of Lu for three months; that, within that time, he effected such a reformation that precious things might be dropped in the street without risk

of misappropriation; that shepherds refrained from watering their sheep before driving them to market, lest they should draw more than their proper weight; that prisons were empty, and tribunals idle; that men were honest, and women chaste; and that the little state began to acquire such a preponderance that its neighbors resorted to unworthy stratagems to undermine the influence of the great reformer. Instead of one clever woman, such as Louis XIV sent as ambassadress to Charles II, the Prince of Ch'i despatched four-score ballet girls, and the Prince of Lu ceased to listen to the lectures of Confucius. These and other incidents, either wholly fictitious or greatly exaggerated, are found in the sober pages of Sze-ma-ch'ien,—the Herodotus of China.

The Sage taught by a child.

Many of these incidents have been taken up and further expanded by later writers. For instance, the historian records that "Confucius took lessons from Hiang-t'oh." Now, Hiang-t'oh was a precocious child of seven years; and the record probably means nothing more than that the Sage condescended to take a hint from the lad, or to make use of him as an illustration in teaching, as a Greater Teacher did, when, his disciples contending for precedence, he set a little child before them as an object lesson in the graces of faith and humility.

Here is a specimen of the stories that have grown out of this obscure incident:—

Confucius, it is said, seeing a little boy playing with tiles in the street, called to him to make way for his carriage. "Not so," said the boy; "I am building a city. A city wall does not give way for a cart, but a cart goes round the wall." "You seem to be uncommonly clever for your years," said Confucius, surprised at the self-possession of the lad. "How so?" said the lad; "a hare of the age of three days can scamper over the fields, and should I not know a thing or two at the age of seven years? If you will tell me how many stars there are in heaven, I shall know more than I do now." "Why do you inquire about things so far away?" said the Sage; "ask about something near at hand, and I will answer you." "Then," said the boy, "please tell me how many hairs you have in your eye-brows." The Sage was non-plussed; and, giving the lad a kindly smile, he drove silently away.

Another story, derived from the same source, though of an earlier date, being found in the works of *Leih-tsze*, is the following:—

Confucius met with two boys, who were discussing the question whether the sun is more distant in the morning or at noon. "It appears larger in the morning," said one; "and the nearer an object is, the larger it appears." "But," replied the other, "is not the sun

hotter at noon than in the morning? And does not a hot object give more heat when near, than when far away?" Unable to agree, they referred the matter to the Sage; and he, with characteristic caution, left the question undecided; or, as one version has it, he was unable to decide, and the boys formed a low opinion of his intelligence.*

In treating of the apocryphal literature relating to Confucius, it is important to distinguish that which originated before the "burning of the books" from that which belongs to a later date. Works that preceded that catastrophe have, of course, the better chance of containing genuine traditions,—especially if, as in the case of *Leih-tsze* and *Chuang-tsze*, they belong to the Taoist school, which was not proscribed, and therefore escaped the conflagration. In the writers last named, the reckless use of imagination vitiates their authority. In *Chuang-tsze*, there are more than fifty references to Confucius and his disciples, not one of which possesses any historical value.

* The German poet Claudius puts a similar dispute into the mouth of two rustics:—

Wie gross meinst du die Sonne sei?
 So gross vielleicht wie ein futter Hen.
etc., etc.

How big, asked Hans, is the sun, do you say?
 As big, said Sep, as a load of hay.
 No! no! cried Hans, not half so big,
 I give it the size of an ostrich egg.

In works of the later period, reminiscences of the Sage are far more multiplied; but their genuineness is not merely questionable on account of their remoteness from the times of their subject. Is it not obvious that an occurrence like the "fires of Ch'in," the avowed aim of which was to extirpate the teachings of Confucius, would open a wide field for the production of supposititious literature? So well, indeed, did the tyrant succeed in his purpose that only a few manuscripts escaped; and they, by being hidden for generations in the walls of houses.

A Premium on Forgery.

On the accession of the Han Dynasty, when the first attempt was made to wake the lost books from their ashes, the same edict, which caused old men to ransack their brain for pages committed to memory in boyhood, encouraged others to exercise their inventive faculties to produce a plausible substitute. The rewards offered for discoveries of hidden Classics acted as a premium on forgery.

All the circumstances of the time were adapted to favor imposture. Under a new dynasty, letters blossomed afresh; and the subject which appealed most powerfully to the inventive faculties of the learned was the huge void left by the missing books. Pecuniary rewards, imperial favor, and popular

esteem, all conspired to incite them to effort; and *aut inveniam aut faciam* became a motto with thousands of zealous scholars.

Zeal for the Confucian school, which, for a time overshadowed by Taoism, now began to recover its lost ground, supplied an additional motive; and scholars, who wished to give currency to their own ideas, did not scruple to publish them under the names of the apostles of Confucianism, or even under that of the great Master himself.

The Arabs of Egypt are not more expert in manufacturing antique mummies than were the students of Han in the construction of ancient classics. Not to speak of spurious portions foisted into several of the canonical books, two at least of the works now reckoned among the *Thirteen Classics* are admitted to be of apocryphal origin. These are the *Li-ki*, or *Book of Rites*, and *Hiao-king*, or *Manual of Filial Piety*.

The Book of Rites.

The former has had the good fortune to be included in the *Five King*, for what reason it is difficult to divine, unless because it professes to record ritual observances which were in vogue in the period covered by the other *Four*. It enjoys, therefore, a great authority from the eminence to which it has been raised.

More than any other work, it has shaped the external form of Chinese civilization,—preserving its essential unity under all vicissitudes, prescribing alike official forms and private manners.

The rules of the *Li-ki* are not, indeed, held as obligatory any more than are the rituals of the Old Testament in the practice of Christendom; but, never having been formally abrogated, a larger proportion of them has entered into the life of the modern Chinese.

The compilers of the *Li-ki* no doubt found much genuine material drifting in a state of wreckage down the stream of time, and they had no hesitation in supplying from their own resources whatever might be required for its reconstruction. Nor did they, in any case, take pains to point out the boundary between the old and the new. What they discovered was at best a torso, and their ambition was to present it as a complete statue.

On reading the *Li-ki*, you are struck by a great inequality of style; parts being crabbed and obscure, while other parts flow in a pellucid stream, characteristic of an advanced stage of literary art. Take, for example, the book entitled *Fu-hing*, the character of a scholar, and you have an eloquent exposition of the conduct becoming a man of letters. Again, in the *Yoh-ki*, you have a rhapsody on music,

without a single indication which might enable a student to reproduce the music of the ancients. Both discourses are credited to Confucius, but the style is too modern by at least four centuries.

In some parts of the collection, the Sage is made to appear as interlocutor in a dialogue; and occasionally an incident is related as a basis for moral reflexions. Such an incident is the following, which I take from the Chapter called *T'an-kung*.

On one of his journeys, Confucius, passing by the foot of a wood-covered mountain, heard the voice of a woman wailing so bitterly that he was moved to inquire the cause of her grief. "Not long ago," she replied, "my father-in-law was devoured by a tiger; more recently, my husband fell a victim; and now, my son has perished in the same way. Have I not cause for sorrow?"

"But why do you live in a place infested by wild beasts?" asked the Sage. "Because," said the woman, "we are here free from the exactions of mandarins."

"Mark that, my children," said Confucius, turning to his disciples; "oppressive officers are dreaded more than tigers."

The incident is sufficiently striking, and its moral is worthy of a Sage. The story of the serpent-catcher, by Liu Tsung-yuen, is based on it, and enforces the same moral in the elegant

diction of a later age, exerting a restraining influence on the rapacity of officials, and promoting a spirit of independence among the people.

In itself, the tiger story is not incredible. In Oregon, I was told of a woman who had lost three husbands by grizzly bears. Who can assert that this remarkable facility of divorce did not for her constitute an attraction to the soil of the new territory?

The Book of Filial Piety.

Like the *Li-ki*, the *Manual of Filial Piety* dates from the first century B.C.; and, like that work, it is reputed to have been discovered in the wall of a house belonging to a descendant of Confucius. In form, it consists of a series of discourses, addressed by the Sage to his disciple Tsêng-tsze,—the one who most frequently served him as amanuensis, and who now wears the proud title of *Ch'uen-shêng*,—"Transmitter of the Sage."

In style, the book bears the impress of the age of its alleged discovery, being more modern by several centuries than that of its reputed author. It is remarkable for the fullness with which it expounds the working of filial piety as a social regulator in all the relations of life. Though the Christian finds in it no sufficient substitute for the

prompting and restraining influence of faith in an omnipresent God, he must acknowledge that in China filial piety might be made a useful auxiliary to the higher sentiment. The decay of that higher sentiment (if it ever existed in China) was no doubt owing to the rise of polytheism; and philosophers were fain to seek in filial piety a force which should serve as the prop of morality.

The state makes it the basis of its legislation; and this book, whose canonicity the state has good reasons for upholding, is therefore a corner-stone in the social fabric. The very phrase 以孝治天下 "to rule the empire by filial piety"—is found in the eighth Chapter; and so beautifully is the idea developed in the proem that I cannot forbear citing a few lines:—

"One day, when the Master was at leisure and Tsêng-tsze in attendance, he said,—“The ancient Sages possessed a perfect method for governing the empire, by which the people were made to live in harmony without discord between high and low;—do you understand it?” Tsêng-tsze rose and replied:—“I am dull of apprehension; how should I understand it?” “Sit down then,” said the Master, “and I will teach you. Filial piety is the root of virtue, and the fountain of moral teaching. It begins with due care for the body because

received from your parents; it culminates in conduct which will make your name immortal, and reflect glory on your father and mother. Its beginning is the service of your parents; its middle, the service of the sovereign; and its end, the formation of character."

The eighteen short chapters which follow do nothing more than amplify this text. They are so brief and pithy that school children commit them to memory, and accept them as rules of conduct for their subsequent life. The effect of the doctrines, thus set forth, can hardly be over-estimated; and, in general, they are consonant with the teachings of the Sage as given in records of unquestioned authenticity. The *Hiao-king*, therefore, though apocryphal, does him no injustice, unless it be in one point, viz.,—in making conformity to the ordinances and even the costume of the ancient Kings an obligation of filial piety. It is known that Confucius was somewhat conservative; but it may be affirmed that he never enjoined such unreasoning submission to antiquity. Did he not say that the man who for three years does not depart from the way of his father may be called filial,—implying that he may or will depart from it in a very short time? And does he not teach, in the first section of the *Ta-hio*, the *Great Study*, that the chief duty of a Prince is to effect the renovation of his people?

How I have longed to see the rulers of China wake up to the fact that their Great Teacher never intended them to be fast bound to the wheels of antiquity !

The Family Traditions.

The last of these apocryphal writings which we shall notice at present is in some respects the most important of all. It is the *Kia-yu*, or *Family Traditions*. It appeared between two and three centuries later than the *Li-ki* and *Hiao-king*;—i.e., in the period of the Three Kingdoms. Its fortune, though less brilliant than that of those two most lucky forgeries, has been such as to surpass the ambition of its so-called editor. For though not, like them, set in the constellation of sacred classics, it is held to be “deutero-canonical;” and, as such, it stands in the Imperial catalogues at the head of *Ju-kia*, or orthodox writers of the Confucian School. The editor, Wang Suh, frankly states the object he has in view in giving these *Traditions* to the world. “Errors are rampant,” he says in his preface, “and the Confucian highway is overgrown with brambles. Why should not I make an effort to clear it of obstructions? If no one, then, chooses to follow it, it will not be my fault.”

The zeal expressed in these words is not fitted to inspire confidence; and, when he informs us that

he has opportunely obtained these *Traditions* in manuscript from a descendant of the Sage in the twenty-second generation, are we not disposed to regard the discovery as rather too *opportune*? Why should a member of the family of K'ung, after the lapse of seven centuries, be more likely to possess genuine traditions than any other of the "hundred names?" That the work as a whole is spurious, is admitted by native critics. That which secures for it unrivalled popularity is:—

1.—Its worthy aim; 2.—Its pleasing style; 3.—Something like an element of real tradition, derived from various sources; and 4.—Its adroit insertion and skilful amplification of authentic records.

Notwithstanding its multifarious contents, it is easy to separate the few grains of golden sand carried down by the stream of time from the bright clay in which the author has wrapped them up, with a view to increasing their bulk and weight.

A Strange Monitor.

As a good example of his method, I may mention the manner in which he deals with a brief notice which he finds in *Suin-tze* (荀子), who lived three centuries before. The passage alludes to a water-vessel, which, when empty, hung obliquely; when half-full, hung vertically; but, on being

filled, turned over and spilled its contents. It was said to have been placed on the right of the Prince's throne as a warning against pride, or fullness, which "precedes a fall."

Taking this for a text, Wang Suh expands it into a discourse of considerable length, a copy of which I obtained in Japan, where it had evidently been used as an inscription in a princely or imperial palace.*

It is, however, in paraphrases on the *Lun Yu* that he most frequently displays his peculiar skill. A few illustrations may not be out of place.

Three Wishes.

Borrowing a hint from a passage in which Confucius calls on his disciples to describe the employ which each would find to his taste, our author shows us the Master with three of his disciples on a hill top. Enjoying the boundless prospect, he says to them:—"Here our thoughts fly unfettered in all directions. Here you may give wing to fancy, and clothe your wildest dreams in words. Now, let each of you name the situation, or achievement, which would most completely fill the measure of his ambition."

Tsze-lu declares for feats of prowess, choosing above all things to be able with a small force to humble a proud foe; and with his own hand to

* See XVIII.

capture the leader of the opposing camp. Tsze-kung, the finest talker of the School, bent on proving the tongue mightier than the sword, enlarging on his friend's picture of opposing armies ready to join in bloody conflict, adds that it would be his ambition to come between the hostile camps, to disarm them both by mere force of argument, showing each his true interest, and by skilful diplomacy to bring about an adjustment of their differences. "I should wish," he says, "no higher glory than that of such a peaceful victory."

Confucius commends his eloquence, and then calls on Yen Hui, his favorite disciple, the St. John of his School. With unassuming modesty, Yen declines to engage in competition with his arrogant companions; but, when urged by the Master, he says:—"My desire would be to find a good Prince, who would accept me for his Vizier. I would teach his people justice, propriety, and benevolence; and lead them no longer to build walls, or dig moats, but to turn their weapons of war into instruments of husbandry."

"Admirable," exclaimed Confucius; "such is the power of virtue."

In the *Memorabilia*, or *Lun Yu*, the Sage gives his suffrage to a disciple, who draws a charming picture of the pleasures of idleness. Wang Suh has re-cast the entire scene, in order to give it a conclusion more

worthy of the nation's teacher, emphasizing the sentiment expressed by Longfellow:—

Were half the force that keeps the world in terror,
Were half the wealth that's spent on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals and forts.

To Be or Not To Be.

The famous saying of the great Agnostic—"We know not life, how can we know death?"—supplies an equally fine text for artful amplification. It is accordingly expanded into the following dialogue:—

"Do the dead retain a conscious existence?" inquired Tsze-kung.

"If," replied Confucius, "I should say they do, I fear the pious and filial would neglect their living parents through devotion to the dead. If, on the other hand, I should say they do not, I fear that the unfilial might so far disregard their duties to the dead as to leave their parents unburied."

With this ambiguous answer, he closed his lips, and left his disciples on the horns of a torturing dilemma.

The Lesson of Running Water.

In the *Lun Yu*, we are told that the Sage, looking on a running stream, exclaimed:—"Behold an emblem of time; it ceases not, day or night."

In the *Traditions*, Confucius was gazing intently on the eastward flowing current of the Yellow River. A disciple, inquiring why a superior man always loves to look on the surface of a great stream, he replies:—"Because its flow never ceases; it nourishes all living things, and yet without labor. Its water is like virtue; it seeks a low place; yet cities and palaces follow its course. It is like goodness, vast and inexhaustible; it is like truth, going straight forward without fear, even though a plunge of a hundred fathoms may be before it. This is why the superior man loves to look on the face of the flowing waters."

Foolish Questions and Wise Answers.

In the *Lun Yu*, Ai Kung, Duke of Lu, asks one or two questions. In the *Traditions*, he is made to ask a score or more. Here are two,—both frivolous; but they elicit wise answers:—

"Will you tell me," said the Duke, "what kind of crown was worn by the Emperor Shun?" After a prolonged silence, Confucius replied, but not until he was urged to speak:—"I was silent, because I do not know what kind of garments Shun wore; but I do know the principles on which he ruled his people. Why should not Your Highness inquire about them?" On another occasion, the Duke said to Confucius:—

"I have heard of a man, who, on removing to a new house, forgot to take his wife. Was there ever a case of greater forgetfulness?" "Yes," replied Confucius; "it is that of the man who forgets himself."

Two Views of Life.

A fine story, which Wang Suh borrows from *Leih-tsze*, is that of an old man of ninety, who, being asked why, under the burdens of age, poverty, and toil, he was still able to sing so merrily, replied:—"I have many reasons for feeling happy, but the principal are these, viz:—That I have come into life as a man; that I have reached a good old age; and that I am now soon to be released by the hand of death."

After relating this without acknowledgement, our author invents one in a similar style:—

Passing near a river, Confucius heard the voice of weeping. Overtaking an old man, from whom the voice proceeded, he inquired the cause of his distress.

"They are three," replied the man; "I have failed in three things, which it is now too late to mend, and nothing remains but unavailing remorse.

When young, I went wandering over the world in quest of knowledge; and, when I returned home, my parents were dead.

In mature years, I served the Prince of Ch'i; but the Prince ruined himself by pride and debauchery, and I was unable to check his downward course.

In my life-time, I have had many friends, but I failed to attach them to me by a sincere and lasting affection; and now, in my old age, they have all forsaken me. Of these three errors, the greatest was the neglect of my parents."

Yielding to a fresh transport of grief, the old man threw himself into the water and perished. "Mark this," said Confucius, turning to his disciples; and that very day thirteen of them went home to serve their parents.

In general, stories and discourses which re-appear in the *Traditions*, display a marked improvement on their originals;—at least, in literary finish, though in some instances "expanded gold exchanges solid strength for feeble splendor."

Thus far, we have looked on the finer side of the tapestry. Let us now turn to its seamy side, as it is necessary to do in order to complete the evidence of patch-work.

An Imaginary Niagara.

On the road from Wei to Lu, Confucius comes to a cataract, thirty fathoms in height, which creates a whirlpool ninety *li* (30 miles) in circumference,

and so furious is the current that neither fish nor tortoise can live in it; yet an intrepid swimmer, more lucky than Captain Webb at Niagara, succeeds in crossing. This passage suggests the wild fancy of *Chuang-tsze*; and, on turning to the older writer, we find it there, but less extravagant in its terms. Wang Suh uses it to point a vapid moral; but he has blundered in admitting it among authentic traditions.

Wise Questions and Foolish Answers.

In the *Lun Yu*, it is said there were four things of which Confucius never spoke, viz:—Fairy tales, feats of strength, outrageous crimes, and the gods (or the supernatural). A book exists, which takes these for its subject, and bears the title 子不語, *Things of which Confucius did not Speak*. There are not a few pages in these alleged *Traditions* that might be grouped under such a rubric.

One of the Princes, asking him a question in *Maxima and Minima*, Confucius launches into a dissertation on giants and dwarfs.

Prince Chao, of Ch'ou, in crossing a river, picks up a floating fruit resembling a cocoa-nut, and sends a messenger to learn its nature from Confucius. Without the least hesitation, the omniscient Sage gives the name of the fruit, and adds that the Prince may eat it, as it is a fruit of good omen, which only

falls into the hands of one destined to be a leader of the nations. When a disciple asks him how he happens to know these facts so exactly, he replies that he once heard a nursery rhyme (童謠) to that effect:—It was prophetic, and this he knew to be its fulfilment.

In another passage, he explains the appearance of a strange bird in the same way. It was called *Shang-yang*, had only one leg, and, as he learned from a childish ditty, its arrival portended a deluge of rain.

These instances, with many others of the same kind, may be taken as completing the evidence that the so-called *Traditions* are a transparent fiction. If I have dwelt too long on this particular work, it is on account of the credit which it enjoys, and the influence it exerts in fixing the popular ideal of the Sage.

There are other works which contain similar fictions; but time fails to enumerate, not to say, examine them.

Taken as a whole, the volume of these apocryhal writings far exceeds that of the authentic records; the gaseous envelope surrounding the luminary is greater than its solid nucleus. But it may be

doubted whether these fabrications, however well meant, have not detracted from the essential greatness of China's model wise man.

Confucius no Myth.

Let us conclude by briefly indicating a few points in which the apocryphal Confucius differs from the *real* founder of Chinese civilization; for, at this stage of our discussion, I need hardly say that Confucius was no myth. He is so far historical that he, and not Sze-ma, is the Father of Chinese History. His words and acts were minutely noted by contemporary pens, hundreds of his pupils contributing to transmit his teachings and perpetuate his memory. The attempt to make him a mythical personage, like Pan-ku or Nü-qua, may afford an agreeable exercise for the leisure hours of an ingenious student; but it can no more unsettle the received conviction than Archbishop Whately's *Historic Doubts concerning Napoleon* could relegate the Corsican Conqueror to the companionship of Hercules and Bacchus. But, in the double personality that goes under that venerated name, it is time to point out the features in which the mythical Confucius differs from the historical. I limit myself to five:—

The Real and the Mythical compared.

1.—The real Sage was noted for modesty; the

fictional is a prig, who assumes to know everything. The myth-makers, who have attempted to display the universality of his knowledge, have succeeded in exposing their own ignorance.

2.—The real Confucius was a man of few words; his style, laconic and grave. The mythical is loquacious, and often occupied with trifles.

3.—The real Sage was reverential towards the Supreme Power of the Universe, but agnostic in spirit and practice. The Confucius of these Apocryphal books is excessively superstitious, drawing omens of the future from birds, beasts, and the nonsensical ditties of children.

4.—The real Sage, when asked if it is right to repay injury by injury, forbids revenge. The Apocryphal is made to teach the vendetta in its most truculent form, prescribing its measure for each degree of relationship,—the slayer of a father to be slain at sight, even in the halls of an imperial palace.

5.—The real Sage was humane, making humanity, or love, the first of the cardinal virtues in his moral system. The Apocryphal personage is cruel and unjust, putting Shao Chêng-mao to death for five reasons,—not one of which would justify anything more severe than dismissal from office;

and cutting off the hands and feet of a mountebank, who sought to amuse two princes on the occasion of a public meeting.

These Apocryphal writings contain, as I have said, much that is good. They must be studied to get at the sources of the later literature. But would it not be a worthy undertaking for some enlightened scholar, native or foreign, to sift these heterogeneous materials, and clear the name of the Great Master from all connexion with the absurd, vain, and wicked things with which his memory has been loaded?

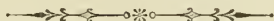


VIII.

PLATO AND CONFUCIUS.

A

CURIOUS COINCIDENCE.*



THE coincidence relates to a moot point of filial duty. In China, filial piety is recognized as the basis of social order. By the orthodox, it is even held to supply the place of religion; so that "he who serves his parents at home has no need to go far away to burn incense to the gods."

In the *Hiao King*, a well-known manual for the instruction of youth, it is represented as affording an incentive to the discharge of duty in all situations, giving force and vitality to consciences which might otherwise remain dormant. Thus, a soldier who runs away is unfilial; an officer who is unfaithful to his prince is unfilial; and, in general, any conduct

* From the Journal of the American Oriental Society.

that entails disgrace is unfilial, because it must of necessity reflect discredit on the parents of the offender. A whole system of morals is deduced from this root; and casuistry finds scope in inventing difficult situations and in reconciling conflicting obligations. Truth is a virtue not much insisted on in Chinese books; and its comparative rarity brings into relief a class of people who vaunt their frankness, and scorn to palliate or extenuate in the interest of their dearest friends. They are called *chih jin*, "straight men."

A disciple of Confucius, speaking of one of these, says to the Master:—"In my village, there was a man renowned for truthfulness. When his father had stolen a sheep, he went to the magistrate and informed against him. Is his conduct to be commended?"

"In my village," the Sage replies, "the duty of truthfulness is understood differently,—a son being required in all cases to conceal the faults of his father, and a father to conceal those of his son. The obligations of truth are not violated by this practice."

A hundred years later, the question was not yet regarded as settled; or, to speak more properly, as with all moral questions, the old battles had to be fought over again.

Mencius was the oracle of the age, and one of his disciples brings up the subject by stating a hypothetical case. "Suppose," he said, "the father of the emperor, being a private man, should commit murder. Is it the duty of the Criminal Judge to seize and condemn him?"

"Without doubt," replied Mencius.

"But then, how could the emperor endure to see his father treated in that way? When the wise Shun was on the throne, if his villainous old father, Kuseo, had committed murder, and was in danger of being condemned by Kao Yao, what would Shun have done?"

"Shun," replied the teacher, "would have taken his father on his back and fled to the borders of the sea. Dwelling there in obscurity, and rejoicing that he had saved the life of his parent, he would have forgotten that he ever filled a throne."

Mencius, the St. Paul of Confucianism, who formulated the doctrines of his school, goes in this passage a step beyond the teachings of his Master. The latter confined the duty of a child toward a parent, guilty of a crime, to the passive part of concealment. The former gives it an active form,—requiring a son, on behalf of a parent,

to do all in his power to defeat the ends of justice. But when, in this dilemma, he sets himself in opposition to the law, he is no longer fit to be a prince; he should abdicate the throne, to win the crown of filial piety; for, according to Mencius, filial duty primes all others.

A case, analogous to the first of these, forms the subject of *Euthyphron*, one of the Dialogues of Plato. Socrates, going to the court of King's Bench, meets Euthyphron, and learns with horror that he has come for the express purpose of denouncing his own father as guilty of a capital crime.

A hired laborer, having killed another in a drunken brawl, the father of the accuser had him bound hand-and-foot and thrown into a pit, where the next morning he was found dead. Euthyphron saw in the hapless victim, not a chattel or a broken tool, but a fellow-man unjustly slain; while, in the murderer, he recognized, not a beloved parent, but an odious criminal.

There is something chivalrous and noble in his taking up the cause of humanity, in opposition to the narrower claims of family. But it detracts from his merit that he is fully conscious of the *beau rôle* which he has assumed.

Socrates, who as usual expresses the sentiments

of the author, is not dazzled by this splendid instance of public virtue triumphing over private feeling. After passing the ideas and motives of the hero through the sieve of his dialectic, he shows him that those instincts which he despises are the voice of nature; and that, in spite of his assumption of superior knowledge, he neither knows "what he is to believe concerning the gods, nor what duty the gods require of man."

"The victim," said Socrates, "must have been one of your near relatives; otherwise, you would not have been able to overcome your natural repugnance to denouncing your father."

"Nothing is more ridiculous," Euthyphron replied, "than to suppose that it makes any difference whether the victim is a relative or a stranger. The whole question is, whether the homicide was justifiable or not. If it was not, then it was my duty to denounce the perpetrator, no matter how closely connected with me; for it would be contamination to associate with such a person, instead of clearing myself by denouncing him." "My relations," he adds, "view this proceeding as impious and unholy; not knowing the nature of the gods, nor the real distinction between things holy and unholy."

"But," asked Socrates, "are you sure that *you* understand the nature of the gods, and the distinction of holy and unholy? Tell me what you call holy and unholy."

"I," replied Euthyphron, "call that holy which I am now doing:—namely, the denouncing of a wrong-doer who commits sacrilege, murder, or other grave offense,—no matter whether the offender be father, mother, or other relative. And it would be unholy to refrain from doing so."

In support of this position, he appeals to the example of Zeus, the "best and most just of the gods," who chained and mutilated his father, as a punishment for his monstrous cruelties.

Socrates repeats his demand for a definition; and Euthyphron answers that the holy is that which pleases the gods, and the unholy that which displeases them.

Soc.—"But what rule shall poor mortals have to go by when the gods are divided on these questions?"

Euth.—"They are never so much divided as not to be unanimous in support of the principle that he who commits an unjustifiable homicide ought to be punished."

Soc.—"But what is to be done when they

are not agreed as to the quality of a crime,—whether it was justifiable or not ? ”

As this is a frequent occurrence in human tribunals, Euthyphron is forced to admit that it might also occur in the councils of the gods ; and he modifies his definition by inserting the word “all,” so as to make an act holy or unholy according as it is loved or hated by all the gods. Here Socrates pushes him into deeper water by asking whether such act is holy because it is loved by the gods, or loved because it is holy ?

To this, Euthyphron is unable to make any satisfactory answer ; and, after a brief skirmish on other points, he drops the discussion.

Through all its mazes, Socrates had pursued him as the Furies pursued Orestes, showing him that the dictates of nature are the basis of our notions of right and wrong ; and that, to outrage our best instincts as he is doing, is to fight against the gods. Like the Chinese philosophers, he teaches that a son is not at liberty to assume the attitude of public prosecutor as against a parent.

The prolixity of the Socratic dialogue, of which I have given only a brief outline, is in strong contrast with the sententiousness of the Confucian school. But, not only is the subject of discussion

identical; the name Euthyphron is singularly similar to the *chih jin*, or "straight man," of the Chinese.



IX.
THE
CARTESIAN PHILOSOPHY
BEFORE
DESCARTES.*

THE chief element of interest in the researches of our Society consists in exploring the intellectual resources of this Empire. From this point of view, ideas of recent importation possess no value. As in the porcelain trade, things that bear the stamp of antiquity are most esteemed,—whether of native growth or borrowed from distant lands.

It is not, therefore, of the *rôle* played by the Cartesian philosophy in the teachings of missionaries that we propose to speak, but of Cartesianism before Descartes;—in other words, to inquire how far it is possible to trace, in the writings of Chinese thinkers,

* Read before the Oriental Society of Peking.

the outlines of a system analogous to that of the eminent French Philosopher.

No better vantage ground can be found for surveying the field of Chinese speculative thought. It gives us something clear and precise, with which to compare that which is fragmentary and somewhat obscure. For the geologist, it is a great advantage to be able to compare the remains of hipparion with the skeleton of a horse, rather than with the fragments of some extinct animal.

But is not that assuming, some one will exclaim, that the philosophy of Descartes is not extinct? No; it is not extinct like the cosmogonies of the Timæus. "Descartes," says Morell* (and he cites Dugald Stewart in support of his opinion), "has unquestionably merited the reputation of standing at the head of the whole modern movement of metaphysical philosophy;" and as sober a critic as J. H. Lewes,† though not belonging to his School, admits that "no man can dispute the title of Descartes to be regarded as the father of modern philosophy".

Not merely was it his breath that called it into life two centuries ago; the philosophy of the

* *History of Speculative Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century.*

† *Biographical History of Philosophy.*

present day, by a sort of atavism, still bears, in some of its features, the marks of its remote parentage.

A brief review of some of the doctrines of Descartes will put us in a position to recognise them, when we meet with them in a foreign clime and at an earlier age.

He was equally distinguished in three departments of intellectual activity ; and his achievements in each were sufficient to win the meed of an imperishable name. Newton combined mathematics and physics ; Bacon, physics and jurisprudence ; but, of the three great men* with whom he is usually compared, Leibnitz alone shares with him the honor of wearing a triple crown. Each was a sovereign in the three united kingdoms of metaphysics, mathematics, and physical science.

Great as was Leibnitz, the influence of Descartes was so obvious on the course of his speculations, that it may be doubted whether his magnificent genius would have unfolded in its full perfection without the light of the earlier luminary. Descartes, on the other hand, called no man master,

* “ Descartes, Bacon, Leibnitz, Newton, les quatre grands chefs de toute la philosophie moderne ”. (*Pensées de Descartes, Disc. Prélim.*).

“ Les trois grands titres de Descartes à l’immortalité :— sa géométrie, sa métaphysique, et sa physique.” (*id.*).

and displayed an originality unsurpassed in the annals of philosophy.

According to his own declaration, the most valuable thing that he carried away from the school of La Flèche was "a conviction of his own utter ignorance and a profound contempt for the systems of philosophy then in vogue." Not a bad preparation, that, for undertaking and effecting a revolution in human thought !

In mathematics, his merit is uncontested, and the boon which he conferred on the world in giving it that most powerful aid to research,—the method of analysis by the application of algebra,—is specially conspicuous.

In physics, he expounded the true theory of the barometer, and described the crucial experiment* shewing the limit of the ascent of mercury ;—

* Pascal's experiment was performed in September, 1648. A letter of Descartes, addressed to P. Mersenne, is extant, dated December, 1647, in which he alludes, with an air of unconcern, to the suggestion he had given :—

"J'avais averti M. Pascal d'expérimenter si le vif argent montait aussi haut lorsqu'on est au dessus d'une montagne, que lorsqu'on est tout au bas : je ne sais s'il l'aura fait." (*Pensées de Descartes*).

After the experiment had been effected, he addresses a friend to obtain information as to the result, and complains of Pascal for withholding it. Here is what he says of his claim to priority :—

"J'aurais droit d'attendre cela de M. Pascal plutôt que de vous : parce que c'est moi qui l'en ai avisé *il y a deux ans* et qui l'ai assuré que, quoique je n'eusse pas fait cette expérience, je ne doutais point du succès." (*id.*).

before Toricelli. The experiments, performed by Pascal at the Tour St. Jacques, and on the Puy de Dôme, were suggested by him as confirmations of his own theory, in opposition to that of Galileo.

These are now simple things, level to the comprehension of a school-boy ; but the experiments that explained them made the reputation of one of those philosophers, and added lustre to that of the other. It is chiefly in the department of physics that we shall have occasion to admire the sagacity of his daring conjectures;—I allude to his discovery of a supersensible world, to which he was the first to give the name of Ether.

In the department of transcendental metaphysics, he was treading on ground less solid,—like Milton's Satan in the realm of Chaos :—

“ O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
He swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies ”.

What wonder that he left behind him no well defined pathway that others are content to follow ! Yet it is precisely in this region that his influence has been most conspicuous. Spinoza, Leibnitz, and the noble army of German transcendentalists, are all his lineal offspring. Those who consider that metaphysics have done nothing but obstruct the progress of science, will he slow to admit this as

constituting an additional claim to the gratitude of mankind. "His philosophical method subsists to the present day," says Lewes, a writer of the Positive School; and he adds, not without a perceptible sneer—"It is the method implicitly or explicitly adopted by most metaphysicians in their speculations on ontological subjects."

As a preparation for gauging the speculations of some of the leading thinkers of China, there are three things in the system of Descartes, to which I beg to direct your attention, to the exclusion of everything else. They are:—

- 1.—His Method.
- 2.—His Hypothesis of a universal Ether.
- 3.—His Theory of Vortices.

I.

His method is deductive,—commencing with general principles, and following them out to their consequences. It is the opposite of induction, which, from the study of particulars, ascends to generals. The one explores a river by entering at its mouth, and working slowly inland against the current. The other strikes boldly across country for the head-waters, and then pursues their downward flow. The former is the method of Bacon; the latter, that of Descartes. Each wrote a book to expound his mode of philosophizing, and each

believed that he was conferring on posterity an invaluable instrument of investigation. No two modes of proceeding could be more opposed to each other; and yet, as we have shown by the illustration of the river, each may lead to success.

Nothing so strikingly exhibits the force and originality of the mind of Descartes as the fact that, having read the books of Bacon, he rejected his method, to proceed in the contrary direction; nor does anything more strikingly exhibit the limitations of the human faculties than the fact that, like navigators before Columbus, each of these pioneers of science was only able to look on the globe on one side, while in reality it required a combination of both to make out a system complete and round.

As a matter of fact, each, while insisting too exclusively on his own view, makes large but tacit use of the other method. From the constitution of the human mind, it is as impossible that it should be otherwise as it is for a worker in electricity to restrict himself to the use of one fluid to the exclusion of the other. Descartes' exaggerated estimate of the *a priori* method resulted from the natural tendency of a pre-eminent mathematical genius; Bacon's neglect of it was due to his ignorance of mathematical science. How extensively

Bacon and his followers had recourse to deduction, I shall not pause to point out.

It is of more importance to indicate that Descartes resorted to experiment so frequently that some of his admirers have made out a plausible argument to claim for him the honor of being founder of the experimental philosophy,—an honor so peculiarly belonging to the great Englishman that an attempt to tear it away looks as monstrous as the claim to the crown of France, so long put forward by the kings of England. His apologists have failed to recognize the essential difference between an experiment in the hands of Bacon and in those of Descartes. With the former, it was the first step toward discovery ; with the latter, it was the last,—only resorted to for the purpose of confirming a conjecture or an inference based on general principles. The former was so devoted to experiment, as a mode of discovery, that he lost his life in making an experiment with his own hands. The latter, believing himself to be in possession of the fountain of truth, was so well satisfied with the potential as to be comparatively indifferent to the actual. “I have proved it by reasoning,” said he to his friends ; “try it, and you will find it so.” Hence, instead of putting himself to the trouble of making them,

he suggested those experiments with the barometer which have added brightness to the illustrious name of Pascal. What a curious anticipation of the case of Leverrier, divining the existence of a new planet, and informing his fellow-astronomers where they would find it!

These two types of mind have existed in all times. Aristotle was an experimentalist; Plato, an *a priori* reasoner. Yet Plato it is who states, in the clearest manner, the advantages of the experimental method.

"Experiment causes the world to advance in a scientific way, but the neglect of it leaves progress at the mercy of chance", he says, in the Dialogue of Gorgias. He saw the better way, but failed to follow it. Descartes, in this, resembled Plato; as he did in the whole cast of his mind, in his fondness for mathematics, his lofty ontological speculations, and his profound religious feeling.

I have said enough, perhaps, on the method of Descartes; and, to show that I have not misrepresented it, I will dismiss the topic with a quotation from the Abbé Fontenelle, in which his procedure is contrasted with the Baconian method of Newton:—

"L'un, prenant un vol hardi, a voulu se placer à la source de tout; se rendre maître des premiers

principes pour n'avoir qu'à descendre aux phénomènes de la nature, comme à des conséquences nécessaires. L'autre, plus timide ou plus modeste, a commencé sa marche par s'appuyer sur les phénomènes pour remonter aux principes inconnus."*

II.

Descartes' hypothesis of a universal fluid, which he called Ether, is eminently original. The name existed from the earliest times ; he gave it a sense which it had never borne before, because he had a clear conception of a substance of which the Greek philosophers had not even a vague notion. Addison's fine lines beginning :—

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky"—

show the popular sense of the word ;—the same in which it is employed by Homer, when he apostrophizes Jove as "dwelling in Ether."

The Greeks, in accordance with their cosmical system, used it for the empyrean or fiery sphere, the highest of the nine, the etymology of the word expressing that idea,—*i.e.*, "burning air."

* The one sought, by a bold flight, to place himself at the source of all things ; to make himself master of first principles, and then come down to natural phenomena as their necessary consequences. The other, more timid or more modest, began with phenomena, in order to ascend to unknown principles.

With Descartes, neither fire nor height has anything to do with the meaning of the term. In his acceptation, it signifies a substance out of which he supposes all the forms of matter to have been evolved.

That such a substance must of necessity exist, he inferred from his doctrine as to space. In his view, there is no such thing as void space. Not merely are the interstellar regions filled with a subtile fluid different from atmospheric air, but the interstices between the molecules of bodies are filled with the same substance. How it acts we shall see, when we come to treat of his celebrated theory of vortices.

The success of the Newtonian astronomy administered a soporific to the Cartesian hypothesis, which kept it dormant for more than a hundred years. But it only waited for the proper hand to wake it from slumber. It is not a mere figure of speech to say that, touched by a ray of light, it sprang again to life.

Newton's theory of light was that of emission, which regarded each ray as a stream of material particles projected through space, as sparks fly off from the anvil of a blacksmith. But that theory labored under insuperable difficulties; and there were striking phenomena, which it failed to explain.

One of these was that of interference, or the extinction of light by the collision of two rays. In 1800, Dr. Young suggested that this might be accounted for, on the supposition of light being the effect of a vibratory motion in some elastic medium. In water, when two waves meet, at the moment when one is rising and the other sinking, they neutralize each other, and the surface remains level. In the atmosphere, when two waves of sound meet in a similar manner, the result is the loss of a note. In the same way, might not darkness be produced by conflicting vibrations in a luminiferous medium? Sixteen years later, Fresnel showed that such a medium was required to account for the phenomenon of polarisation.

What was that medium? It could be no other than the subtle Ether demanded and named by Descartes. The undulatory theory of light requires it. Heat and electricity equally call for it. At the present hour, it is admitted, without exception, by men of science; and the study of its properties has lately engaged the attention of physicists of great eminence.

Sir John Herschel, in his discourse on atoms, refers to the ether, in which they move, as a fluid which, like our atmosphere, has its elastic tension heightened by pressure;—a pressure, he conjectured,

of many thousands of pounds to the square inch.

Whewell, in his *Bridgewater treatise*, argues that this ether, however attenuated, must in some degree impede the free motion of the planetary bodies, and eventually bring them to destruction,—a view which derives no little confirmation from the fate of Biela's comet.

Sir William Thomson thinks he has found evidence that ether is viscous, having a consistency somewhat resembling shoe-maker's wax. It yields to pressure, but is split or fractured by a sudden blow, such as the passage of a heavy charge of electricity.

This mysterious substance, which no sense can perceive, no balance weigh, and no vessel contain, has taken its place securely in the world of science.*

* A recent work on *Physics*, by Professor Daniell of Edinburg, places all the chapters on light, heat, and electricity, under the common rubric of "ether waves", which appears as a running title at the top of each page. There can be no better proof of the new importance assumed by ether in physical science.

Professor Oliver Lodge thus describes the theory of ether, in a lecture before the Royal Institution in London :—

"The simplest conception of the Universe that has yet occurred to the mind of man,—one continuous substance filling all space,—which can vibrate as light, which can be parted into positive and negative electricity, which in whirls (or vortices) constitutes matter, and which transmits by continuity, and not by impact, every action and reaction of which matter is capable. This is the modern view of the ether and its functions."

III.

Descartes' Theory of Vortices, representing the planets as moving in a stream of ether like apples in a whirlpool, is not much of an improvement on the earlier theory of hollow spheres. Whewell, in his *History of the Inductive Sciences*, points to it as a proof that, though Descartes had announced the first law of motion in advance of Newton, he did not fully comprehend its applications; or he would not have resorted to such a clumsy contrivance as the starting-point of his *mécanique céleste*.

But the Cartesian Vortex is not merely a huger kind of maelstrom that carries the worlds on its bosom; it is also exceedingly minute, and bears in its circling embrace each individual atom. This is evident from his explanation of the gaseous*

* In 1881, M. Nourisson read, before the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences in Paris, a paper on the "Discovery and Demonstration of the Theory of the Barometer." From an original letter of Descartes, he proves that the writer had a clear notion of atmospheric pressure. We shall cite the same letter to show how he explains the action of vortices, in separating the particles of bodies:—

"Imaginez l'air comme de la laine, et l'éther qui est dans ses pores, comme des tourbillons de vent qui se meuvent ça et là. Et pensez que ce vent qui se joue de tous côtés entre les pores empêche qu'ils ne se pressent si fort l'un contre l'autre, comme ils le pouvaient faire sans cela, car ils sont pesants."

The Professor says "qu'il ne faut pas confondre l'éther cartésien avec l'éther des philosophes grecs". (*Le Temps, Mars, 1881*).

form of the atmosphere as due to the action of *tourbillons* of ether, which prevent the particles from coming in contact.

This view bears some analogy to the kinetic theory of gases, which explains their elasticity as resulting from the motion of their particles; and all, who are familiar with the recent progress of molecular physics, will perceive how the minute *tourbillon* of Descartes re-appears in the hypothesis of vortex rings, now resorted to, to account for the activities of atoms as centres of force. The champion of this hypothesis is Lord Kelvin (Sir W. Thomson), who constructed a machine to illustrate the action of the vortex ring. What a rehabilitation of a long neglected philosopher, to find the foremost physicists of our century not merely accepting his ether as the basis of their theories of light and electricity, but borrowing his idea of vortex motion as an explanation of the constitution of matter! *

Bearing in mind these salient points, let us travel back to the fifth century before Descartes, and see if we can find in China anything answering to the

* Lord Kelvin said in his Presidential address to the Royal Society, November, 1893 :—

“During the fifty-six years that have passed, since Faraday offended physical mathematicians with his curved lines of force, many workers and many thinkers have helped to build up the Nineteenth Century School of *Plenum*,—one *Ether* for light, heat, electricity, and magnetism.”

Cartesian system. We shall occupy ourselves mainly with a constellation of thinkers, who illumined the middle period of the Sung dynasty.

The most noted are Cheo Lien-hi, Chang Hêng-chü, the two brothers Ch'éng, and Chu Hi; and their names, being curiously alliterative, are woven into a line of four syllables, to assist the memory,—*Cheo, Chang, Ch'éng, Chu*. Of the five, the most famous in China, and the best known abroad, is Chu Hi, or Chu Fu-tsze,—a pre-eminence due rather to his labors as expositor of the canonical books than to any superior acuteness in speculation. In that respect, he was surpassed by several, perhaps by all of the others. Chu Hi, however, was eminently endowed with the judicial faculty. He presents himself to our imagination as the incarnation of criticism; holding aloft the golden balance, not, like the fabled goddess, with blind-fold eyes, but scanning the horizon with searching gaze, ready to welcome the precious metal from whatever quarter it may come. Taoism and Buddhism, as well as the relics of Confucian antiquity, engaged his attention and quickened his intellect. Like China's greatest Sage, he might have said of himself:—"My office is to select and transmit, not to

create or invent." His stamp is accepted as the hall-mark, not only for the orthodoxy of classical exposition, but for any opinion admitted into that huge conglomerate known as Confucian philosophy.

In speculation, the method of all these worthies is uniform,—*viz.*, to seize a first principle, and deduce its consequences. Like their countryman Chang Ch'ien, the Stanley of the Yellow River, they seek first to arrive at the Milky Way, before exploring the course of the terrestrial stream believed to issue from it. Not one of them ever thought of questioning nature, by means of a careful induction of particulars. Confucius had indeed, in one prophetic sentence, laid down the maxim 致知在格物 "The progress of science depends on the study of things;" but the chapter, which they say the Sage had written on that subject, was lost. They record the fact, and expound his words; but not one of them undertakes to supply the place of the missing manual, by a treatise *de augmentis scientiarum*. To them, the example of Confucius was more powerful than his solitary saying; and that saying, though embodying a vital germ, remained as barren as seeds wrapped in the cerements of an Egyptian mummy. For, had not Confucius, like Plato, set the

vicious example of indulging in speculations which are susceptible of no proof? Had he not accepted, at the hands of the ancients, without questioning, a calculating machine called the *Book of Changes*, which professes, by means of diagrams resembling an abacus, to grind out great truths pertaining to all things in Heaven and Earth? His followers, even the bold thinkers of the Sung dynasty, have not ventured to question what the Master accepted. Bound by the yoke of authority, and led by a habit of the Oriental mind, they have clung to the *a priori* method even in questions susceptible of easy solution by experiment. Witness that preposterous classification of elements, which includes such an organic substance as wood, and omits atmospheric air. Witness again their blundering enumeration of the five senses, which includes the heart among the organs of sense, and omits the sense of touch. May not the omission in the first case be accounted for on the supposition that the functions of air, as a component of bodies, were too subtile to strike the attention of the ancients, from whom they received the formula; and that the authors of the other classification omitted the sense of feeling, from inability to find a special organ to which to refer it?

With us, chemical analysis has long since abolished the four elements, which our forefathers regarded as pillars of the universe; but in China, until recently, no analysis has been applied. It inspires us with a feeling akin to contempt to see philosophers resting their world-moving levers on a hypothesis as baseless as that of a numerical relation between the elements, the planets, and the cardinal points of the compass, which, curiously enough, they make five.

Their method was at fault;—it was the deductive method of Descartes *plus* the bondage of ancestral tradition.

It is concisely expressed in a passage* of Chang Hêng-chü—"To know Nature, you must know Heaven. If you have pushed your science so far as to know Heaven, then you are at the source of all things. Knowing their evolution,

* In the *Best Thoughts of the Five Philosophers* 五子近思, a work compiled by Chu Fu-tsze and subsequently enlarged by the addition of his own best thoughts, this passage occurs as Chang's answer to a question as to 格物, the Study of Nature:—

知	待	心	當	物	所	源	從	天	學
	語	喻	無	之	從	自	出	則	至
	而	亦	莫	當	出	見	當	物	於
	後	不	不	有	則	知	源	所	知

you can tell what ought to be and what ought not to be, without waiting for anyone to inform you."

This is precisely the mental attitude of Descartes, who, with the substitution of 'God' for 'Heaven,' would have accepted the formula for his own. Descartes, however, examined his premises,—a thing which our Chinese philosophers no more dared to do than the Hebrew priests to open the ark of the covenant. Yet, is it more surprising that they should entertain irrational opinions than that Descartes should believe that the actions of brute animals are purely automatic, or that Bacon should believe in witchcraft?

We have said enough to show that these Chinese thinkers, though less rigorous in its application, employed substantially the method of Descartes; it is time to show that they held the same conception of Ether as that for which the illustrious Frenchman has obtained such deserved renown.

Chang, the writer last quoted, was born in the year 1020, a little more than a century before the advent of Chu Hi. He is the author of a small treatise entitled *Chéng Méng*, "Right Discipline for Youth." Its leading aim is moral instruction; but, with that kind of thoroughness so characteristic of the Chinese,

he begins with the origin of the universe :—

“The immensity of space, though called the great void, is not void, but filled with a subtile substance.*

* Chang's celebrated treatise, *Chéng Méng*, 正蒙, forms the fifth Volume, or 卷, of the 性理大全, or *Grand Encyclopædia of Philosophy*. For convenience sake, I bring together, in the following paragraphs, all the passages in it bearing on the nature and origin of matter :—

行有凡濁太有極虛氣之氣皆萬太客太	而間氣濁虛有盡即之融塊不物虛形虛	至則清則爲無於氣聚結然得不不爾無	通風則礙清之參則散糟太已能能形	之通行礙清分伍無於粕虛而散無氣	極而昏則則非之無太煨升然散而氣	與聲則形無窮神故虛燼降也爲不本	聞壅礙理變聖猶無飛爲不能體	具清無之易人冰非楊太虛不聚其	達極礙學而語凝教未嘗止息山川	清則故也諸子淺妄	神反清爲	驗故聚而	與不	化之
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In fact, there is no such thing as a vacuum. Therefore, the Holy Sage, in speaking of Nature and Nature's laws, comprehended the whole in the transformations of an organizing principle."

Here we have brought before us the old question of a *vacuum* or a *plenum*, so much discussed by the sophists of Greece; and our author resolves it, in a truly Cartesian manner, by denying the existence of a vacuum and filling all space with Ether.

With Chang-tsze, as with Descartes, this Ether is the primordial stuff out of which matter was formed; but he goes a step further than the Frenchman ventured, and adds that into Ether all forms of matter are destined to return. *His words are—

* The text of this and the preceding quotation is found in the foregoing Note. As to the literal accuracy of the rendering here given, I have some doubt. It makes 神 the subject of 反, which is liable to more than one objection. If, however, 神 be taken as an adjective, the general meaning amounts to the same thing. "Being freed from obstruction, it becomes divine,"—i.e., develops a divine energy, in virtue of which the "pure becomes transformed (or returns) into the gross." This gives, it is true, no distinct idea of personality, or what Plato calls eternal mind; but it does imply the inherence of a *divine power*. Ch'êng-tsze says, in commenting on this passage:—"Spirit and matter, 神氣, are one and inseparable. To say that the divine spirit exists outside of matter, or that matter exists outside of the divine spirit, is to make two things of one." This is not atheism, but pantheism.

“Within the immensity of space, matter is alternately concentrated and dissipated, much as ice is congealed or dissolved in water.”

This conception, in all its fullness, we find presented in a recent work on *The Unseen Universe*, ascribed to Professors P. G. Tate and Balfour Stewart, in which the hypothesis is advanced that matter may disappear by reverting to the state of ether, in preparation for re-appearing in a new creation. Science, however, knows of no force capable of evoking it from its grave. At this point, we must call in the intervention of a Deity, to save us from the impossible idea of a defunct universe. Is it not what Horace calls—

Nodus tali vindice dignus ?

The consideration of this change of state brings us to what I have called the dynamics of ether. By Descartes this is comprehended in his theory of vortices,—a term by which he described certain whirls and eddies of an attenuated fluid, which he represented as required, not only to maintain the planets in motion, but to keep the particles of air from coming in contact with each other, and so changing into a solid.

The whirling and grinding of that primitive element, he believed to result in the production

of the grosser forms of matter ; and he professed to point out the exact way in which the three leading forms,—the gaseous, the liquid, and the solid,—are actually generated.

The modern physicist, who holds the dynamic theory of the molecule, entertains substantially the same view, however he may differ from Descartes as to details of the creative process. Curious as it is to see an obsolete theory revived in the heyday of western science, it is more curious to meet with it in China more than eight centuries ago.

Not only does Chang-tsze agree with Descartes in making ether the primordial element, which condenses into matter, but he and his fellows seem to have hit on vortex motion as an explanation of the mode of condensation:—

“The great void,” he says, “is filled with a pure fluid. Since it is pure, it offers no obstruction to movement ;” or, to translate into the language of modern physics,—“In a frictionless fluid, the original motion is maintained without alteration.”

He adds:—“There being no obstruction to movement, a *divine* force converts the pure into the gross.”

The Chinese philosopher, no more than the Frenchman, can explain the creation of matter,

without invoking the aid of a *divine* force. That he meant God in a proper sense, we shall not assert; all that we insist on is that he attempts to explain the process by a theory of vortices.

A citation or two from other writers may serve to throw light on a view which they held in common. Cheo Lien-hi, a contemporary of Chang-tsze, is known as the author of a diagram of cosmogony.* He begins with a single ring or circle, of uniform whiteness. This represents the uniform, primitive ether. Then follows a circle partly dark, which shows the original substance

* Cheo's diagram of cosmogony forms the first chapter of the **性理精義**, or *Minor Encyclopædia of Philosophy*. It begins with the statement that—"This (the diagram) shows the evolution of matter out of Chaos,—its motion producing light, and its rest darkness,"—*i.e.*, the dual principles. The comment of Chu Fu-tsze adds that—"In Heaven and Earth, there is nothing besides motion and rest."

所動靜謂更兩之也靜也謂周
謂靜則易無端間朱而所無子
太之必而餘循只子陰以極曰
極理有其事環有曰之動而(易)
者是所勳此不動天本而太此
也則以其之已靜地體陽極所

differentiated into two forms, the *Yin* and the *Yang*, the meaning of which suggests night and day as the source from which the symbolism was derived.

Speaking of this diagram, Chu Fu-tsze says—"It shows how the primitive void is transformed into matter;" and he goes on to describe the process. "The two forces," he says, "*mo lai mo ch'ü*, grind back and forth in opposite directions; and the detritus resulting from their mutual friction is what we call matter."*

We may smile at the rudeness of the illustration; but is it not very similar to that of Descartes, who describes the particles of ether as cubes, which, in the course of revolution, get their angles rubbed off, and thus give birth to matter?

* The above passage is from his book on 理氣, *Matter and Force*; and, in this, he sets forth his idea of vortex motion, and its result in the production of matter.

不	只	周	星	爲	央	結	裏	便	運	陰	天
是	在	環	辰	天	氣	成	面	稷	行	陽	地
在	中	運	只	爲	之	箇	無	許	磨	之	初
下	央	轉	在	日	清	地	處	多	來	氣	間
	不	地	外	月	者	在	出	查	磨	此	只
	動	便	常	爲	便	中	便	滓	去	氣	是

I have not cited these passages for their intrinsic merit, but for the sake of their resemblance to the vortex theory of Descartes. So similar are they, both in substance and in imagery, that one might almost take them for different versions of the same original.

The Chinese are held to have borrowed much (some say even their written language) from India or Babylon. Whence did they obtain their conceptions of ether and of vortices? Whatever analogies may be found in other countries, it is certain that their theory on this subject springs from the most ancient of their own sacred books.*

On the other hand, is it certain that Descartes borrowed nothing from them? Is it not possible that some fragment of Chinese philosophy, translated by Jesuit missionaries, may have fallen into his hands, while a student at the College of La Flèche?

If this could be shown to have been the fact, we should have to acknowledge an obligation to the extreme Orient, of which we have hitherto

* The character inscribed in the first circle of Cheo's diagram is 易, Change, the name of the *Book of Changes*. It means transformation, and its use here is an acknowledgment that this theory of transformation is drawn from that ancient work. The other philosophers equally extol that venerable book as the source of their wisdom. Its different parts date back from 1200 to 2800 B.C.

entertained no suspicion. We should have to confess that the philosophic movement, which rose in France and swept over the whole of Europe, drew its first impulse from Chinese thinkers of the 11th century.

Until that can be proved, we must still concede to Descartes the honor of originality; but it may heighten our respect for the Chinese to know that they have had thinkers, whose speculations are not unworthy to be compared with those of the "Father of Modern Philosophy."



X.

CHINESE IDEAS
OF
INSPIRATION.*

BEFORE entering on the treatment of this subject, there are two or three remarks to be made by way of definition.

In the first place, the word "inspiration," as applied to the notions of the Chinese, must be taken with considerable latitude, as expressing their conceptions of an ultimate authority, which pervades and lies behind their Sacred Books, as the source and basis of their teachings.

Secondly, as their Sacred Books belong to three leading schools of religious thought,—not to speak of numberless alloys,—it is not to be supposed that the views of these schools on the

* Read before the American Oriental Society at Princeton, October 23rd, 1890.

subject of inspiration coincide more closely than on other matters in regard to which they are in fact widely divergent. It is hardly possible that the materialism of the Taoist, the idealism of the Buddhist, and the ethical sadduceeism of the Confucianist, should hold much in common on the subject of inspiration. We shall accordingly point out the peculiar form which the idea of inspiration assumes in connection with each of them.

Thirdly, while the high social development of the Chinese, their vast numbers, and their long history, give value to any elements of their fundamental beliefs, in order to be of interest to us, these must be taken at a date prior to their contact with Christianity.

I.

To begin with Taoism:—Indigenous to China, its root idea is the belief in the possibility of acquiring a mastery over matter, so as to change its forms at will, and thus protect ourselves against decay and death. Obscurely hinted at by its great founder in the Metrical Manual of 5,000 words which he is believed to have bequeathed to his successors, the latter have deduced from that Manual the extravaganzas

of alchemy, the transmutation of metals, and the elixir of immortality.

Those who have attained immortality constitute a pantheon, ruling over the material world, and presiding over the destinies of man. Material in its origin, this school gradually evolved a system of belief strikingly analogous to the so-called "spiritualism," which not long ago attracted so much attention in our Western World.

Instead, however, of regarding all spirits as indiscriminately ferried over to the farther shore, it considers that those of the profane multitude, not being sufficiently concentrated to resist the inroads of decay, vanish into air and cease to be; while a favored few, by dint of persevering effort, subdue their animal nature, and weave its fibres into a compact unity that defies destruction. A favorite analogy to illustrate this process is their theory of the evolution of gold, which, as they believe originally a base metal, passes upward through a succession of forms, all liable to tarnish or corrode, until it reaches a state in which its perfected essence remains forever unchangeable. The diamond,—a gem of "purest ray serene,"—smiling at the sharpest steel, and mocking the hottest fire, is another symbol

much used ; and it might have done much to confirm their faith in this theory, had their science gone far enough to connect the gem that shines in immortal splendor with the fossilized carbon that lies hidden in the bosom of the earth, or with those evanescent forms of vitalized carbon that beautify its surface.

The happy few, as precious as gold and as rare as the diamond, who attain to immortality, do not leave their bodies behind them, like cast-off clothing ; nor would their bodies cause the boat of Charon to draw a deeper draught, for the body itself is transformed and becomes a "spiritual body," with changed qualities and new powers. Its qualities are such in general as we ascribe to spirit ; its powers are limited only by the stage of its progress,—a progress that rises from sphere to sphere without a bound.

Among the acquired powers of these immortals, one which occupies a leading place is that of spiritual manifestation. These *sien-jin*, or genii, as they are called, are of various grades ; and all of them are capable of renewing their intercourse with human beings, among whom they walk invisible. It is seldom that they re-appear in their primitive shape ; but they

frequently make their presence felt through the intervention of suitable media.

A favorite medium is the human body, in a hypnotic condition; and through such, when properly invoked, the genii are wont to speak to mortals, as Apollo spoke through the Delphic Priestess. Their oracles in such cases relate, in general, to the cure of disease, or the conduct of family affairs. In early times, they aspired to the direction of affairs of state; but the detection of numerous impostures brought them into discredit, and their influence is now restrained to a humbler sphere, though it is still real, and by no means to be despised.

Another medium is the *fulon*, an instrument which we may describe as a magic pen. It consists of a vertical stick, suspended like a pendulum from a cross-bar. The bar is supported at each end by a votary of the genii, care being taken that it shall rest on the hand as freely as an oscillating engine does on its bearings. A table is sprinkled with meal, and, after becoming invocation, the spirit manifests his presence by slight irregular motions of the pen or pendulum, which leaves its trace in the meal. These marks are deciphered by competent authorities, who make

known the response from the spirit world.

This will be recognized as an early form of planchette. In the Far East, it has been in vogue for more than a thousand years; and there is as yet no sign that it "has had its day." Not merely Taoists by profession, but scholars, who call themselves Confucian, believe in it with a more or less confiding faith. When they resort to it with a serious purpose, they usually get an answer which they accept *bonâ fide*, whether it meet their wishes or oppose them. Often, however, they call in the magic pen to supply diversion for the late hours of a convivial party; and in such cases, they tell me, they are sometimes surprised by the result,—an invisible person evidently joining the festive circle, and solving or creating mysteries.

Skeptical as are the Chinese *literati*, no one that I have seen doubts the genuineness of some of the communications so obtained. I have had such sent to me from a distant place, with the assurance that they were obtained through the magic pen at the altars of the gods; and, whatever I may have thought on the subject, I could not doubt that the sender believed in them.

Where such credulity renders the public mind as susceptible to impressions as the meal does a writing-table, it is obvious that revelations for the purpose of religious instruction are to be expected. The fact is that the magic pen is one of the most prolific sources of religious literature. Mahomet claimed credit for the Koran, on the ground that it was brought leaf by leaf from Paradise by the angel Gabriel. The hierophants of China are wont to impose on the credulity of their countrymen, by ascribing their own teachings to revelations made by means of planchette.

Some of these so-called revelations are deservedly popular, on account of the beauty of their style and the excellence of their subject matter; and they are held in special reverence, as worthy expressions of the mind of deified Sages.

To this category belong:—

1.—The *Kan-ying-pien*, a treatise on retribution, derived by this method from no less a personage than Lao-tse, the great founder of the Taoist sect.

2.—The *K'io-shi-king*, or world-waking appeal of Kwan-ti, tutelar god of the reigning dynasty.

3.—The *Yin-chi-wén*, or Book of Rewards and Punishments.

Others might be added, but I forbear to cite them, because they "attain not to the first three."

The last cited is ascribed to Wên-ch'ang, the god of letters, a Taoist deity much in favor with scholars of the Confucian School; for, wide apart as they are in fundamental principles, the dividing lines of the three sects are now well-nigh obliterated. Each borrows deities from the other, and priests of one are found in charge of temples that belong to the other;—a result, not so much due to *rapprochement* in their authorized teachings, as to a chronic confusion in the popular mind.

II.

Buddhism, as the stronger faith, has "drawn the cover to its own side,"—adopting many Taoist usages, and, among them, the practice of procuring spiritualistic revelations. In vain do the orthodox denounce it, as tending to corrupt the canon, and as derogatory to the dignity of the deities invoked; the practice continues to flourish.

Of the extent to which it is carried, you may judge from the following indignant protest, which I translate from the *Siu Che Yao Yen*, a practical guide for the Buddhist priesthood:—

"In these latter days, men's minds are superficial and false. There is nothing that they do not

counterfeit. Even in the dissemination of good books, they resort to falsehood to aid their circulation. Their own rude language, which has no meaning more than skin-deep, they palm off as revealed through the magic pen,—thus imposing on the ignorant.

“They mostly father their effusions on Wên-ch’ang and Lü-tsu; less frequently, on Kwan-ti. Only think of it:—In case of ordinary books or pictures, to falsify the authorship is held as an odious crime. How much more hateful the crime of adulterating the teachings of gods and sages! When book-shelves are loaded with fabrications, the circulation of the genuine article is impeded. Instances of this kind of outrage on Holy Names are too frequent to enumerate.

“Recently some cases of a truly extraordinary character have come to light. Shameless forgeries are put forth as books of Buddha! Buddha himself is sometimes invoked to indite a commentary, and even Taoist genii are called on to reveal an exposition of Buddhist classics. Then we have lists of Buddha’s titles, purporting to emanate from spirit revelations. The blunders of these books go without castigation, and falsehood gains strength day by day. Formerly moral tracts were aids to virtue; to-day they are used to mislead mankind.”

Here follows a list of spurious books, ending with the remark that "names of men and places, though formed on Sanscrit models, are so clumsily constructed that their rough angles pierce through the thin disguise; and the more extended a discourse, the more thoroughly does the fabricator succeed in exposing his imposture."

To note the adoption of this Taoist practice by a section of Buddhism is not foreign to our subject, because it is Chinese in origin; but, to ascend the stream and treat of inspiration from the stand-point of orthodox Buddhism would lead us away from China. It would carry us into the world of Hindoo mysticism, where Shakyamuni laid the foundation of his conquering creed.

Suffice it to say that, to the Buddhist, there is no form of existence higher than Buddha,—no authority above that of Buddha. He does not look beyond Buddha to an all-pervading spirit, as Christians look through Christ up to the Father of Spirits. For him, Buddha is ultimate; and, as the name signifies supreme intelligence, so all believers accept the utterances of Buddha as truth, not to be called in question. With them, the only possible question is that touching the authenticity of those utterances,—in other words, respecting the proper contents of the Buddhistic canon.

How much of that canon fell from the lips of Shakya, and how far the teachings of his followers are deducible from his original revelations, are questions of serious import; or rather they would become such, if once the spirit of critical inquiry were fairly aroused. If, among the heterogeneous materials composing the canon as acknowledged by one or other of the schools, the spurious utterances ascribed to Buddha were sifted from the genuine, there would remain but a very small residuum. Among his subordinates, the degree of authority conceded to each is decided according to their grade of intelligence or rank in the canonical hierarchy; but no spiritual influence emanating from a higher source is admitted. This is true of primitive or atheistic Buddhism; but in Buddhism, as modified by time, and by contact with other creeds, we find a superintending and enlightening influence from the spirit of Buddha freely acknowledged.

III.

The ideas of Confucianists in regard to inspiration differ widely from those of both the preceding schools. They are the ideas, not of a sect, but of the bulk of the Chinese people.

When the three schools are named in series,

the Ju, or Confucian, stands at the head; but when the Confucian is spoken of by itself, it is generally described as *ta-kiao*,—the great, universal, or catholic school. Its tenets form the bed-rock of Chinese civilization, whatever may be the complexion of the over-lying soil. The yellow of Buddhism and the black of Taoism may be everywhere detected, but they form only a superficial tinge on the original background. Every Buddhist or Taoist (outside of the priesthood) is, first of all, a Confucianist; but the converse is by no means true,—the more educated Chinese in general rejecting both the other sects, and speaking disrespectfully of their claims, though not altogether exempt from their influence. Hence a common error in estimating the number of Buddhists on the globe; for, unlike Burmah and Siam, where Buddhism is established by law, the intellectual culture of China flows apart from Buddhism; and, in China, the priesthood of Buddha, with but few redeeming exceptions, has sunk to the condition of an ignorant and despised caste.

The canon of Confucianism is, therefore, pre-eminently the canon of China; and, to find

what views the Chinese hold as to its inspiration, we have in the first place to turn to the canon itself.

The canon consists,—if we reject the enumeration of thirteen books as too wide, and accept that of nine as more exact,—of two classes of works:—the pre-Confucian, and the post-Confucian. The *Li-ki*, or *Book of Rites*, is classed with the former, though compiled under the dynasty of Han, because it professes to preserve the traditions of an earlier age. Held in high esteem, it is nevertheless deemed somewhat apocryphal. The other four pre-Confucian books were all edited by the great Sage, and issued with his *imprimatur*.

They contain such fragments of antiquity,—historical, poetical, and philosophical,—as he thought worth while to preserve. Among them there is not much of unity to be discerned “in member, joint, or limb;” and, as a whole, they are not regarded as emanating from a supernatural source.

There are, however, in this collection, two sketches of a rudimentary philosophy, for which a supernatural origin is distinctly claimed. One of these is a table of mystic symbols,

from which the diagrams of the *Book of Changes* were subsequently evolved.

This was, according to tradition, in the reign of Fu-hi, 2800 B. C., brought up from the waters of the Yellow River on the back of a beast, which was "half horse and half alligator;" signifying, if we admit a grain of truth in the legend, that the first eight diagrams, which form the basis of the sixty-four in the *Book of Changes*, were suggested by the mysterious markings on the carapace of a tortoise. That the figures on the shell of a tortoise were employed in divination is attested by history, princes keeping sacred shells in temples erected for the purpose. The shell only ceased to be consulted, when the ampler book became known and accepted as a treasury of divine oracles.

The other fragment of direct revelation is an outline of natural and political philosophy called the *Hung Fan*, or "Great Plan." It is said to have been brought to the Emperor Yu, from the waters of the river Loh, by a monster somewhat similar to that which figures in the preceding legend.

Both stories were indorsed by Confucius, if the Appendix to the *Book of Changes* be his work; and the highest scholars of China continue to receive them as true beyond a question.

Leaving the barbarous age in which tortoise and dragon are messengers of the gods, we come to a more rational period, when man becomes the medium through which the Will of Heaven is revealed. This view is first enunciated in the *Book of Odes* (*circa* 1000 B. C.), in a passage often cited, and one which remains in use as a popular formula:—"Heaven, having given life to men, raised up princes to rule them and teachers to instruct them,"—a statement which, with all the light of our developed Christianity, it is not easy to improve upon.

The general conception, of teachers providentially raised up, became at length restricted to that of certain eminent men who were looked on as infallible guides. They were called *shéng-jin*, a phrase commonly rendered "holy men," but one which expresses unerring wisdom rather than holiness. They were numerous in remote antiquity,—inventors of arts sharing the honor along with the founders of human society.

Thus Fu-hi, who instituted marriage, was a *shéng-jin*; Hwang-ti, who invented medicine, was a *shéng-jin*; Tsang-kie, the inventor of letters, and Ta-nao, the author of the most ancient calendar, are also venerated as *shéng-jin*. In later ages, such paragons of wisdom became few, the advent of one being heralded by presages of an unmistakable character.

None of those above named ever claimed the credit of a divine mission, but posterity agreed to honor them with that exalted title. The sage of sages is Confucius. He makes no direct claim to inspiration, and always speaks of himself with becoming modesty. According to himself, there are virtues to which he has not attained, and there is knowledge that lies beyond his range. Yet he evinces at times a sublime consciousness of a peculiar mission. When in peril, he exclaims:—"If it be the will of Heaven to preserve my doctrine for the benefit of mankind, what power can my enemies have over me?" At other times, confident of the truth of his teachings, he appeals, not to the people of his own day, but to the judgment of sages that are to appear in distant ages.

His teaching was from Heaven, but it was not imparted to him in a supernatural way. "How,"

he exclaims, "does Heaven speak,—what is the language it addresses to men? The seasons follow their course, and all things spring into life,—this is the language of Heaven." In his view, it was the province of the sage to interpret Nature, not merely as she lives in the forms of matter, but as she breathes in the soul of man.

This idea of the *shéng-jin*, or sage, had begun to take shape in the dawn of Chinese civilization. Confucius, who did more than any other to fix the forms of that civilization by a wise selection of the best traditions, seized on the idea as one of essential importance, and gave it precision, without in so many words laying claim to the character.

His grandson, Kung-kie, half a century later, gave the world a theory of ethics, based, like that of Aristotle, on the assumption that good is a middle term between two evils. Unlike the Stagyrte, he gives free scope to a fervid imagination, and draws a glowing picture of concrete good in the character of the *shéng-jin*, or perfect man. The passage is an eloquent apotheosis of wisdom and virtue, for which his great ancestor confessedly served as a human model.

Not only has posterity permitted Confucius to remain on that exalted pedestal, but each

generation has contributed to raise him higher.

A few extracts from this treatise will serve to exhibit the Sage as expounder of the Will of Heaven :—

“None but the most sincere is able to exhaust the capabilities of his own nature. By so doing, he aids the work of heaven and earth, and takes his place as third among the powers of the universe.”

“He who possesses this perfect sincerity attains to prophetic foresight. This quality, therefore, partakes of the divine.”

“Great is the Holy Sage (or *shéng-jín*) ; all the books of all the rites wait for him to fulfill them.”

“He can appeal to the gods above, because he knows Heaven ; and to the wise of coming times, because he knows men.”

“He speaks, and none hesitate to believe ; he acts, and none fail to approve.”

“His fame overflows the boundaries of China, and extends to barbarous peoples. Wherever ship or chariot can go, wherever sun and moon give light, wherever frosts and dews descend,—there is no one who has blood and breath, who does not honor and love such a man. Therefore, he is said to be the equal of Heaven.”

This description of the ideally perfect man, drawn as it was from the teaching and example of Confucius, caused him to be accepted in that character. Mencius, the St. Paul of Confucianism, its last and greatest apostle, confirmed the judgment of the author of *The Mean*. His words are:—"From the time that human life appeared on earth down to this day, the world has seen no man like Confucius;" and his estimate of China's greatest teacher has been ratified by all succeeding ages.

In the process of time, speculative thought attained a higher development; and, in the theory of the universe which it produced, the *shéng-jin* holds a definite place. Heaven, earth, and man, form a triad of agents, as hinted already in the *Doctrine of the Mean*;—the first representing self-acting spirit; the second, plastic or passive matter; the third, man;—a child born of their union,—a microcosm or epitome of the universe, his soul reflecting the pure spirit of Heaven, and his body composed of the gross elements of earth. For the Sage it is reserved to connect the two in a perfect union. Accordingly we see, in all the temples of Confucius, a central inscription just over the shrine of the spirit tablet:—*Yu t'ien ti wei ts'an*,—

"He forms a triad with heaven and earth."

The conception is obviously pantheistic. In the person of the Sage, the dual powers find their harmony completed. He receives no spoken communication, and asks no illuminating influence; but, embodying in its highest degree the spiritual essence of both, he becomes thereby an infallible expositor of the universe,—a law-giver to the human race. It is said of him,—“He speaks, and his word is law to the world; he acts, and his conduct is an unerring example.”

It is in this light that the Chinese, without exception, are accustomed to look on the last of their Sages. He is not a god, but a perfect man; not a prophet who utters occasional oracles, but, in word and deed, a constant manifestation of ideal excellence. He does not speak in the name of a higher power; but, if that power were conceived as speaking, it could add nothing to the authority of the Sage.

How near this conception approaches to the Hindoo view of Buddha, as the perfect embodiment of intelligence and virtue, needs not to be pointed out. In the Confucian system, however, there is a Heaven above the Sage; while, in the Buddhist, there is none.

It follows that everything that bears the seal

of such an authority is sacred in the highest degree. The verbal text of his books is not to be altered, no matter what faults may be detected by rational criticism. Thus, incomplete and pleonastic expressions,—the errors of ancient copyists,—are faithfully reproduced, much as our Hebrew Bibles reproduce the '*ayin suspensum*,' and other errors of transcription.

This superstitious reverence for the letter of the canon symbolizes and fosters that unprogressive conservatism which has become the unenviable distinction of the Chinese race.

Confucius, it ought to be said, and his great disciple Mencius, lend no countenance to such unreasoning worship of antiquity. The latter says boldly,—“It were better to have no books than to be bound to believe all that our books contain,”—referring, it is thought, to the *Shoo*, the canonical book of ancient history. And Confucius lays it down, as the first duty of a ruler, to aim at the “renovation of his people.”

In conclusion, it would hardly be pertinent to raise the question whether the views of inspiration, which we have been considering, are favorable or adverse to the adoption of Christianity. The great Sage, so far from arrogating definitive completeness for his own system, leads his

disciples to expect the appearance of *shêng-jin* in coming ages. Nor is the advent of such Heaven-sent teachers limited to China. There is, therefore, nothing to prevent a sound Confucian accepting Christ as the Light of the World, without abandoning his faith in Confucius as a special teacher for the Chinese people. "Confucius *plus* Christ" is a formula to which he has no insuperable objection; but the man, who approaches him with such an alternative as "Christ *or* Confucius," is not likely to meet with a patient hearing.

As a matter of fact, native Christians continue to believe in the mission of Confucius, much as converted Jews do in that of Moses.



XI.

STAGES OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

IN

CHINA.*

RELIGION consists of two elements,—thought and feeling. Its thought is directed toward the mysterious problems of existence. In this aspect, every religion that emanates from human thought is, to a certain extent, to be regarded as a philosophy; hence worthy of careful study, not as throwing light, which to us would be valuable, on the question of human destiny, but as throwing light on human character, on national character, and the relations of nations to each other.

The religious experience of the Chinese people, the elements forming their religious beliefs, constitute the subject which I have to discuss. No theme could, perhaps, be of greater interest,

* Stenographic report of an address before the American Society of Comparative Religion, New York, 1891.

partly on account of the multitude of people who are affected by these views, partly on account of the vast antiquity of their civilization, and also because that great people have been segregated by mountain chains and ocean breadths from intercourse with the rest of mankind, to a very large extent, for the greater part of their national existence.

In order that our lessons may be of value, it will be important that we should take them out of the stream, at a point prior to the influx of Christianity; for Christianity has to some extent affected the modes of thought of that people beyond the pale of Christian communities, which, for the last three hundred years, have been growing up in that land. The systems, of which I have to speak, date back far beyond that time.

The missionary, thoughtful and accustomed to study the field upon which he is entering, is somewhat like a scientific farmer who studies and analyzes the soil into which he intends to cast the precious seed. He may find that that soil was produced by the disintegration of many kinds of rocks, some deposited from water, others thrown up by the action of internal fires, others yet affected by atmospheric influences. We find, in a similar

manner, the mental soil of China composed of three leading elements, which have been commingled and brought into interaction in such a way as to present to the superficial observer a homogeneous aspect. These are known as the three religions,—Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist.

Before attempting to point out their interaction, which, after all, is the objective point, allow me briefly to sketch the leading characteristics of each, as they rise successively before our eyes. I shall not be able to go into detail in our allotted time, nor would it be desirable, inasmuch as I have in mind the distinct object of pointing out only a few salient features by which these religions have acted upon each other.

The Confucian system did not originate with Confucius. He said:—"I am an editor, not an author." He took the records of remote antiquity and sifted them, in such wise, however, as to exert in a most effective manner the influence of an editor, giving to the readers of all succeeding ages only that which he wished to produce its effect on the national mind. We consequently date Confucianism from the beginning of his records,—from the time of Yao and Shun, his favorite models of virtue,—twenty-two centuries before the Christian era. Viewed as a religion, it presents

two leading features:—The first is the worship of Shang-ti; the second is the worship of the spirits of men under the title of ancestors.

Shang-ti signifies the Supreme Ruler. Coming before us in some of the most ancient books extant in any language, the name suggests at once the Jehovah of the Christian Scriptures,—the Lord, the Most High, who was worshipped not only by those who are recognized in the canon of Scripture as possessing the guidance of inspiration, but by such men as Melchizedek, the King of Salem, who was both king and priest. We find the earliest sovereigns of China combining this double function of king and priest, signalizing their accession, especially in the case of founders of dynasties, by going to mountain tops, the highest points approaching to heaven, and there offering up burnt sacrifices to the King of Heaven, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice.

If there were any doubt as to the lofty spiritual conception connected with this grand object of worship of the one alone to whom all kings and princes were recognized as accountable, we may find it in a single passage among many scores that I might cite to you if I only had time.

The founder of the dynasty of Chow, eleven hundred years before the Christian era, is leading a small army to attack the powerful host which upholds the throne of a tyrant. On the battle-field, before the critical engagement, he addresses an eloquent harangue to his soldiers, in which he points upward and says:—"The Most High God, the Supreme Ruler, is looking down upon you. Let not your hearts waver."

The worship of Shang-ti, the Most High (for that is almost a literal translation of the name), continues to the present day,—the sovereign now on the throne acting, as did his predecessors of four thousand years ago, as high priest for the empire. On an altar within the walls of Peking, he offers up burnt sacrifices to the Supreme Being. From the earliest days, however, this worship was impure. We find no point in Chinese history where it was not mingled with the worship of subordinate deities, nature-gods,—gods of the hills and rivers; and that intermixture not only continues to the present day, but it has been largely increased, as I shall have occasion to show, by the influence of other religions, more or less corrupting the comparative purity of the primitive ideas.

Confucius was himself strongly inclined to

agnosticism. In his intimate conversations with his disciples, he refuses to give them any positive statement in regard to the things beyond the reach of human sight. He said:—"We know not life: how can we know death, or what lies beyond the grave? We are unable properly to render service to our living parents; how should we know how to render fitting service to those who have passed into the other world?" Yet he enjoined service to those who have passed into the other world as the cardinal duty in his religious system; and it is that, more than anything else, which makes it a religion, potent and living to this day.

The worship of the Supreme Ruler, grand as it is, is nevertheless like a ray of the sun falling upon an iceberg, so far as its influence on the public mind is concerned. It is limited to the emperor and to a few remarkable and august manifestations of public ritual; but you do not find it in the household. You do not find it on the lips of the people. You do not find that God in that form has taken up his abode with men. He is still far remote, on the summit of an icy Olympus, as it were, although to a certain extent dimly perceived by the mind of the Chinese nation.

Taoism rose next. The founder of Taoism preceded Confucius; but, by a kind of paradox, his religion is of later date. The founder of Taoism goes by the name of Lao-tse, which signifies the "Old Philosopher,"—probably because he was old when Confucius was young, they being contemporaries. The Taoist system is not found clearly developed in the only book which has been transmitted to us from the hand of Lao-tse, and the authenticity of which has been to a large extent questioned. His followers, however, deduced from the obscure hints contained in that book two ideas, or rather, one idea, which afterward subdivided itself into two. The one idea was that, by persistent effort, we may acquire a mastery over matter in such a way as to command all its potencies, and employ them in accomplishing objects which would seem far beyond the reach of human power, unless it were elevated by a process of discipline.

The *matter* thus spoken of is subjectively that of our own bodies, the discipline of which would result in a possible immortality, and objectively the material objects surrounding us, but chiefly the elemental forms, the careful study of which would enable man finally to transmute the baser

metals into gold, and to accomplish many things which have the air of miracle. You perceive how naturally from this root spring the two fundamental ideas of alchemy,—the transmutation of metals into gold, and the attainment of immortality. These came forward under the influence of perhaps the two leading desires which characterize human existence,—the first to be rich, the second to live long, or to live forever, in order to enjoy wealth.

This system has, however, a close relation to what preceded it, as a cause and explanation of the energy with which it took hold of the human mind. I have just said that Confucius was something of an agnostic. He dealt largely in negations,—refused to give any light beyond the grave, or to hold out any hope of immortality, although that is to some extent implied in the formal worship of ancestors. The longing of the human mind for a future life sought satisfaction in the Taoist conception of a possible immortality, which was to be conquered by a long and laborious discipline, and which could not be the heritage of the many, but which might become the possession of a few.

This system, at the same time, imparted a kind of life to all nature, making every form

of matter instinct with an inextinguishable divine essence, which is capable of assuming personality. In this way, it peopled the world with a new Pantheon of gods, fairies, and genii. The term genii we usually employ as a translation for *shên-sien* or *sien-jin* (both forms being used), which is the word the Taoists apply to their adepts,—those who obtain the precious gift, the elixir of immortality. This view may be illustrated by the following lines from a Chinese poem :—

“A prince the draught immortal went to seek,
And finding it he soared above the spheres ;
In mountain caverns he had dwelt a week—
Of human time it was a thousand years.” *

The Taoist system, deifying, as it were, matter, being essentially materialistic, laid hold upon the sublime conception of Shang-ti, the ruler of the universe, and incorporated it into the material world. Not only so; having arrived at

世	洞	丹	王	*
間	中	成	子	
已	方	昇	去	
千	七	九	求	
年	日	天	仙	

the idea of the five elements, it subdivided the idea of the supreme ruler, and made five gods,—each a god of a special element. Thus it corrupted the idea of God; and it has been one of the most fruitful sources of religious corruption in the history of the Chinese mind, introducing a multitude of favorite idols,—nature-gods of material origin,—which continue to be worshipped to the present day.

The Buddhist system came in, as you are aware, early in the Christian era, the emperor Ming Ti having sent a mission to India to bring Buddhist priests and books from that country in the year 66 A.D. The occasion for the introduction of Buddhism was, on the one hand, the eclipse of Confucianism, and, on the other, the religious thought, or phases of thought, stimulated and introduced by Taoism. The defects of both were supposed to be supplied by the stronger, more intellectual, and more spiritual creed of India.

The eclipse of Confucianism was not caused by the ascendancy of a rival creed. It was caused by a political revolution. The builder of the Great Wall rose up in his might, conquered the rival kings, and resolved that he would extirpate the feudal system. He was made to believe that, without extirpating

the books of Confucius, he never could eradicate that system; and that, though he might overthrow one state after another, yet after he should pass away the system would again spring from the pages of the Confucian books. He resolved to burn the books; and then, lest these books should be reproduced from the memory of able scholars, he put them to death, and thus flattered himself that he had swept away Confucianism from the face of the earth, and with it the whole of the feudal system. It was during this eclipse of Confucianism, which lasted for about two centuries, that the emperor Ming Ti sent his embassy to India.

The Chinese people, having got the idea of immortality from Taoism, were at first fired with it; but, disappointed that through that system there was no hope for any but a very few, they were fascinated with a report they had heard of a blessed religion in India, which offered salvation to all. Hence the Emperor sent his embassy to India and introduced this new religion, which had perhaps, to some extent, already found its way into China, and begun to exert some influence; but which, from that day, became a potent factor in the development of the Chinese mind, and continues to the present day

to be the leading *religious* influence in that country.

I may here mention, as an illustration of the position which Buddhism acquired and holds in China, that I hold in my hand a document never given to the world in the English language,—nor, so far as I know, in any other Western language,—showing that if, in the year 66, an Emperor was so impressed with Buddhism as to send an embassy to India to introduce it into China, fourteen centuries later another Emperor was so much influenced by it as to send an embassy to bring Buddhist Classics from Thibet.

This Paper is—*A Eulogy on the Sacred Books of Thibet*, by the Emperor Yung-loh,* 1412 A.D. It reads as follows:—

“In our opinion, Julai Buddha was manifested for one great purpose, *viz.*:—To reveal the profound mysteries of the *Three Collections* and *Twelve Categories*. All that is needed to point out his meaning, and transmit his teaching, is therefore extant.

“From the time when this doctrine flowed into the Central Land, its meaning has been expressed in translations for the instruction of the multitude ;

* The text of this Eulogy and Hymn was obtained from a Thibetan Lama in Peking, by Professor Pander, of the Imperial College, and translated by Dr. Martin.

but, excepting scholars of the highest order of intelligence, very few have been able to understand it, and those who have got hold of its essential principles are not many.

“Now the government of the heart, and improvement of the conduct, are means to the attainment of virtue. By heart is to be understood that pure intelligence which comprehends mysteries, and sheds its light upon the obscure. It embraces every variety of truth, and omits nothing. The way to learning lies through a sea of books; yet, if we trace all principles to their root and source, we come back to the heart alone.

“If we study this doctrine, and examine its evidence, it rises above all that is most excellent; it stands forever unmoved, and there is nothing hid from its light. Verily it is a bridge of safety that reaches to the end of the world,—a flaming torch that shines in the midst of uncertain pathways.

“We, having come to the throne of this Great Empire, and receiving the charge of this vast inheritance, call to mind the tender care bestowed on our education by our Imperial Parents. The virtuous toil, by which they founded their family, cannot be repaid; but, in memory of it, we sent envoys to the West to bring the Sacred

Books of Thibet, which we have caused to be printed and distributed gratuitously, as an example of zeal in recommending and propagating the Faith, in the hope that every living soul may obtain happiness thereby.

“Of those who do this, the merit is more than words can express. As to those who are lost in the mazes of error, bound by the cords of original sin, blindly rushing on and not knowing whither they go,—if they do not examine this doctrine, they will never be able to attain substantial good or return to the ways of truth. To act out this sentiment by giving succor to those that are sinking in the whirlpool, is to share the compassionate disposition of Julai Buddha.

“We take this for the subject of a hymn of praise, which may be placed as a preface in front of those books, and serve to add wings to their circulation forever.”

Hymn.

Julai has set forth the principles of righteousness ;
The voice of his law fills the universe ;
Worlds many as the sands of Ganges
Are every one full of it.

He transforms the race of men,
So that they may all become models of virtue ;
Those who are as water spilt upon the dust
Are lifted above the waves of sense.

Passing through the experiences of countless kalpas,
He has opened wide the gate of happiness ;
The misguided ones who cleave to earthly show
Every one become perfectly illuminated ;
And as long as there is one who is not illuminated,
Julai swears that he will not enter Nirvana.*

We have pity on the crowds of men,
And for that reason spread abroad the words of Julai ;
With deep sincerity submitting to the Faith,
We desire that all men should, along with us,
Experience the felicity of Bodisatwas.†

Our first object is to recompense the great love
of our parents,
The next is to deliver men from the way of bitterness,
That they may together rise to the highest intelligence ;
That, the overflowings of desire being repressed,
They may attain to victorious excellence of heart,
Escaping calamities to come.

* Buddha is defined as "Supreme Intelligence, ready to enter Nirvana." While hovering on its verge, he (Julai) is conceived as acting as a compassionate Saviour, which he could not be after entering that state of endless repose. The same is said of Kwan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy.

† Bodhisatwa is the penultimate stage ; *i.e.*,—next to Buddhahood.

Julai spread abroad the doctrine of occult causes,
And published it under Indian skies—
A phoenix who spoke the speech of Magadha,
Most perfect beyond thought or expression.

He is like the beating of a drum to awaken the
four quarters,
All who have ears may hear him ;
Those who hear him awake,
And, fixed in purpose, no more turn back,
Nor ever again fall into the wheel of change.

To bear our testimony to the venerated Lord
of the World,
We have composed this hymn of praise ;
Its poetic merit is not worth speaking of,
But may it redound to the good of souls !

Various doctrines are alluded to in this Paper, only one or two of which I will touch upon. I have already referred to the full and bounteous offer of salvation and immortality made by Buddhism, as furnishing a very powerful attraction in contrast to the meagre promises of Taoism and the cold negations of Confucianism, which preceded. This was connected with the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which was common to almost all Indian creeds.

The Indian philosophy regarded transmigration as something amounting to a physical necessity; maintaining that it is absolutely impossible for a man to extinguish his being; that he has, as it has been expressed, come into this world without his own choice, and will go into the next without his own choice, and thence go on in a succession of changes forever. This succession of changes is described under the figure of a wheel, the urn of destiny, or wheel of fate, which is represented as revolving rapidly and dropping out human souls to be born again in the form of man, or of some higher or lower being, there being six categories in all, according to the Buddhist division. The view of human life, taken by the founder of the faith, was pessimistic. All change is evil, and, to escape from this series of changes, constitutes happiness; and he devised a method for that purpose.

In the Northern School of Buddhism, especially in its popular phase, we seldom meet with this idea. We meet more frequently with the idea that, to rise in the scale of being, is happiness. Shakyamuni had in his system no heaven. The Northern Buddhism, which has prevailed in China, has a heaven, borrowed, it may be, from the Christian's Paradise. It has, presiding over it, a Goddess of Mercy, borrowed, perhaps,

from the Catholic conception of the Mother of Jesus Christ. Many other ideas present a parallel,—I shall not say a travesty,—of Christianity.

We are asked particularly to point out the relation and interaction of these three systems, which we have thus briefly sketched. You have noted that they rose one after the other, each of them introduced by a felt want, and that each was preceded by a yearning of the human soul for something better; consequently, in a religious point of view, each one may be considered as an advance upon that by which it was preceded. They were a long time antagonistic, sometimes even inciting bloody persecutions; but at this day they have become comparatively quiescent, like active chemicals, which, being brought into juxtaposition, exert for a time their various qualities, but which soon become inert, until they are brought into contact with some more energetic réagent. We shall find that reagent in Christianity.

A remarkable illustration of the quiescence of these long active and conflicting systems is found in the fact that there are, in some parts of China, little shrines or temples, where the three religions are seen represented by their

founders,—Confucius, Buddha, and Lao-tse,—all sitting side by side, and receiving at one and the same time the homage of worshippers who acknowledge all three.

You might object that it would be a strange mind that would acknowledge and swallow all these creeds; yet there are many who assert that the three creeds are identical, if you could only get down to the bottom. In fact, nothing is more contradictory. The Confucian system is essentially ethical; the Buddhist system is pure idealism, as pure as that of Berkeley or Hegel; and the Taoist system is materialistic, beginning with gross matter. How is it possible that three systems so utterly divergent should ever be reconciled? The fact is, they are irreconcilable. Each one presents some one thing which meets a human want, but reconciliation there is none; peace, union, harmony, there cannot be, though a truce, a permanent truce, seems at present to exist between them.

The question may be raised—"What benefit has each one of these conferred upon the Chinese people?" Each one has enlarged and widened the speculative thought and religious conceptions of the people. Confucianism gave them, or at least preserved for them, and preserves to the present day, the grand idea of the Supreme Ruler; and it

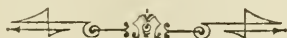
bears witness, too, to the doctrine of immortality, in the duty of worshipping departed spirits. But this is faint, very faint, in comparison with the religious teaching of the other two sects. Buddhism has been especially potent in instilling ideas, which are so nearly akin to those propagated by Christianity, as to prepare the way for the introduction of another system.*

Buddhism, no doubt, vastly enlarged the area of Chinese conceptions. To borrow a mathematical illustration, the religious ideas of the Chinese were limited, before the introduction of Buddhism, to two dimensions,—to something that may be described as a “flat-land,” with length and breadth, but no height. Buddhism gives it height, soaring up to the heavens and developing the conception of the universe, the grandeur of which, perhaps, nothing can exceed. Is it possible that, after this universe of three dimensions, we shall have one of four dimensions? Mathematicians tell us that, with space of four dimensions, it is possible to do many things which cannot be done without it. There is, in my view, room for the fourth dimension, or (to drop the figure) there is room for a fourth stage in the progression,—one which China is waiting for.

* See next Paper.

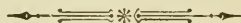
Christianity alone can supply the defects of all the systems, and present one harmonious unity.

If I were to express in one word what Christianity is to confer upon China, it would be this:—Not a God seated far away, upon some remote Olympus, as in the Confucian system; not a God inherent in matter, as in the Taoist system; not a God, as in the Buddhist system, who has risen from the ranks of the disciples of virtue, a mere deified man;—but God, the Spirit of the universe, in Christ Jesus, coming into the human soul, taking up his abode there, and working by his Holy Spirit a regenerating influence, such as none of these creeds ever exerted, and of which they have presented only a faint and dim prophecy. This I believe to be the mission of Christianity; and I believe the Chinese, though it may be unconsciously, are waiting for it, and reaching out after it.



XII.

BUDDHISM A PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIANITY. *



F late we have heard much about the science of comparative religion. To studies of that kind, as Professor Max Müller is careful to admit, our modern missionaries have contributed valuable materials. It was a graceful admission of this, on the part of New York University, recently to elect to its chair of comparative religion the Secretary of one of our most prominent missionary societies. No renunciation of the claims of Christianity was required, as a qualification for the duties of his chair. The pre-eminent qualifications of the professor elect consisted in the fact that long experience had made him familiar with the actual state of all existing religions; that he had studied their

* Chinese Recorder (May, 1889).

history, and had given proof of his ability to discuss their merits with fairness and in a most attractive style. "Impartial, not neutral"—is the motto which Dr. Ellinwood might have taken for his series of lectures.

This expresses the ground which the Christian missionary should occupy on the same subject, with his mind open to all that is good in ethnic systems, doing them on all occasions full justice, borrowing from them freely to enrich his own presentation of the truth, as the Hebrews adorned themselves with precious things borrowed from their friends among the people of Egypt.

"Embrace the truth where'er 't is found,
On Christian or on heathen ground"—

are the words of Watts, the most evangelical of poets. They express the true spirit of Christian eclecticism,—the spirit with which I desire that we should approach our subject this evening.*

Viewed from our standpoint, the religion which above all others has a right to claim serious study, in comparison with Christianity, is Buddhism. It has been brought forward of late as a rival to Christianity, not merely by its traditional votaries, but by poets and philosophers †

* Addressed originally to an Association of Missionaries in Peking.

† Arnold and Schoppenhaur.

educated in the schools of Christendom. The poet has purloined the ornaments of the daughters of Zion to deck an Eastern beauty, and the philosopher has endeavoured to persuade Western thinkers that their highest wisdom is to sit at the feet of the gymnosophists of India.

One scarcely knows which is the more formidable assault on the foundations of our faith,—whether the gospel would be more discredited by being set forth as plagiarizing in part from the traditions of India, or by being proven to be a less effectual remedy for human woe than the pessimism of Shakyamuni.

There is a lawsuit now pending in the courts of England, in which a claimant seeks to oust the present occupant of a great estate by proving that he belongs to an older branch of the family, and that his title ante-dates the other by more than a century.

In the forum of the world, the contest for priority of title to the traditions referred to is of infinitely higher moment. After the learned investigations of Dr. Kellogg, it can scarcely be said of it *adhuc sub judice lis est*; and yet it is one of those cases in which defeat is never acknowledged,—in which, in fact, we may expect to see the old pretensions advanced again and again with as much confidence as if they had never been refuted.

It is not my intention to go into this question at length, on the present occasion; but I may say, in passing, that a new and weighty authority has come forward to challenge the validity of the Buddhistic claims.—I mean the Bishop of Colombo.

Allow me to quote a few paragraphs from his Paper in the *Nineteenth Century*, (July, 1888):—

“We must distinguish,” he says, in speaking of Buddhism, “two very different sources of information, only one of which I shall hereafter speak of as historical. The one source is the *Tipitaka*,* or threefold collection of sacred books, which forms the canon of Southern Buddhism; these I call the books of 250 B. C.

“The other source is the *Biographies of Buddha* and the *Lalita Vistara*, which are of uncertain date, between the first and sixth centuries. These last are the sources of Arnold’s *Light of Asia*. . . . When anything is included in them, which is conspicuous by its absence from the *Tipitaka* (*i.e.*,—which, had it been believed, must have been inserted), such is certainly a later fabrication; such are most of the points that bear any resemblance to Christianity,—for example, the miraculous birth. Inmeasurably

* Usually written *Tripitaka*.

superior, for historical purposes, are the *Pitakas* to the connected biographies, which belong to various dates posterior to the Christian era;—unreasonable indeed it is to treat the latter as history at all.

“We have been led to the only source of history,—the *Pitakas*. The resultant biography of Gautama* shows nothing supernatural; and nothing which, in those days, was strange. The life of Gautama contains nothing more strange than does the life of Shakespeare.”

Thus far, the Bishop shows conclusively the unhistorical character of much of that material which Sir Edwin Arnold has woven into his beautiful poem. As a poet, he had an unquestionable right to employ it; but it behooves all serious thinkers to beware how they accept poetry in place of history.†

* This is the name for Buddha, in general use in Ceylon and Burmah.

† Dr. Eitel, who has made a special study of Buddhism, summarizes his conclusions in these words:—

“There is not a single Buddhist manuscript that can vie in antiquity and authority with the oldest codices of the gospels. The most ancient Buddhist classics contain but few details of Buddha’s life, and none whatever of those above-mentioned peculiarly Christian characteristics. Nearly all the above-given legends, that refer to events that happened many centuries before Christ, cannot be proved to have been in circulation earlier than the 5th or 6th century after Christ.” (Eitel’s *Three Lectures on Buddhism*).

Dr. Eitel points to early Nestorian Missions as what he calls “the precise source” of these “apparently Christian elements.”

That Buddhism borrowed much in subsequent ages is incontestable, and that Christianity borrowed something is highly probable. Professor Rhys-David asserts that Buddha himself has been canonized as a Christian Saint.*

The fact is that the resemblances between the two great religions of the East and West lie far deeper than the external habiliment of poetical tradition, or the superficial analogies of religious orders and religious ritual. They are traceable in the general development and practical doctrines of both.

Some of their practical doctrines we shall bring into comparison in the sequel. Of the analogies to be observed in their historical development, I may, in passing, be permitted to indicate one or two. Both are found to pursue a course exactly the reverse of that mapped out in a celebrated *dictum* of Auguste Comte; their initial stage was not far removed from positivism, and yet both evolve a spiritual universe;

* He says:—"It is a curious part of the history of the legend of Buddha that it should have been adapted into a Christian form by a father of the Christian Church. The hero of it has been entered in the Roman calendar, and is ordered to be worshipped as a Saint on every 27th of November, under the title of St Josaphat. How this came about has been told by Professor Max Müller in his Paper on the *Migration of Fables*, in the "Contemporary Review" for July, 1870."

one burst the bonds of Hindu caste, the other broke down the walls of Jewish isolation, and each stretched forth its hand to the nations with the offer of a new evangel. In spirit as wide apart as in geographical situation, they have gradually approached each other, so that they have come, in the course of ages, to occupy the same ground in both senses, and each to lend a tinge to the other. For the objects of our present inquiry, it matters little how inconsistent the Buddhism of one country or of one age may be with that of another; what we have to do is to estimate its effects.

No religion has ever shown itself so plastic as that of Buddha, not only chameleon-like, taking its hue from its surroundings, but promulgating at different times doctrines contradictory and self-destructive. Beginning as a philosophy of self-discipline, it developed into a religious cult. At the outset professing atheism pure and simple, in the end it brought forth a pantheon of gods; and, most wonderful of all, raised a denier of God's existence to the throne of the Supreme. After such changes in doctrine, it is hardly surprising that a system, which preferred poverty to riches, and deserts to cities, should in later times seize the revenue of States

and place its mendicant friars on the throne of kings. The controversialist, who has to confront Buddhism as an opposing force, may make the most of its contradictions and errors; but for ourselves, on the present occasion, we have only to inquire whether or not Buddhism, under any or all of its phases, in this country, has done good or evil.

In the present it may even be an obstruction, but that does not prove that its past influence has been otherwise than beneficent. The Western farmer, when he first breaks up his prairie lands, finds his plough impeded at every step by the strong roots of wild grasses; but he knows that it was those grasses; growing up year after year through centuries, that accumulated the rich loam in which he plants his corn.

Let us analyze the mental soil of China and find what elements Buddhism has contributed, to make it ready for the higher cultivation of our Christian epoch.

The fundamental requisites of all religious teaching are two, *viz.* :—

1.—A belief in God; *i.e.*,—in some effective method of divine government.

2.—A belief in the immortality of the soul; *i.e.*,—in a future state of being, whose condition

is determined by our conduct in the present life.

These cardinal doctrines we find accepted everywhere in China. There are, it is true, those who deny them; but such are Confucianists, not Buddhists;—and I do not hesitate to affirm that, for the general prevalence of both, China is mainly indebted to the agency of Buddhism. When, in the first century of our era, the missionaries from India arrived in this country, in what condition did they find the mind of the people with reference to these two great questions?

They found a Supreme God recognized in the books, but practically withdrawn from the homage of the masses, because he was considered as too exalted to be approached by anyone except the lord of the empire. The people took refuge in the worship of natural objects and of human heroes; not one of all their deities taking any strong hold on their affections, or entering deeply into their spiritual life.

In regard to the hope of a future existence, the state of things was not better. The worship of ancestors maintained a shadowy faith in something like ghosts, but it seldom amounted to a potent conviction. The absence of such a conviction showed itself in the eagerness with

which men laid hold on the faint hope held out by Taoist alchemy,—that some medicine might be discovered which would vanquish death. The few enthusiasts seen on mountain tops, seeking for the *elixir vitae*, and stretching their hands and eyes towards heaven,—were they not rather touching proofs of a universal want, than evidences of any well-grounded faith?

In fact, it was the deep consciousness of a want in both respects that rendered the introduction of Buddhism so easy. It found an “aching void” in the human heart, and it filled it with such poor materials as it possessed.

Let us see how it filled the void made by the want of a knowledge of God. Instead of their gods of the hills and streams, it brought to the Chinese a portion of the Hindu pantheon; and, instead of their materialistic conceptions, it raised them to a belief in the powers of a spiritual universe infinitely more grand than this visible world. In that universe Buddhas and Bodisatwas held sway, not limited to any hill or city, but extending to all places where their devout worshippers called for succour. Buddha, though in theory already passed into the blessedness of an unconscious Nirvana, was popularly held to be the actual lord of the

universe. Divinities of the next grade, called Bodisatwas, were believed to have the forces of nature at command, and to be actively engaged in the work of blessing mankind.

The superiority of these Buddhist divinities over those which they displaced, consists chiefly in the fact that they possess a moral character. By virtue, they have risen in the scale of being in a progression, bounded only by that sublime height on which Buddha sits wrapped in solitary contemplation. Their human kindness rendered them attractive, and the most popular of all is the Goddess of Mercy, of whom it is said that she declined to enter the bliss of Nirvana, and preferred to hover on the confines of this world of suffering, in order that she might hear the prayers of men and bring succour to their afflictions. What wonder this attribute of divine compassion should win all hearts?

To make it more effective, the Buddhists of China, taking, as I have no doubt, a hint from the homage paid to the Mother of our Lord, have clothed it with the beauty and tenderness of woman. Kwan-yin, who holds in her arms an infant child, and who stretches a thousand hands to help the needy, is the favourite object of Chinese devotion. She is called briefly *Pu-sah*,

and, in most parts of the empire, that term is employed to express the idea of a vigilant and merciful Providence. *K'ao P'u-sah ch'ih fan* means—"The food we eat comes from God." Missionaries, in their talks to the people, sometimes begin with this admission, employing for God the accepted term, however objectionable in its origin, in order to lead the people to higher views and a purer faith. Providence is also commonly ascribed to Buddha. The reigning Emperor is so called, as representing the providence of the Supreme Deity. The "blessing" and "protection" of Buddha are phrases in familiar use. In a set of verses, to which I shall have occasion to refer again, the abbot of a monastery in the Western Hills ascribes the fruits of the earth to the goodness of Buddha.* The verses read :—

"The production of a grain of rice is as great a work as the creation of a mountain.

Had it not been for the power of Buddha, where should we have found our food ?

If we sincerely remember how near to us is Buddha, then we may dare to accept the nourishment that heaven and earth afford."

* The volume from which I copied these and other stanzas is in manuscript.

Our question relates to Buddhism in China; but it may not be out of place to indicate that a similar transformation of the original conception of Buddha has taken place in other countries, especially in those that belong to the Northern School. In Japan, Amitaba is endowed with the attributes of Preserver and Redeemer. In Mongolia, the same is true of Borhan (a name which I take to be derived from Buddha and Arhan); and missionary translators have not hesitated to accept it as a fitting expression for God, in the rendering of our Holy Scriptures. In Nepaul, Adi-Buddha is adored as the supreme and living god. A hymn, which I translate from the French* (which in turn is taken from an English translation of Hodgson), addresses him thus:—

- 1.—“In the beginning there was nothing; all was emptiness, and the five elements had no existence.
Then Adi-Buddha revealed himself under the form of a flame of light.
- 2.—He is the great Buddha who exists of himself.
- 3.—All things that exist in the three worlds have their cause in him; he it is who sustains their being. From him, and out of his profound meditation, the universe has sprung into life.

* Tour du monde, Voyage au Nepal, 1888.

4.—He is the combination of all perfections;
the infinite one, who has neither bodily
members nor passions!

All things are his image, yet he has no image.

5.—The delight of Adi-Buddha is to make happy
all sentient creatures.

He tenderly loves those who serve him;

His majesty fills the heart with terror;

He is the consoler of those who suffer."

Who will deny that this is a noble psalm of praise; that the sublime ascriptions which it contains are worthy to be laid as an offering at the feet of Jehovah? The only error in it, so far as I can perceive, is that it is addressed to Adi-Buddha, a rather serious defect you will say, as that honor is given to another which is due to God alone. I shall not at present go into the refinements of metaphysics, and reply that it matters little by what name God may be called, provided that which is predicated of him be agreeable to truth. Nor shall I assert—what Pope appears to imply—that the same Divine Being, under different names, is—

"In every age
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,—
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord."

But I *will* say that a people who have derived these ideas from the teachings of Buddhism do appear to be in a state of comparative readiness for the message of an apostle of the true faith, proclaiming—"Him whom ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you."

Let us see if the same kind of preparation is to be discovered in the notions entertained in regard to the soul.

In China, prior to the arrival of Buddhism, there existed on this subject, as we have said, a melancholy void.

The school of Confucius offered to the longing anxious heart the idea of a shadowy existence, accompanied by a recommendation to be perfectly indifferent to it. Its teaching was essentially that of the Sadducee, who said—"There is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit."

The school of Tao taught that the soul is a material essence, capable of being concentrated by discipline, as the diamond is condensed by fiery forces; and that it may thus be rendered indestructible. To this state few, very few, could hope to attain; and the masses of mankind were given over to despair. When both schools had failed to throw their light beyond the grave, Buddhism came in like an evangel of hope,

teaching that immortality is man's inalienable inheritance, and not the inheritance of man only, but of every sentient creature; that all are connected by the links of an endless chain, moving onward in unceasing procession, either on an ascending or descending scale; that the reality of the next stage of being is more certain than the existence of the material objects by which we are surrounded; that the soul is an immaterial essence, which the transformations of matter have no power to destroy; and finally, that the weal or woe of the future life depends on the conduct of each individual during this present state of probation.

How thoroughly this teaching has permeated the Chinese mind may be inferred from the fact that it is set forth in its pure Buddhistic garb in one of the most popular text-books employed for instruction in the primary schools of Peking. I refer to the **六言雜字** (*Liu Yen Tsa Tzŭ*). It says:—"The glory and happiness of the present life are fruits that spring from seeds planted in a former state. If the present life is hungry, cold, and bitter, the fountain of evil is to be traced to the sins of a former state of existence."

The materializing views of Taoism are condemned (to quote only one example) in the following verses from another book (**觀音濟度本願真經**):—

“Ye who study the doctrine of Tao,
And strive to prepare the elixir of immortality,—
Do you not reflect that the elements of immortality
are within you?
Do you not know that the elixir of life is within you?
For soul and spirit, they are the root
and fountain.”

In the same book, there are verses which represent a princess as announcing her resolution to adopt a religious life, and with many tears exhorting her parents to do the same. She says:—

“If a man live to a hundred years, his life is as a dream;
Glory and wealth pass away like a flash of gunpowder.
I beg my father and mother to give themselves
to works of piety,
To worship Buddha, to read the holy books, and move
the heart of Heaven;
To store up good works, to confirm your own virtues,
And escape from a sea of bitterness,—a world of dust
and turmoil.
Owing to your good deeds in a former state, you now
possess the sovereignty of hills and rivers.
If, standing on your present height, you still strive
upward,

Praying the gods to write your names on the roll
 of the purple mansion,
 You may come to enjoy the blessedness of heaven,
 and rise above the estate of men."

The book from which these last passages are taken is a metrical biography of the Goddess of Mercy.

I do not go into the recondite lore of great libraries, but draw my proofs from manuals of the family and of the common school, in order to show what doctrines are actually in possession of the popular mind. That they teach the supreme importance of a life to come, there is no denying. Their best views are vitiated by mixture with the errors of metempsychosis. But is not this so far a preparation for receiving a better hope from Him who "brought life and immortality to light?"

Having thus pointed out the service which Buddhism has rendered, by conferring on the Chinese the blessing of a stronger faith in the two doctrines that lie at the root of all religion, let us next inquire into its influence in bringing about those states of mind which are described as the Christian graces. For want of time, I purposely refrain from going into an examination of the Buddhist decalogue, or in any other way

entering into a general comparison of Buddhist and Christian ethics. The side of ethics, with which we have to do at present, is that which looks heavenward; *i.e.*,—religion in its practical aspect.

Our Christian ethics, in their religious bearings, are beautifully summarized by the Apostle Paul in the three graces of "Faith, Hope, and Charity." Has Buddhism anything answering to these? If it has, it differs in that respect from all other pagan religions. In the old religions of Greece and Rome, the things signified were so utterly unknown that these three words acquired a new signification in passing into Christian use. As for the early religions of this country, they have nothing to show under any of the three rubrics,—neither Faith, nor Hope, nor Charity, in a religious sense, as including love to God. Is it not, then, claiming for Buddhism a great approximation to our divine system to assert that it possesses all three? To make this apparent, let us take them up in order.

The faith, which figures so conspicuously in Buddhism, might be defined, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

It keeps in view the realities of the unseen world, and supplies the place of sight and of reason too, to no small extent. The place assigned to it is, as with us, at the head of the list. In a publication by a learned priest of Ningpo, it is called "the mother of virtues" (信爲功德母).

Our abbot of the Western Hills gives it an equally exalted position; and, like St. James, he connects it with "works," as proof of its genuineness. He says:—"To be a Buddhist, faith has always been considered the first requisite; but faith without works is vain." (爲僧原來信當先, 有信無行是枉然).

Can anything show more clearly than this antithesis that the word is used in a sense identical with its Christian usage?

From this peculiar prominence of the grace of faith, it almost follows as a matter of course that the adherents of the faith should be called "believers." We are not, therefore, surprised to find the term *Sin Shi* (信士), "believers," in general use. *Shan Nan Sin Nü* (善男信女), "honest men and believing women," is a frequent phrase, which tells its own story as to the proportion of believers in the two sexes.

Hope is a grace which Buddhism makes prominent, without having a word for it. Of the emphasis which it lays on the hope of immortality, I have already spoken in treating of that cardinal doctrine. Hope implies the expectation of some kind of gain or benefit. Now the constant endeavour of the devout Buddhist, is it not to secure the rewards of the life to come by working and suffering in this present world? In Chinese Buddhism, that which kindles hope and quickens effort in the highest degree, is it not the prospect of entrance into the happy land (極樂世界); the pure or sinless land (淨土); the 西天, or paradise of the West? This is the Buddhist's hope of heaven.

On the place of charity in the Buddhist scheme, I need not dilate. Love to being, in the broadest sense, is enjoined by precept; it was exemplified in the life of the founder, and it finds expression in every phase of Buddhist religious life. Compassion (慈悲) is the form which it chiefly takes. The loftier form of adoring love for divine perfection, as in our Christian system, is less frequent, but not wholly wanting. Is it not charity to men that our abbot expresses, when he says—"My desire is to pluck every creature that is endowed with feeling out of this sea of misery?"

And is it not something very like love to God, when he says—"In your walks, meditate on Buddha; call to mind his refulgent person; at every step, pronounce his name, and beware that you deceive not your own heart?"

It follows, from what we have seen, that Buddhism must have made an immense addition to the religious vocabulary of the Chinese people. For the jargon of its Sanskrit prayers, and for a multitude of theological terms, imported bodily from India, I have no word of praise or apology; but, within the domain of pure Chinese, it is safe to affirm that Buddhism has enriched the language, as it has enlarged the sphere of popular thought.

It has given the Chinese such ideas as they possess of heaven and hell; and of spiritual beings, rising in a hierarchy above man, or sinking in moral turpitude below man. It has given them all their familiar terms relating to sin, to good works, to faith, to repentance; and, most important of all, to a righteous retribution, which includes the awards of a future life.

Not one of these words or phrases conveys to the Chinese the exact idea required by the teachings of Christianity; yet, as a matter of fact, the first teachers of Christianity, on coming to this

country, seized on these terms as so much material made ready to their hand, sprinkling them with holy water, and consecrating them to a new use.

Matteo Ricci soon renounced the Buddhist garb; but no missionary, Papal or Protestant, has ever abandoned the Buddhist terminology.

Half the churches in Rome are built of stones taken from the temples of Paganism; and some of them, such as the Pantheon and the Ara Coeli, continue to be known by their old names. So half the doctrines of Christianity are introduced to the Chinese in a dress borrowed from Buddhism. It could not be otherwise; and this fact, taken alone, appears almost decisive in favour of the affirmative side of the question under discussion.

If the eloquent Saurin is right in asserting that God's purpose in bringing Judea under the domination of Greece was, by the introduction of the Greek language, to provide a more perfect vehicle for the revelations of the new dispensation, is it going too far to suggest that Buddhism has had a similar mission? Has it not, in this country, prepared a language for the communication

of divine truth? * Has it not also prepared the mind of the people to receive it, by importing a stock of spiritual ideas, and by cultivating their spiritual sense?

But, however sympathetic may be our mental attitude in regard to it, we must admit that its mission is fulfilled; and that, for the future, the highest service it can render will be to supply a native stock on which to graft the vine of Christ. By giving the Chinese an example of a foreign creed winning its way and holding its ground in spite of opposition, it has prepared them to expect a repetition of the phenomenon.

* The following are some of the Buddhistic terms and phrases, which occur most frequently in Christian books:—

天堂	Heaven.	彼岸	Shore of safety.
地獄	Hell.	罪孽	Sin.
魔鬼	Devil.	悔罪	Repentance.
靈魂	Soul.	皈依	Submissive trust.
來生	Life to come.	婆心	Earnestness.
重生	New birth.	念經	To read prayers.
投胎	Inanimation.	講經	To preach.
降生	Advent.	大慈大悲	Infinite mercy.
超度	Rescue.	看破紅塵	To feel the vanity of the world.
苦海	State of misery.	歡喜地	The happy land.

As Buddhists (and though professing to be Confucians), they are nearly all more or less tinged with Buddhism; they are taught to believe that their present form of faith is not final, and to look for a fuller manifestation in an age of higher light. The magistrates very generally look on Christianity as a species of Buddhism; and will not thus prepare both them and the people more readily to accept Christianity as the fulfilment of their expectation?

Postscript.—In the discussion that followed the reading of this Paper, a doubt was expressed whether in point of fact missionaries had found their converts prepared in the school of Buddhism.

A typical case is given in detail by Dr. Edkins, in his work on *Chinese Buddhism* (pages 366 *et seq.*).

The present writer has found such preparation to be a fact in several instances.

After the above was in print, I met with a book by Professor Rhys David on *Buddhism and Christianity*, which contains the following:—

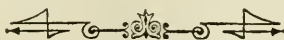
“In it (Buddhism), we have an ethical system, but no law-giver; a world without a creator, a salvation without eternal life, and a sense of evil, but no conception of pardon, atonement, reconciliation, or redemption.”

Sir Monier Williams states the negative features of the Buddhist creed in terms not less forcible and explicit. "Buddhism," he says, "has no creator, no creation, no original germ of all things, no soul of the world, no personal, no impersonal, no supermundane, no antemundane principle."

Of original and classic Buddhism, this is strictly true; and the defects of the root affect more or less all the branches. Still it is very instructive to remark how, in the popular Buddhism with which I am dealing, man's religious instincts triumph over the obstacles created by an atheistic philosophy, so that Buddhism has become pre-eminently the religious discipline of Eastern Asia.*

* The assumption by Buddhism of a distinctly religious character is primarily due to the school of Mahayana, which Eitel describes as "a later form of the dogma,—one of the three phases of its development, characterized by an excess of transcendental speculation, and not known to Southern Buddhism."

The Buddhists of Japan are beginning to agitate the question whether the Mahayana rests in any degree on the authority of Shakyamuni.



XIII.

THE NATIVE TRACT-LITERATURE
OF
CHINA*

THE more practical subjects suitable for such occasions have been pretty well exhausted by my predecessors. One speaker has told you what attitude you should observe towards the native religions; another, the kind of censorship you should exercise over the productions of your press; and a third has laid down such lucid rules for the composition of tracts that there is no longer any mystery on the subject. With such a guide, it would seem that the dullest intellect ought to be able to produce a book as readily as a tailor can make a suit of clothes when supplied with a pattern. A Roman critic, however, after laying down his code of composition, adds that a pre-requisite is the "consent of Minerva."

* Read before the North China Tract Society, in Peking.

Tu nihil invita dices faciesve Minerva,—
i.e., brain power is a first condition. As the author of *Hudibras* says—

“For all the rhetorician’s rules

Teach nothing but to name his tools.”

For me it remains, not to lay down rules, but to point you to certain examples from the examination of native tracts,—to borrow a side light, which may perhaps prove useful alike to composers and distributors of that kind of literature.

The word “tract,” in its more general sense, signifies a treatise on any subject. In the special sense, which the activity of our Tract Societies has brought into use, it means a small book in which the sanctions of religion are brought forward in support of morality. Its aim is to enlighten the human mind, and to purify the widening stream of human life.

That the people of this ancient empire, who have anticipated us in so many discoveries, and in every kind of social experiment, should have gone before us in the creation of a tract-literature, is not surprising. In China, as in most other countries, one of the earliest uses of written speech was to extend the influence of good men, by causing their words to reach a wider circle, beyond the bounds of

their personal intercourse, which in space is limited to a few miles, and in time to a few years.

For the same reasons, one of the first applications of the art of printing, in which China was six hundred years in advance of Europe, was to multiply tracts; and the aggregate mass of its publications in this department has, in the course of ten centuries, attained an enormous development. To enumerate even the most popular of them would necessitate the recitation of a long catalogue; and to offer an outline criticism of each would be an endless task. They fall, however, into certain well-defined categories, such as :—

- 1.—Those which inculcate morality in general.
- 2.—Those which persuade to the practice of particular virtues.
- 3.—Those which seek to deter from particular vices.
- 4.—Those that are written in the interest of particular religions or divinities.

One or two in each class, as types of the whole, is all that time will permit us to mention.

In the first class, a leading place might properly be assigned to the discourses of Confucius and Mencius, and to numerous treatises of later

philosophers ; but, as we are accustomed to make a distinction between scriptures and tracts, these, or at least those first mentioned, are to be regarded as the sacred scriptures of the Chinese.

With us, many tracts consist almost entirely of scripture passages, selected and arranged. In the native literature of the Chinese, similar tracts may be found in great numbers.

One such is called the *Ming Sin Pao Kien* (明心寶鑑),—*Mirror of the Heart*. It contains a choice collection of the best sayings of the best men this country has produced. Those sayings are gems, neatly cut, highly polished, and sparkling with the light of truth. In other tracts, they may be differently arranged; but everywhere they shine with the mild radiance of wisdom and virtue.

A collection of this kind, called *Ming Hien Ki* (名賢集),—*Sayings of the Wise*, is a great favorite in Peking. It differs from the tract last named in drawing its wise saws chiefly from modern sources. It opens with the noble maxim :—"Only practice good works, and ask no questions about your future." The first chapter ends with the encouraging assurance :—"Human desires *can* be broken off; Heaven's laws *can* be observed."

Another maxim gives the general tenor of its

teachings:—"All things bow to real worth; happiness is stored up by honesty." Every sentence is a proverb; and though, like the Hebrew proverbs, there are many that inculcate thrift and worldly wisdom, there are not a few that rise to a higher level. Its religion is unhappily of a very colourless description,—contrasting strongly with the doctrine of direct responsibility to a living God, which pervades the proverbs of the Jews,—making their religion the most practical of their concerns. The idea of direct responsibility is not indeed altogether wanting, though in this class of tracts it is not sufficiently insisted on. In this, and in nearly all similar collections, we find the warning that—

"The gods behold an evil thought,
As clearly as a flash of lightning;
And whispers uttered in a secret place,
To them sound loud as thunder."

The *Family Monitor* of Chu Po-lu (朱子家訓) is so well known that I give no citations. It sets forth an admirable system of precepts for the ordering of a household, in which children are brought up with judicious severity, and servants treated with considerate tenderness,—purity and honor being vital elements of the domestic atmosphere.

The *Ti Tzŭ Kuei* (弟子規), or *Guide to the Young*, though less known, is a book of a higher order. Composed almost in our own times, in imitation of the far-famed *Trimetrical Classic*, it surpasses its model, and shows that, if we may judge by words alone, China still possesses contemporary Sages. In the second chapter, entitled *Truth and Virtue*, we find a doctrine too rarely taught in Chinese books :—

“In every word you utter,
Let truth be first;
Deceit and falsehood,
How can you endure !

Do not lightly speak
Of what you do not certainly know ;
Things not right,
Do not lightly promise ;
If you do promise,
Whether you go forward or go back,
You are equally in fault.”

Here is a neat definition :—

“To do wrong without intention
Is an error ;
To do wrong with purpose
Is a crime.”

The author adds :—

“Your errors, if you correct them,
End in no error ;
If you hide or cloak them,
You add one sin more.”

The four tracts that I have mentioned emanate from the school of pure Confucianism. They are not irreligious, for they everywhere admit the supremacy of a vague power called Heaven. They admit, further, that that power, whatever it may be, is not indifferent to human conduct.

Does not the venerable *Book of Changes*, the most ancient of the canonical writings, expressly declare that—

“On those who store up righteousness,
Heaven sends down a hundred blessings ;
And on those who store up ill-desert,
Heaven sends down a hundred woes.”

This sentence re-appears in all these tracts ; and the doctrine of a providential retribution, unfailing for the good, unrelenting for the evil, is affirmed, amplified, and illustrated, as a cardinal truth which no man can doubt. By this school it is taught, as it was by the Saducees of Judea, without reference to hopes or fears connected with a belief in a life to come. The certainty

of prosperity in this world as the reward of virtue, and of shame and suffering as the penalty of vice, is the motive most constantly appealed to, though it should not be forgotten that, in a passage already quoted, a sublimer conception is set forth :—
“Only do good, and ask no questions as to your future destiny,”—assuring us that some among the moralists of the pure Confucian school might unite with us in the petition of Pope’s *Universal Prayer*—

“What conscience tells me should be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than heaven pursue.”

The experience of moralists in China coincides, however, with that of the west in showing that the theory of virtue as its own reward is too refined for the mass of mankind. One, here and there, who is moulded of purer clay, may be seized with that kind of passion for virtue, which, without a figure, we call Platonic,—Plato himself having set the example; but the great majority are so constituted that to them virtue has no charms aside from happiness. Nor is this of necessity an ignoble sentiment; for, in this case, what God has joined together it may not be possible for man

to put asunder,—happiness always following in the footsteps of virtue, as shadow follows substance. Are we not told that even Moses had “respect to the recompense of reward?”

When Buddhists imported from India a distinct notion of a future life, their doctrine of transmigration was first adopted by the Taoists, and afterwards accepted by many who never ceased to call themselves disciples of Confucius; and all parties felt that an immense reinforcement was added to the sanctions of morality. Instead of the shadowy idea of a vicarious recompense, reserved for one's posterity in some remote age, comes the conviction that each individual soul, sooner or later, inevitably reaps the reward of its deeds;—a conviction which took so strong a hold on the public mind as to become the foundation for a mixed school of moral teaching.

In the tracts of this mixed school, Confucianism may in some cases be the leading element, Taoism or Buddhism in others; but the most powerful argument to incite to good, and deter from evil, is always the certainty of retribution in a future life.

The two most celebrated tracts in this department, if not in the whole cycle of

Chinese literature, are distinctly on the subject of retribution. They are the *Kan Ying P'ien* (感應篇), and the *Yin Chi Wên* (陰騭文). Each bears the name of a Taoist divinity,—one going under the auspices of Lao-tse, the other under those of Wên-ch'ang. One sets out with the declaration that "Happiness and Misery never enter a door until they are invited by the occupant of the house." "They are the reward that follows good and evil, as surely as a shadow follows a moving body." The other begins with a statement that its beatified author practised virtue through no fewer than seventeen lives or stages of existence before he attained to perfect felicity. Starting from this point, each unfolds its text with admirable skill, building a rainbow arch of virtues, with one foot resting on the earth, and the other lost in the blue of heaven; while the vices are depicted in fiery colors, on a back-ground of utter darkness.

While on this branch of the subject, a very vulgar tract ought to be noticed, which has perhaps a wider currency than either of the preceding. Like them, the *Yü Lih Ch'ao Chuan* (玉粒鈔傳), or *String of Pearls*, is devoted to the doctrine of retribution. Instead, however, of insisting on true morality,

this treatise spends its force in clothing the infernal world with imaginary horrors. They are drawn in such colors that they are not Dantesque, but grotesque. The letter-press is accompanied by pictorial illustrations, in which one sees a soul in the process of being sawn in twain, or pounded in a mortar; a bridge from which sinners are precipitated into a field of up-turned sword points; a cauldron of boiling water in which they stew and simmer for ages; then a bed of ice on which they freeze for an equal period; together with other scenes equally adapted to bring a wholesome doctrine into contempt.

An idea, to which this gross view of retribution naturally gives rise, is that of opening a debit-and-credit account with the chancery of Heaven. Such account books form a distinct class of tracts. On one side are ranged all conceivable bad actions, each stamped with its exchange value according to a fixed tariff. The Chinese moralist has not, like Tetzels, gone so far as to convert this numerical valuation into a sale of indulgences, but we may be sure that the ingenuity of the reader does not fail to find out a way—

“To atone for sins he has a mind to,
By doing things he’s not inclined to.”

The artifice of keeping with one's heart such an account-current is one which, if properly conducted, might end in the practice of virtue. Franklin tried something of the kind with success, and he tells us that it enabled him to make such proficiency in the grace of humility that he grew proud of it.

Among tracts of the second category—those that inculcate particular virtues—I may mention first of all the *Hiao-king* (孝經), or *Book of Filial Duty*. More ancient than any of its class, it is also more venerated, being referred to Confucius himself, whose discourses on the subject were taken down by one of his most eminent disciples. Its origin is no doubt apocryphal, but its fullness and perfection give it the weight of a classic, while the simplicity and beauty of its style make it specially attractive to the young, for whose instruction it was composed.

The teachings of the book culminate in the grand idea that filial piety, as the first of virtues, may be made a rule and regulator for the entire conduct of life. Every act has reference to our ancestors; good acts reflect honor, and bad acts bring disgrace on the name of our progenitors. The process of reasoning is somewhat similar to that which makes the love of God the law of a Christian life;

but how feeble the sentiment that attaches itself to the moss-covered monuments of dead ancestors, in comparison with love to a living God, whom we are privileged to call our Father in Heaven !

As in China all social, political, and even religious obligations center in the duty of filial piety, that cardinal virtue is, as might be expected, the theme of innumerable hortatory compositions. Some of them are excellent from every point of view ; but not a few are tinged with extravagance, extolling the merits of children who have saved the life of an invalid parent by giving medicine mixed with their own blood, or broth made of their own flesh.

There is one, and that the most popular of all, which sinks to a depth of silliness quite beyond anything attained by Mother Goose. I refer to the stories of the Four-and-Twenty Filial Children.

One of those worthies is held in remembrance because, when his parents had lapsed into second childhood, he, at the age of three score and ten, dressed himself in parti-coloured vestments, and acted the clown to make them laugh. Another, when a little boy, was seen lying on the ice ; and, when questioned as to his object, replied that he "wished to melt it to catch a fish

for his mother." One of them, hearing a physician commend the virtues of milk freshly drawn from the teats of a wild deer, disguised himself as a deer in order to procure the precious beverage for his invalid mother. One of them, on the occurrence of a thunder storm, always threw himself on his mother's grave, saying—"Mother, your boy is with you, do not be afraid." The other stories are equally foolish, and some of them positively wicked; yet Chinese artists vie with each other in embellishing this precious nonsense, and the greatest men of China make a merit of writing out the text for engraving on wood.

Is it not probable that these exaggerated views of filial piety have had a tendency to dwarf other virtues, and to distort the moral character of the Chinese people? The duty of speaking the truth, for instance, so much insisted on by us of the West, is seldom touched on by the moral writers of China. While the foundation stone is neglected by these builders, what masses of wood, hay, and stubble, do they put in its place!

It would be easy to load a cart with separate treatises on the duty of showing respect to written or printed paper. Absurd as are the rhapsodies which Chinese scholars indite on this subject,

may they not teach a lesson to our tract distributors,—the lesson not to show disrespect to their own cargoes of printed paper, by selling too cheaply, or giving too lavishly?

Then we have exhortations in equal quantity to compassion for brute animals. The radical sentiment is just and praise-worthy, but the writers rush into extremes as before; and, instead of nourishing a well-poised, active humanity, they make a merit of emancipating birds and fish, and of succouring ants that are struggling in the water. Under the influence of this literature, a society has been formed in Peking for the release of captive sparrows; but I have yet to hear that any society has been organized for the suppression of the sale of little children,—a traffic which is openly carried on in all the cities of China! Our own Cowper wept over a dead hare, and wrote the lines—

“I would not count upon my list of friends,
A man who wantonly set foot upon a worm.”

But his pity was not exhausted by such manifestations. He admitted man among the objects of his compassion, and sounded the note of anti-slavery long before the abolition of the trade in slaves:—

“Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit nature’s claim ;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.”

Against particular vices there are numerous tracts which are earnest and powerful. In some, the enormities of infanticide are set forth ; some denounce the folly of gambling ; others deal in scathing terms with licentious practices of every description ; and still others dissuade from opium-smoking, drunkenness, and the like.

Tracts of a distinctly religious type are neither so abundant, nor so highly esteemed, as those that aim to mend the morals of mankind. Yet they are not wanting ;—one meets every day with little pamphlets commending the worship of particular divinities. Here is one that points out the way to obtain the favor of Chang Sien, the greatest of the Taoist genii, who rewards his worshippers with the blessing of offspring. And here is another which consists chiefly of prayers to Kuan-yin, the goddess of mercy. The prayers are in Sanscrit, and utterly unintelligible to those who use them.

Of polemics there are very few,—indeed I have only seen one or two of modern origin. The earlier ages teemed with them ; and the literati,

by inserting in every collection of *Ku-wén*, Han Yu's ferocious onslaught on Buddhism, seek to keep alive a feeling of animosity against the Indian creed. Time, however, is a great peace-maker. The conflicting elements, that once threatened to turn this celestial empire into primeval chaos, have gradually subsided into a stable equilibrium. The founders of the Three Religions may now be seen side-by-side in the same shrine, called *San Kiao T'ang*, in loving union, like that of Liu Pei and his adopted brothers.

Antagonistic and mutually destructive, their teachings may be found mixed together in most of the tracts of which we have been speaking. In one of them, in a conspicuous place, at the head of a list of good actions, stands the injunction—*K'wang Hing San Kiao*, "Spread far and wide the Three Religions." Philosophers tell us of a time, happily far in the future, when earth shall no more be the scene of terrific storms,—when north wind and south wind shall cease to contend for the mastery, because the atmosphere no longer receives sufficient heat from the sun to disturb its repose. It is the heat of conviction that engenders controversy. Where that has ceased, is there not reason

to suspect that faith has lost its vitality, and that sincere convictions no longer exist?

In ancient Rome, the gods of the conquered nations came trooping into the capital; and all of them, in the lapse of time, were seated in friendly conclave in the pantheon of Agrippa. They were at peace, because they were dead. Lucian, in his satirical dialogues, deals with dead gods as well as with dead men; but those dead gods were galvanized into life by the contact of Christianity. Christ came into their midst, and, at his touch, their dry bones began to shake, and they rose up to do battle against the Lord of Life. History repeats itself, and what we have seen in Rome, is now taking place in China. The calm of ages is disturbed, and the heat of controversy begins to show itself anew; but the only polemics from the pagan camp are those in which the adherents of the Three Religions combine in a vituperative attack on that arrogant creed which claims for itself the homage of the world.

Inert as are the creeds of paganism, in comparison with the undying energies of our Holy Faith, it would be wrong to infer that they are either active for evil, or powerless for

good. To those who have not the sun, star-light is oftentimes a precious guide.

In looking over a vast variety of native tracts, we are struck by the fact that authors of all the schools agree in seeking to fortify their moral teachings by the sanctions of religion. Even the Confucianists ascribe to their canonical books the authority of inspiration. Chu Fu-tsze, sceptical as he was on most subjects, admitted the claim of the Confucian teachings to a superhuman origin. Later writers naturally sought to invest their productions with the sanctity derived from an inspired source. The two other creeds peopled the heavens with deified mortals. With them it was easy to hold communication, and from them oracular responses were obtained. If the divinities deigned to give prescriptions for the cure of measles or toothache, why not for the maladies of the human mind? The medium of response was planchette, an instrument known to the Chinese a thousand years before it began to make a figure in Europe. I have myself seen effusions in faultless verse, fresh from the pens of deified spirits.

In connecting religion with morals, these writers agree with us; for what a feeble thing would be a moral propaganda unaided by the fervor of religious faith!

One of the literary lights of the English firmament defines religion as "morality touched by emotion." The definition is neither logical nor complete; but it hits in happy phrase one feature of a union formed by two distinct things. Morality, to borrow the imagery of a Hebrew poet, springs up out of the earth, and religion looks down from Heaven. Morality is the body, cold and beautiful until religion, which is its soul, enters into it and gives it life; or, in the words of Mr. Arnold, "touches it with emotion."

The love of God is religion; the love of man, morality. The two must be combined, in order to give the highest effect to an enterprise like that of our Tract Societies. The assertion may sound strange, but it is true nevertheless, that morality is our supreme object. If men were to persist in the debasing practices inseparable from heathenism, would we deem it worth while to substitute the names of Jehovah and Jesus for those of Kwanti and Buddha?

We should not fail to recognize how much has been done by the agency of native tracts to prepare the way for the tractarian crusade, in which we are now embarked. It is owing to them that our efforts in this direction meet with a respectful welcome. It is owing to them that we

find the people in possession of religious ideas, to serve as roots on which to graft the branches of the true vine. Let us, on our part, cultivate a sympathy for all that is good in native books and native methods, and endeavor to learn from them something that may enable us more efficiently to carry on our own enterprise.

That which we may study with most advantage is their mode of communicating instruction on religious and moral subjects. No missionary should undertake the composition of a Christian tract, without having first made himself acquainted with a wide range of native tracts. Not only may he learn from them how to treat his subject in a style at once concise and lucid,—respectable in the eyes of the learned, yet not above the comprehension of the vulgar,—what is more, he may learn from them the spiritual wants of the audience whom he proposes to instruct.

A weakness of the native tract lies in the fact that, for the most part, elegant as it may be, it contains nothing but what everybody knows. We, in the preparation of our tracts, can draw on resources that lie beyond the reach of native authors. In addition to the inestimable treasures of Revealed Truth, we have Geography, History,

Astronomy, Physics, to communicate,—not to speak of our improved systems of mental and moral philosophy.

These sciences are not only powerful for the overthrow of superstition,—they are essential to the understanding of religious truth. Every new tract ought to contain more or less on these subjects; and some tracts should be entirely devoted to them, and to the religious applications of which they are so readily susceptible. Would it not be well for our Tract Societies to prepare a series—not of text books, for that task has been undertaken by another association—but of primers, which, along with religious truth, shall impart the elements of science? By acting on this principle, our publications will be made in the highest sense an educational agency. They will command the respect of the better classes, and not only win them away from grovelling superstitions, but lead high and low away from the Light of Asia to him who is the Light of the World.

Note.—The Sacred Edict (聖諭廣訓), containing the Maxims of Kang Hi, amplified by Yung Chêng, is too large a work to be classed with tracts, unless each chapter be regarded as a tract on a special subject. Nothing, since the discourses of Mencius, gives a better view

of the kind of morals inculcated by the head of the nation,—morals which harmonize in a wonderful manner with the teachings of Christianity.

The *Ts'ai Kén Tan* (菜根譚) is a little treatise full of deep thought, and shows to advantage the blending of the three schools. I add a list of well-known tracts, mostly those above referred to:—

明心寶鑑
名賢集
朱子治家格言
弟子規
關聖覺世經
關聖忠孝經
感應篇
陰騭文
功過格

玉歷鈔傳
孝經
二十四孝
勸孝文
勸敬惜字紙
戒溺女文
戒殺放生文
戒烟文
戒色文

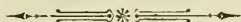
These and many others may be had in collections, such as—

敬信錄，願同集，等書。



XIV.

THE WORSHIP
OF
ANCESTORS. *



IF I were called on to name the most serious impediment to the conversion of the Chinese, I should without hesitation point to the worship of ancestors. Gathering into itself all that is deemed most sacred in family or state, it rises before us like a mountain barrier, hoary with age, and buttressed on the bed-rock of the empire.

Strong in faith, the missionary may summon it to surrender in the words of the prophet—"Who art thou, O great mountain! Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." But if he employs no other tactics than those of direct and undisguised attack, he will have to look to the distant future for the fulfilment of his expectations.

Chinese legend tells us of a man who,

* Read at the Decennial Conference of Missionaries in Shanghai, 1890.

feeling annoyed by the presence of a hill in front of his dwelling, resolved to remove the obstacle, instead of shifting his habitation. After exhausting his own life in the enterprize, he bequeathed the task to his posterity, who, after many generations, saw its accomplishment. His procedure is cited as an illustration of perseverance, but not of wisdom.

A better example of the latter is afforded by the construction of the first railway tunnel through the Alps. When the engineers of France and Italy desired to unite the railway systems of the two countries, they found themselves confronted by an Alpine range. To drive a tunnel through its bowels would involve many years of delay, and the expenditure of an immense capital. What was to be done in the meantime?

Seeking out the lowest available pass, they ran a spiral track up the mountain side, and approached the summit by a gradual ascent. The two countries were connected by rail, and the road itself yielded the funds for the construction of a shorter route. Is there not in this a lesson for the missionary, who is called to build in China a highway for the Lord, and to make His paths straight? Has he not some latitude for the exercise of discretion? And is there not still room

for the wise adaptation of means to ends in contending with this giant difficulty?

We think there is; but, before proceeding to indicate the means for overcoming it, it will not be out of place to take a survey of the ground, with a view to ascertaining the length and breadth of the obstacle in question.

I.

The worship of ancestors springs from some of the best principles of human nature. The first conception of a life beyond the grave was, it is thought, suggested by a desire to commune with deceased parents. And, if it is natural that children should follow them with their thoughts and affections, is it not equally natural that they should seek to call them back by the offering of such things as they require while living?

How touchingly Virgil depicts the devotion of Æneas to his aged father! Not only does he bear him on his shoulders through the flames of Troy, but, when Anchises dies in the course of the voyage, the pious hero celebrates games in his honor, and offers libations to his spirit. He even follows his father to the nether world, in order to consult him as to the future of the Roman State.

In this last proceeding, the Roman epic treads in the footsteps of its Greek prototype; for had not Ulysses penetrated the region of Cimmerian darkness, to find and consult the shade of Laertes?

Earlier than the earliest of these dates, far back at a period anterior to the calling of Abraham,—we find the worship of ancestors existing in China as an organized and established cult.

The earliest recorded instance of it is the rite of adoption, by which Shun, the son of a blind peasant, is received into the family of the Emperor Yao, and acknowledged as heir to the throne, 2,200 B. C.

Of the ceremonial employed on this occasion, we have no details; the statement that the “concluding rites” were performed in the temple of Wên Tsu, the ancestor of Yao, is all that the historian has vouchsafed to communicate. Yet, how much is implied in this laconic record?

It implies, on the part of Yao, an announcement to the spirits of his forefathers of his purpose to effect a change in the line of succession. On the part of Shun, it implies a reverential acceptance of Yao’s ancestors in place of his own, and the assumption in their presence of vows of fidelity in the discharge of his high functions.

When the Emperor, now on the throne, was

adopted as the son of his uncle Hien Fung, a similar ceremony was performed by proxy in the temple of the deceased sovereign. On that occasion, a fanatical censor, Wu K'o-tu, protested against the affiliation to Hien Fung; contended that it was doing dishonor to the last Emperor Tung Chih, to leave him without a son; and, in order to give emphasis to his remonstrance, he sealed it with his blood, sacrificing his life before the tomb of the latter sovereign.

This occurrence, illustrating as it does what took place 4,000 years ago, is of itself sufficient to prove that in the China of to-day the worship of ancestors is not a dead form, but a living faith.

Not only is the adoption of an heir to the throne thus formally announced to the ancestors of the reigning house; every case of regular succession is solemnly notified by a similar ceremonial.

The occupant of the throne holds himself responsible to those from whom he received it; and there are numerous instances in the history of this country in which a sovereign rejects humiliating conditions, offered by an enemy, with the indignant exclamation—"How could I dare to face my ancestors, were I to submit to such disgrace?" The force of such a motive,

fortified by the precedents of a hundred generations, it is not easy to overestimate.

Not longer ago than last year, we saw it resorted to as affording a solemn sanction to an oath taken by the Emperor of Japan. On granting to his people a new Constitution, he swore by his ancestors to maintain it inviolate. This, the Mikado learned from the Chinese; why did he not learn from them that their homage is not restricted to their personal ancestors? Over and above them all, they recognize a Divinity, whom they call Shang Ti, the ruler supreme, and king of kings. To him their ancestors are subordinate, and in his high court they are held to be ministering spirits. At the Temple of Heaven, the tablet of Shang Ti occupies the central space, while those of deceased sovereigns are ranged on either hand, in humble acknowledgment that "by him kings reign, and princes decree justice."

In the *Shu King*, the oldest of the books of history, there are numerous references to the cult of ancestors, but I refrain from citing more than one or two additional.

In the 12th century before our era, Wu Wang overturned the house of Shang, and founded the dynasty of Chow. In the terrible indictment

which, to justify his rebellion, he brings against the degenerate occupant of the throne, he begins by charging him with neglecting the service of Shang Ti and subordinate deities, and even neglecting to sacrifice at the altars of his own ancestors.

In a second manifesto, he refers to his deceased father Wên Wang, and adds—"If I gain the victory, it will not be through my own prowess, but through the merits of my father. If I am beaten, it will not be from any fault in my father, but solely from the want of virtue in me."

He warns his soldiers that—"if they are brave, they will be rewarded publicly in the temple of his ancestors; but if cowardly, they will be slain at the altars of the earth-gods."

Such was the place held by the worship of ancestors at the dawn of history, along with that of Shang Ti and a host of inferior divinities. And at the present day, no one can visit the magnificent monuments of the Ming Emperors, or witness the vast sums expended on the mausolea of the reigning House, without a profound conviction that the cult of ancestors has lost nothing of its ancient sanctity.

Scarcely a month has elapsed since the reigning Emperor and the Dowager Empress made a solemn

pilgrimage to the tombs of their fathers ; the former to report in person his marriage and full accession to imperial power, the latter to give account of her exercise of delegated authority during her long regency. What stronger proof could be required of the important position which the worship of ancestors still occupies in the religion of the State ?

It is not, however, as might be inferred from our references to historical precedent and official usage, an observance restricted to the ruling classes. It forms, without doubt, the leading element in the religion of the people.

It is, in fact, the only form of religion which the government takes the trouble to propagate among its subjects. This it does, not merely by upholding the authority of those classical books in which it is consecrated, but by giving to the worship of ancestors a prominent place in the popular teaching of morality enjoined on the magistrate of every district.

In the collection of discourses known as the *Sacred Edict*, a large space is assigned to the duties of filial piety. This work was composed by Yung Chêng, the first of the persecuting Emperors, on themes taken from the maxims of K'ang Hi; and, in imitation of Christian preaching, required

to be expounded to the people, partly with a view to checking the spread of Christianity. It takes the worship of ancestors for granted as the basis of morals, and does not treat the subject in detail; but it is significant that, while it denounces Buddhism and Taoism, as well as Christianity, it insists on the service of one's parents as better than that of the gods.

The second of the discourses makes the "building of a family temple for the worship of ancestors, and the founding of a family school for the instruction of the young" to be the principal ways in which the rich can manifest a fellow feeling for their kindred. An official comment, at the end of the seventh discourse, says—"If, instead of worshipping the gods, you will serve and honor your parents; and if, instead of giving alms to Buddhist and Taoist monks, you will succour your kindred and assist your neighbors, false doctrines will of themselves cease to be believed." This is what is required to be proclaimed in the hearing of the people, twice in each revolving moon.

Two maxims, that take the form of proverbs, express the spirit of these instructions. The first is that—"To stay at home and serve your parents is better than to go far to offer incense at a sacred place." The other, that—"It is better to offer

a chicken to your living parents than an ox to your dead ancestors," not disparaging the latter class of duties, but insisting on the paramount obligation of the former.

Every household has somewhere within its doors a small shrine, sometimes resembling a cupboard, sometimes representing a miniature temple. Here are deposited the tablets of ancestors, and of all deceased members of the family who have passed the age of infancy.

Each clan has its ancestral temple, which forms a rallying point for all who belong to the common stock. In these, as in the smaller shrines of the household, the objects of reverence are not images, but tablets,—slips of wood inscribed with the name of the deceased, together with the dates of birth and death. In these, according to popular belief, dwell the spirits of the dead. Before these ascends the smoke of daily incense; and, twice in the month, offerings of fruits and other eatables are presented, accompanied by solemn prostrations.

In some cases, particularly during a period of mourning, the members of the family salute the dead, morning and evening, as they do the living; and on special occasions, such as a marriage or a funeral, there are religious services of a more

elaborate character, accompanied sometimes by feasts and theatrical shows.

Besides worship in presence of the representative tablet, periodical rites are performed at the family cemetery. In spring and autumn, when the mildness of the air is such as to invite excursions, city families are wont to choose a day for visiting the resting places of their dead. Clearing away the grass, and covering the tombs with a layer of fresh earth, they present offerings and perform acts of worship. This done, they pass the rest of the day in enjoying the scenery of the country.

In all these observances, whether as practiced by the rulers of the State or by their humbler subjects, there is unquestionably a large intermixture of superstition and idolatry. Yet, there is also in them much that may claim our approving sympathy.

They tend strongly to cherish some of the better sentiments of humanity, binding together the members of a family or clan, as the roots of a tree hold in compact unity the grains of sand, which might otherwise be dissolved and swept away by flowing waters. Meeting at the shrine of a common ancestor, the widely severed members are reminded of their blood relationship; and it is perhaps owing to this that the tender appellations

of brother and sister find among the Chinese a wider application than among us.

Nor is this recognition of kindred an empty form. The more prosperous are accustomed to show kindness in many ways to their less favored relatives. From time to time, we hear of the endowment of clan schools, clan cemeteries, and clan refuges for the aged poor; the aim of these laudable charities being to secure that no child who bears the family name shall be deprived of that best of birth-rights—a right to the advantages of education,—that no aged person shall suffer the pangs of hunger, and that no one, when his race is run, shall want the honors of a decent burial.

What Fan-wên-chêng-kung did for his kindred at Soochow is done every day by some rich man in some part of the empire. It detracts something from the credit of this munificence that it is always followed by marks of Imperial favor; but it cannot be denied that the existence of such an institution, as the family temple, has a powerful tendency to foster the sentiments that lead to these acts of generosity.

To be a member of such a fraternity exerts, moreover, a moral influence of no mean quality on every man who is capable of the sentiment of self-respect. By every meeting with his kindred,

and by every act of worship, he is reminded that their ancestors are his; that the good name of the founders of the family is in some sort entrusted to his keeping; and that, if he may not add to its lustre, he is bound to refrain from staining it by disgraceful conduct. Poor he may be, but he still possesses a conscious dignity as the offspring of such parentage.

The restraining influence of this feeling is enhanced by the fact that those who are guilty of infamous crimes are liable to the pains of excommunication,—a sentence of terrible import, and one which it requires immense fortitude in a Christian to incur, as he must, by refusing to join in the worship of his ancestors.

If the system of ancestral worship is tinged with idolatry and complicated with the absurdities of geomancy, it must, as an offset, be credited with having rendered at least one important service to the cause of religion. Notwithstanding their proclivity to scepticism, it has done much to keep alive, among the Chinese people, a conviction that the soul survives the decay of the body. Every rite implies or affirms it.

The souls of the departed are invited to partake of the finer essences of viands destined to supply a feast—a kind of *agape*—for their living kindred.

They are addressed as still retaining consciousness and affection in full measure.

The philosopher Han Wên-kung distinguished himself by opposition to Buddhism, a religion which has done much to strengthen the spiritual beliefs of the Chinese people. Yet this doubter betrays, in a touching manner, his latent faith in a conscious existence after death. Among his remains is found a letter, full of feeling, addressed to a deceased nephew. In that epistle he recounts recent changes in the family, just as he might have done in writing to a relation across the seas, and appears to look forward to joining him beyond the grave. He does indeed give passing expression to doubts and fears, but for all that he still clings lovingly to the better hope.

Confucius, by his silence on this point, left room for both hope and doubt. In answer to one of his disciples, he said—"We know not life; how can we know death?" And to another—"If we fail in our service to the living, how can we expect to render acceptable service to the dead?" He is even reported to have weighed the consequences of a decision, and to have hesitated to give it. "If I should say the soul does survive,

I fear that persons of pious temperament might forsake their living parents in order to serve their dead ancestors; if, on the other hand, I should say the soul does not survive, I fear the unfilial might throw away the bodies of their parents and leave them unburied." The Sage did not decide the question; but the worship of ancestors, which he enjoined on his disciples, strongly disposes all his followers to incline to the side of faith in a future life.

II.

In contemplating this system, with its three-fold tendency—

1.—To strengthen the bonds of family union, and stimulate to active charity;

2.—To cherish self-respect, and impose moral restraint;

3.—To keep alive a sort of faith in the reality of a spirit-world;—

let us ask ourselves whether, if we had the power by a pen-stroke to sweep it all away, we should dare to incur the responsibility of doing so?

Let us then, instead of proposing to abolish the system, ask ourselves the further question, whether it is not capable of being modified in

such a way as to bring it into harmony with the requirements of the Christian Faith?

This is a question of the gravest import for every missionary body that is free to act; to those, I say, that are free to act, because from some their freedom of action has been taken away by the intervention of an Infallible Authority. If there is no question more grave in its import, there is none, the consideration of which requires more care, in order to free the mind from the influence of prejudice, and to distinguish the essentials of substance from the disguises of form.

In dealing with this as a practical question, there is, as I conceive, but one rule by which the missionary is bound to be guided, *viz.*,—to avoid giving countenance to anything that can fairly be construed as idolatry, a thing forbidden alike by the letter and by the spirit of our Christian Scriptures. That ancestral worship, as commonly practiced, is liable to objection on this ground, I am far from denying; but I maintain that its objectionable features are its excrescences, not its essence. To prune off such excrescences, preserving the good and eliminating the evil, I believe to be altogether feasible; and, if so, is not that preferable to the quixotic attempt to destroy the system, root and branch?

Let us examine the matter with reference to this single point.

The word "worship" must not be taken as evidence. It signifies etymologically nothing more than to assign worth to an object. In the antiquated English of our Scriptures, it is often used to indicate a respectful salutation, and it is still used as a honorific appellation in our law courts and masonic fraternities. Equally vague and comprehensive are the Chinese words which it represents (拜, 敬, and 祭). The essential elements of ancestral worship are three,—posture, invocation, and offerings; and these are nearly the same, whether the worship is performed at the family shrine, or at the tombs of the deceased.

The posture is always that of kneeling, alternated with prostrations,—in the worship of the most exalted divinity there is no other; but it does not in itself form an act of idolatry, because the same posture is employed to show respect to the living. Children fall on knees and face before their parents; subjects before their sovereign; officials of every rank before those above them; and common people before their magistrates. Beggars in the street assume that attitude in asking alms.

Considered as a mode of salutation, it merits our contempt as a fit expression of the abject condition of most oriental nations; but it is not sinful, and we have no right to place it under the ban of ecclesiastical censure. As a mark of respect to the dead, is there any reason for seeing in it anything more than a continuation of the sentiments with which they were regarded while living?

It is not merely those who are ancestors in the ascending line who are thus honored; the same demonstrations are made to all who stand nearer than the worshipper to the root of the genealogical tree, and they are sometimes rendered to those of equal grade. I have seen a Russian widow kneel in the street, and bow her head in the dust before the coffin that contained the remains of her husband. In that act, there was nothing idolatrous, or even religious,—the deceased not being a calendar saint. Why should the same posture be construed in a different sense, when enjoined by Chinese rites?

Whether the invocation is an act of idolatry depends on the attributes ascribed to the deceased. If, as often happens, they are looked on as tutelar powers, to whom the family is indebted for peace and prosperity, the ascription of this kind

of patronage detracts from the honor that belongs to God alone, and is so far tinged with idolatry.

The ascription of such attributes is not, however, universal, even among those who are unenlightened by the teachings of Christianity. In many of the forms laid down in the books, these objectionable features do not exist; and where they do exist, their omission would leave the service intact.

The following are some of the occasions on which formal addresses are made to the spirits of ancestors. When a youth dons the cap of manhood, he is taken to the ancestral temple, where his father invokes for him the guardian care of his forefathers, "that he may be a complete man, and not fall below their standard of excellence." The rite is extremely impressive, and it would lose nothing of its solemnity, if, in lieu of the invocation of the dead, the blessing of the living God were invoked.

When a son or daughter is betrothed, the parents simply notify their ancestors, much as they do their living kindred, but without asking for tutelar care. When a youth goes to fetch home his bride, the father "reverentially announces the fact to his ancestors, with offerings of fruits and wine." The same is done in case of a bride departing for her new home.

In the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom presents his wife to his ancestors as a new member of the family, and invokes for her their "paternal blessing."

In none of the forms connected with funerals is there any petition for blessing or protection, the language being that of a simple announcement, accompanied by an expression of profound sorrow. But in the periodical services at the family cemetery, this objectionable element shows itself, the worshipper saying—"We have come to sweep your tombs to show our gratitude for your protecting care, and now we beseech you to accept our offerings and make our posterity prosperous and happy." With the alteration of a few words, these so-called prayers would be reduced to mere expressions of natural affection. If, after such retrenchment, they are still in contravention of Christianity, then must we not condemn that most pathetic effusion of a filial heart—Cowper's address to his mother's picture?—

"My mother, when I knew that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?"

In *Hernani*, that noble tragedy of Victor Hugo, one of the most impressive scenes is an act

of worship at the tomb of an ancestor.

Don Carlos, afterwards Charles V, on the eve of election to the throne of the German Empire, enters the mausoleum of Charlemagne at Aix la Chapelle, and, throwing himself on his knees before the tomb of the great monarch whom he claims for ancestor, pours out this prayer :—

“Pour into my heart something of thy own sublime spirit ; speak, for thy son is waiting to hear. Thou dwellest in light ; oh, send some rays upon his pathway.”

This, it may be said, is poetry, not religion ; while the worship of the Chinese is religion, with very little poetry.

The third essential of Chinese ancestral worship is the offering.

This has, I confess, an idolatrous aspect ; but it is the object of worship, not the offering, that constitutes idolatry. In our native land, no one finds fault with the presentation of floral offerings at funerals, or at the graves of the departed ; and, if it is legitimate to deck a grave with flowers, why is it not so to offer fruits or meats ? The idea of offering food to the dead is not in accordance with our habits of thought, but it cannot be denied that such offering may be made the vehicle of an innocent and beautiful sentiment. It means.

that the spirit still remembers its kindred, and joins them in their commemorative feast.

Are we entitled, from the absence of these usages among ourselves, to forbid them among the Chinese? If so, what are we to say to the recent practice of setting apart a special day for the decoration of our soldiers' graves?

Thus we find that, of the three essentials of ancestral worship, no one of necessity implies an act of idolatry. It follows therefore that, instead of being compelled to condemn the system as a whole, we are left at liberty to deal with it in detail, according to the dictates of Christian prudence. Even after eliminating everything that partakes of idolatry, there will still remain much that is repugnant to our ways of thinking and feeling.

The practice of keeping up any kind of connection with the dead is, we confess, out of harmony with our Protestant theology. It sternly discountenances prayers to, or for, the dead. It glories in its logic, and sings, or used to sing, such cheerful effusions as this:—

“The living know that they must die,
But all the dead forgotten lie;
Their memory and their sense are gone,
Alike unknowing and unknown;
They have no part in all that's done,
Beneath the circuit of the sun.”

This is a dreary creed, and borrows its expression from that older dispensation under which the hope of immortality was faint and uncertain. Far more humane is the Catholic custom of keeping alive their affections by praying for the dead. Many a time I have had a little billet come to me from beyond the sea, informing me of the decease of some member of a family known to me, and concluding with the request—"Priez pour elle," or "Priez pour lui,"—a request that always touches me deeply. I never comply with it, but I confess that I should like to do so. To breathe a prayer for the repose of a soul is a very different thing from the *opus operatum* of a vicarious mass. Dr. Samuel Johnson was as sturdy a Protestant as any of us; yet, for twenty-eight years, he tells us, he never failed to offer a daily prayer for the soul of his beloved Hetty. The poet Coleridge was, in his later life, a champion of orthodoxy; yet, in his epitaph, written by himself a few days before his death, he says:—

"Stop, Christian passer-by; stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast, Beneath this clod
A poet lies, or that which one seemed he.
O lift a thought in prayer for S. T. C."

These are sporadic expressions of what, since that day, has become a wide-spread feeling.

The violence that attended their rupture with the Roman church unavoidably carried Protestants to an opposite extreme, leading them to abandon many graceful observances, in themselves as innocent as the painted windows which Puritan soldiers took such pleasure in smashing. Now that a reaction is setting in, relaxing the severity of Puritan theology, is it incumbent on us to extinguish, among our converts, expressions of natural affection, by which they seek to bind themselves to those who have gone before? In a matter of this kind, is it not admissible to have one rule for the West and another for the East, as the broad-minded apostles in the early church relaxed the stringency of Jewish practice in favor of gentile converts? The venerable usages of a civilized people should be judged by their own merits, and it is to be borne in mind that our aim is not to Europeanize the Chinese, but to make them Christians.

If it be objected that the tendencies of the system are to be guarded against,—the human mind being liable almost unconsciously to transform a ghost into a God,—I admit the tendency, and acknowledge the necessity for preventive measures. But is it not better, by the exercise of a wise forbearance, to keep the way open for counteractive

teaching, than, by proclaiming an uncompromising conflict, to close the ears of the better class to all good influences?

A missionary relates that a catechism, which he was distributing, was always well received and often perused with interest as far as a question on ancestral worship. It was then thrown down with a gesture of disgust, because what the reader deemed the most sacred of moral duties was abruptly forbidden.

Protestant missions in China are still in the morning of their existence. Some of them have shown sufficient independence to reconsider the decision of a Pope as to the word to be employed for the name of God, reverting to the usage of those early pioneers, who understood the wants of the people and the demands of the times. I should like to see them reconsider another of the decisions of the same infallible authority, *viz.*,—that which condemned the worship of ancestors, as if the forms of reverence with which Chinese are taught to honor their dead were not as consonant with reason and Scripture as the worship of that pantheon of saints, whom Rome has seen fit to canonize.

There is good reason for believing that, by those two decisions—but chiefly by the latter—

China was lost to the Church of Rome, a loss immense, and perhaps irreparable, to our common Christendom.

For a time, the great K'ang Hi appeared inclined to become the Constantine of this empire, patronizing missionaries and encouraging them in their efforts to convert his people. But when the Apostles of the Faith became divided into hostile camps, and when the Head of the Church condemned the party which he had favored, the Emperor turned his back upon the cross. It was not long before his successors were seen trampling that sacred symbol in the dust.

The quiet obedience with which the losing party submitted to a decree that ordered them to assail an impregnable battery in front, instead of taking it by a flank movement, is worthy of all praise :—

“ Theirs not to make reply ;
Theirs not to reason why ;
Theirs but to do and die,
Even though they knew
Some one had blundered.”

From that day to this, they have toiled with sublime fidelity, but without the slightest prospect of regaining their lost ground. For them there is no alternative but to obey orders, and to persevere in their hopeless task.

Happily Protestants are not bound by any such arbitrary authority. The magnificent opportunity thrown away by the Popes is not likely to offer itself in the experience of any denomination of Protestants. It would be folly for them to trim their sails with a view to catching the breath of imperial favor; but is it folly to seek to conciliate the literati, who are the real rulers of the empire?

About a year ago, two eminent officials, with whom I was conversing, introduced the subject of missionary methods. (One of them, now deceased, was President of the highest of the Six Boards).

They took it for granted that the various Societies would persist in their efforts to convert the people; but they anticipated for them but a small measure of success, while proceeding on their present lines.

The facility with which bad characters find admission to the fold, the readiness of missionaries to hold a shield over the heads of their erring converts, and, lastly, their rejection of ancestral worship, formed the staple of the criticism. "Why," they asked, insisting specially on the third point, "cannot Christian missionaries adopt this native institution as did the propagators of Buddhism?" I answered that—"For myself (and

I wish I could have answered for all the teachers of Christianity), I do not object to ancestral worship as a system, but solely to those parts of it which ascribe divine attributes to the souls of the dead."

If any considerable body of missionaries were to take up this position, they might, I believe, initiate a movement which would in a few years result in more success than has been achieved thus far by the united—or disunited—efforts of all. How many of those, who are disposed to accept the higher truths of the gospel, draw back when they find that in marriage they must conform to unrecognized and repulsive rites, while they are required to renounce the sacred privilege of presenting their brides to their ancestors in the family temple! How many are precluded from embracing Christianity, by holding a pecuniary interest in lands connected with a temple of ancestors! But, not to enumerate classes, does not every man, who feels the value of family ties, as soon as he begins to weigh the claims of Christianity, at once throw into the other scale his duty to his progenitors, living or dead; and is it not a thousand to one that his incipient convictions will be stifled before they ripen into practical conversion?

As long as missionaries manifest a determination to pluck the keystone out of China's social fabric, so long will the innumerable clans that form the nation, rallying round the altars of their forefathers, form an impenetrable phalanx, barring at every point the ingress of a disintegrating doctrine. As long as the neophyte is called on, like Caius Torranus, to prove his devotion by betraying his fathers, so long will the Christian community continue to be a despised caste, apart from the life of the people, and receiving accessions chiefly from pariahs, who set no value on family connections.

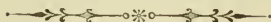
In conclusion, I respectfully suggest that we refrain from any direct or indiscriminate attack on the native mode of honoring ancestors; and that we leave the reformation of the system to the influence of Divine Truth, when it gets a firmer hold on the national mind. *

* This modest suggestion was, I am sorry to say, received with strong expressions of disfavor; yet many missionaries have assured me that they concur in the general sentiment of the Paper. It is republished in the hope that a calm perusal, outside of an excited assembly, will result in the accession of many suffrages.



XV.

THE EMPEROR AT THE ALTAR OF HEAVEN *



THE Roman Emperors always associated with their other titles that of Pontifex Maximus; and the Sovereigns of China have from time immemorial acted as High Priests of the empire.

It was in that capacity that His Majesty Kuang Hsü officiated at the Temple of Heaven on the 22nd December, 1887, for the first time, on the occasion of the solstitial sacrifices. On the previous day, he proceeded to the Temple with great pomp, accompanied by the grandees of the Court, three elephants harnessed to as many chariots appearing in the procession. Having prepared himself by a night spent in fasting and meditation to approach the presence

* This brief Note, sent originally to a local newspaper, appears worth preserving, as a concise view of a great subject.

of the King of Kings, he prostrated himself nine times before a tablet inscribed with the name of Shang Ti, and offered an ox, the bones of the victim being consumed in a furnace.

As to the herd of common gods, the Emperor can make and unmake them at will. He even assumes to decide whether a living Buddha shall or shall not have the privilege of re-appearing in another body; but in the presence of Shang Ti, the master of China's millions abases himself in the dust, and confesses himself a subject of law.

When the Taiping rebellion was at its height in 1853, the Emperor Hien Fung repaired to the Altar of Heaven, confessed his sins, and implored on behalf of his suffering people the compassion of the Sovereign of the Universe. By this act, he acknowledged that he ruled by delegated authority, and that he was answerable for its proper use.

The same idea is impressively set forth by a row of iron censers, ranged around the foot of the altar. In these, it is not strips of mimic gold that are consumed, nor sticks of incense, but long lists of the names of criminals condemned to death, the smoke and flame rising up to Heaven, appealing for ratification or for vengeance to the Supreme Court of the Universe.

The Emperor is a monotheist, because there is only one God sufficiently exalted to be to him an object of worship in the highest sense; for, though he does worship at the shrines of other divinities, to none but Shang Ti does he employ the humble style of a servant, and he, if not the only worshipper of Shang Ti, is the only one who is permitted to make use of the prescribed ritual. For any one else to presume to imitate that ritual would be an act of high treason, as it could have but one meaning,—that of an intention to usurp the prerogatives and to seize the throne of the sovereign. The only instance of this which we have on record—except in cases of overt rebellion—is that of the Prince of Ch'in erecting an altar to Shang Ti, some 2,500 years ago. The act betokened a disposition on his part to seize the falling crown of the Chows,—which one of his descendants actually accomplished. The Chow Emperor in the meantime tolerated the abuse, because he lacked the power to punish so great a vassal.

The antiquity of this Imperial rite is not the least interesting of its features. It goes back to the first of the Three Dynasties, to a date when Melchisedek combined with his kingly office that of "Priest of the Most High God." In that day, there was

no Buddhism, no Taoism; but, whether that primitive worship connects itself with a purer form of patriarchal faith, or whether, as Emerson expresses it—

“Up from the heart of nature came,
Like the volcano’s tongue of flame”—

I shall not undertake to determine.

The idea of the offerings on this occasion is that of a banquet, in which the spirit of the Supreme condescends to accept entertainment at the hand of a mortal. He is accompanied by eight imperial guests,—the ancestors of the officiating sovereign,—who, like Wên Wang in the *Book of Odes*, are regarded as favoured guests in the Court of Heaven.

The august pageant is withheld from eyes profane; and of course all foreigners in Peking are officially invited to be absent.

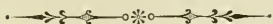
I do not, accordingly, profess to give you the observations of an eye-witness; though I have perhaps as good a right to do so as certain war correspondents have had, to depict a battle-scene, when they have viewed the smoke at a distance.

I have seen the altar; and I have at this moment the ritual of the day before my eyes. But it would not add much to the interest of my readers to have a libretto of the nine pieces of sacred music, or an inventory of the subordinate offerings which accompany the *Fan Niu*, or ox of burnt sacrifice.



XVI.

A PILGRIMAGE TO THE TOMB OF CONFUCIUS.



THE dust of the great Sage reposes near the place of his birth, at Chu Fu, in the Province of Shantung. For twenty-three centuries, official offerings have been made to his manes ; and emperors, princes, and scholars, have repaired to his sepulchre to do him homage. Yet Chu Fu is not to China what Mecca is to the Mohammedan world; not that Confucius is less esteemed than the Founder of Islam, but because the pilgrimage to his tomb is not enjoined as a religious duty.

Ten days would have sufficed to carry me to the sacred spot; but, as I desired first to visit an ancient colony of Jews in the central Province of Honan, I spent four weeks wandering through

the heart of China before arriving there, and thence I proceeded to Shanghai, by way of the Grand Canal and the river Yangtse.*

On the 2nd of February, 1866, I set out from Peking on what was then a route unfrequented by Europeans; but so few are the changes that have taken place in the interior of that most conservative of empires, that my narrative, which is now for the first time given to the public,† is as true to the life as if its date were of yesterday. No new canal has been excavated, and no railway constructed in that region.

Kai-fung Fu is the abode of the Jewish colony, and one of the ancient capitals, lying 1,500 *li* (or 500 miles) to the south-west of Peking; I engaged a cart, drawn by two mules, to carry me to that point in fifteen days.

Bestowing in it my baggage and a servant, I accompanied the vehicle on horseback, taking pains to keep in sight. As these carts have no springs, this mode of travelling by cart is to be recommended, on the score of comfort; the chief drawback being exposure to wind, dust, and cold.

* For my observations on the Jews, with notes of that part of my travels, see *Hanlin Papers*, Volume I (Kelly & Walsh), reprinted under the title of *The Chinese, &c.*, by the Harpers, New York.

† In the *Independent*, 1890.

My driver, being liable to a fine for loss of time, made it a point to rouse me from my bed before day-light, and to continue on the road far into the night, sometimes covering a distance of forty-five or fifty miles. In the morning, the cold was intense; so that, as I trotted along, the icicles formed on my beard, and tinkled like a chime of bells. My servant, Yung-an, "Everlasting Peace," who was snoring in the cart, had a better time. So indifferent are the Chinese to jolting that the master always takes the cart, and puts his attendant on horseback.

In less than a week, my horse becoming lame, I sold him for a song, and soon became reconciled to the snug berth of Yung-an, taking long walks to stretch my stiffened limbs.

After a full month of this luxurious mode of motion, I had to descend to a humbler vehicle, because the road became so narrow that it would accommodate only one wheel. My wheel-barrow, the common conveyance in that region, was pushed by one man and drawn by another, the passengers balancing each other by sitting on opposite sides, when they did not choose to walk.

Some of these barrows were fitted with mast and sail, so that, when the wind was fair,

the driver had nothing to do but hold the helm and "keep her steady."

Coming to a spur of the mountains, our ship of the plains had to be abandoned. I might have continued my journey on foot, as I had become accustomed to walking; but, for the sake of expedition, I hired post-horses, and soon found myself at the bank of the Grand Canal. For comfort, commend me to a Chinese canal-boat. With no passengers and no noise, if you are not pressed for time, you have no occasion to wish for smoky steamer, or rattling railway.

Except in the capital of Honan, I failed to find, on this long journey, any thing that could be called a decent lodging-place. The larger inns were caravansaries, like those of Western Asia, for the entertainment of camels; the smaller, offering accommodations for foot passengers only. Not one of them is more than one story in height; and all have floors of earth, with a divan of brick or wood which serves for bed at night and sofa by day. The guest provides his own bedding, and his food too, if he is nice on that point.

Many of them are kept by Mohammedans, as I learned to my cost. One day, when my servant had set the table, and I was about to

begin my breakfast with a slice of ham, the inn-keeper appeared, and implored me by all that was sacred to abstain from pork, for his sake, if not for my own. Sending it away, I addressed myself to a piece of corned beef. To this the host also objected, saying that the cow was a sacred beast; and it *is* so in Southern China. To spare his feelings, I said I would break my fast on bread and butter. "Not on butter, I beseech you," he exclaimed; "butter, too, is forbidden. My dishes have not been greased with it for five years." Swallowing my dry morsel with a cup of tea, I left the place, resolving the next time to ascertain the religious faith of my inn-keeper before unpacking my cart.

In places, the country had been swept by hordes of rebels, and it was scarcely possible to obtain, for any price, a chicken or an egg, while rice was out of the question, and coarse millet the only available food. In one place, the inn was too poor to afford a candlestick; but, by way of substitute, the inn-keeper showed me a trick which would have delighted the economical Diogenes. Cutting a turnip in half, he turned the flat side down, and, thrusting into it a bamboo chopstick—"There's your candlestick," he said, in a tone of triumph.

My candle, supported on that sharp stick,
gave as good a light as if it had rested on silver.

In most of these inns, the whited walls serve the double purpose of ledger and visitor's book, the names of lodgers being scrawled there, along with various effusions in prose or verse. In one was a pasquinade on Lady Shên, the wife of the Prefect, who must have been a remarkable woman to exercise a "reign of terror over her husband, and, through him, over the whole district." In another, I read in verse this sad confession of an opium smoker:—

"For a time, I dallied with the lamp and pipe;
Pleasure became disease, and I sought in vain for antidotes.
Now, in poverty and pain,
I am glad to consume the ashes from another's pipe."

His experience may be taken as that of a large class. At a third, I read a satire on a noted general, who had been beaten by the English, ending with the query—

"When he fights and runs away,
Is it fight, or is it play?"

To these rude verses add rude pictures, not always decent, and you have an idea of the embellishment of our wayside hotels. As an index of the state of morals, I may mention that, in many places,

singing girls were importunate in offering their services, which were not confined to music.

Away from great cities, the people always exhibited a friendly and unsuspicious disposition. "He speaks our language," they said; "if his whiskers were shaven off, he would be as good looking as we are." They asked me not from what country, but "from what Province" I came; and occasionally inquired whether I was Tartar or Chinese. In one case, the most learned man in a village, after talking with me in the evening, came back in the morning to say that he had not been able to find the name of my country in his *Dictionary of Universal Knowledge*. I inquired the date of the work, and found it was two hundred years old.

Arriving late and starting early, I usually escaped annoyance at the hands of the curious; but where I stopped for Sunday, their curiosity knew no bounds. Gathering in immense throngs, they would force themselves into my inn, breaking down doors and windows, and were only appeased when I came out and placed myself on view. When I spoke to them on the truths of religion, they listened respectfully, and they were always glad to get a few tracts, though but few were able to read them. One man said he had received a Bible from

a foreigner, but remembered only one word of its contents;—that, he said, was the name “Jehovah.” That name, I told him, was the subject of the whole book; and it served me for an excellent text.

Except in the districts affected by rebellion, the people appeared well fed and well dressed; and the absence of beggars testified to the comfort of their social condition. In one village, every man wore two hats, one superposed upon the other. Before noting it down as a custom of the country, I learned on inquiry that those people were coming home from a fair, where each had provided himself with a new hat for the New Year, to begin the next day.

The next day, they wore only the new one; the shops and gateways were adorned with new inscriptions on fresh red paper; everybody appeared in bright apparel; and the streets were thronged with people paying visits of ceremony. My inn-keeper threw himself at my feet and wished me a Happy New Year, expecting and receiving the usual *cumshaw*, or gift,—the word meaning *gold dust*. My servant performed the same ceremony, and then asked my permission to offer the prescribed token of respect to his mother. She was far away; but, turning his face toward Peking, he bowed his head to the earth nine times,

and wished her long life,—a beautiful expression of that filial feeling which has created the worship of ancestors, and made it a living force among the Chinese people.

In China, a city always has a wall; and it is sometimes called a large city, when it has very few inhabitants. After leaving Peking, I passed through more than twenty cities, of four grades in political importance,—Pao-ting and Kai-fung, with a population of one and two hundred thousand, respectively, being the largest. Isolated farm houses were nowhere to be seen, the people all congregating in villages for convenience and mutual protection. The country is thus deprived of its beauty; and what Akenside calls—"The mild dignity of private life"—is practically unknown. Through the greater part of the region that came under my view, the population was sparse compared with that of the sea coast, though the soil is extremely fertile.

The cities were in most cases empty fortresses,—their streets here and there spanned with honorary portals, or *pai-lows*. One was inscribed to a father and son, who had both risen to the rank of Cabinet Minister; another recorded the fact that one family had, for four generations, given a Viceroy to some Province of the Empire; a third was in honor of a widow, and bore the legend—

"Her virtue was as pure, and her heart as cold, as ice."

This does not imply that chastity—

"Pure as the icicle that hangs on Dian's temple"—is at all rare. It only means that Lady Ping, being left a widow at an early age, had resisted all temptations to marry again. Such portals are erected at private expense, but not without a license from the emperor, which it costs something to obtain.

A similar portal, spanning the road-way near a humble hamlet, informs the passengers that—"Here were born six or seven famous kings of the Dynasty of Shang" (*i.e.*,—between three and four thousand years ago). It was amusing to note that the names of these kings were not given, but that of the public-spirited donor was duly recorded. By the "six or seven kings," I was reminded of an incident told me by a captain in our navy. Being in a foreign port, a party of nobles were inspecting the ship, when the quarter-master, touching his cap, said quietly—"Please, Sir, one of them kings has fallen down the hatch-way."

This reference to antiquity also reminds me that I passed through a deserted city, whose walls of baked clay were in good condition, though their

facing of brick had been removed. It had been the capital of Chao, a small but warlike State in the feudal period, when Babylon was in her glory. Fancy could conjure up the armies that had issued from those silent gates; and the Chinese, who have a dread of ghosts, though they pass through it in day-time, always give it a wide berth at night.

Another spot of antiquarian interest was the town of Yang-ku, which is supposed to have been the site of an astronomical observatory in the reign of Yao, 2,300 B. C. At present, it contains nothing suggestive of science.

Situated in a fertile plain, with a range of hills, in shape like the arc of an ellipse, to bring the *fung-shui* influence to a focus, Chu Fu, the goal of my pilgrimage, is deemed equally favorable for the birth or the burial of great men. Trade, it has none,—living on the emoluments which a grateful nation has thought fit to confer on the greatest of its benefactors. A lineal descendant of the Sage has here his palace, with the title of Duke and ample domains. Twelve of the nearer branches of the family, and sixty of the more remote, have likewise been provided for by imperial bounty.

The city is in the form of a rectangle,

a mile in length by half a mile in breadth. One end of the enclosure is occupied by the temple of Confucius; and the tomb, which is outside of the city, is connected with it by an avenue of stately cedars. This avenue bears the name of *Shên Tao*, the "Spirit Road," meaning that the spirit of the Holy Man, when invoked with proper rites, passes through these trees, back and forth between tomb and temple. He has a temple in every city of the empire, and his effigy is adored in every school-room in the land. His worship is accordingly not localized; and hence, but little zeal is shown to make the pilgrimage to this holy city. Yet the tomb and temple are both on such a scale of magnificence as to be worthy of an empire whose most sacred traditions are here embodied.

The temple is a vestibule to the tomb, and we shall visit that first.

On the last day of February, just as the sun was rising, I presented myself at the great gate; but, as the porters saw me approaching, they closed it in my face. That meant nothing more than a demand to be paid for opening it. A red card thrust through a crevice, and a promise of *cum-shaw*, proved to be an "open sesame;" and the great shrine stood full before me.

The moon being at the full, a company of young men in rich attire were paying their devotions to the spirit of their illustrious ancestor. I was politely requested to amuse myself in some of the adjoining courts, until the service should be completed. It was not long,—chiefly consisting of the *k'o-tow*, or nine prostrations, accompanied by a repetition of the titles of the Sage, in form something like a hymn of praise.

In the meantime, I entered a spacious court paved with stone and studded with sculptured *pai-lows*, or honorary gate-ways, that lead nowhere. From this, I passed into another of equal extent, which had a little canal meandering through it, excavated for the sole purpose of giving occasion for a dozen or more beautiful bridges of shining marble. A third court contained a solemn grove of funereal cypress, some of the trees being of enormous size, and their deep shade being profoundly impressive. One of them, it is alleged, was planted by the Sage himself, more than two thousand years ago.

Beyond these, in another court, stood a forest of granite columns, range on range, each covered with laudatory inscriptions, and sheltered by a pretty pavilion. Each column had been erected by a sovereign of the empire; and some of them, dating as far back as the dynasties of Han, Tsin,

and Wei (from fifteen to twenty centuries), were so defaced by time as to be illegible. The habit of taking printed copies from the stone had helped to obliterate the inscriptions. Some, of later dynasties, were more distinct. One by Ch'êng Hua, 1465 A.D., particularly attracted my attention. It styled Confucius the "Heart of Heaven, without whom we should have been wrapped in one unbroken night." Expatriating on his virtues, it concludes with a hymn of praise.

The library was a wooden tower, four or five stories in height, in the finest style of Chinese architecture. Instead, however, of being filled with books, it is tenanted by innumerable pigeons; and, if it ever contained books, there is now no trace of them.

The central shrine, where I had seen the descendants of the Sage at their devotions, resembles the Confucian temple at Peking, but is vaster in its proportions. Like all of its kind, it consists of a long hall, rising in one story to a great height. In this, however, the front pillars are of stone instead of wood; and a more important difference is the fact that here the Sage and his principal disciples are represented by statues of stone, while elsewhere they have only tablets inscribed with their names. The statues are not

the work of a Pheidias ; and the simple tablets, which even here are the chief objects of adoration, are far more impressive.

The tablet of Confucius bears on it the inscription—
“The seat of the spirit of the most holy ancient Sage, Confucius.”

Numerous inscriptions on gilded tablets, some fixed in the vaulted roof, others pendant from the ceiling, set forth the Sage’s virtues in phrases like the following :—

“The model teacher of all ages.”

“With Heaven and Earth he forms a trinity.”

“His virtue is equal to that of Heaven and Earth.”

“He exhausted the possibilities of Nature.”

“Of all the Sages, he was the grand consummation.”

“His holy soul was sent down from Heaven.”

The tablets of seventy-two, out of his three thousand disciples, who became conspicuous for wisdom and virtue, are ranged on either hand, each in a separate shrine ; while in niches, around the walls, are to be seen the tablets of some of his eminent followers of later times, all participating in the cloud of incense offered to the great Master.

Attached to this building are several others, less conspicuous, one of which is devoted to the memory

of the father of Confucius, of whom nothing is known, except that he died too early to influence the character of his famous son. A shrine to the "Holy Mother" pays deserved honor to the woman who trained and taught China's teacher. His ancestors for five generations all have places of honor, and wear the posthumous title of prince, though in life they were poor and unknown.

The most curious of these collateral shrines is one to the "Holy Lady, the wife of the Sage." As she was divorced, it suggests the dilemma that, if put away for cause, she does not deserve a shrine; if without cause, the Sage was not worthy of his.

A well, where the Sage is said to have drawn water, and a hall, filled with portraits on stone of himself and his disciples, were the last objects of interest that I had time to inspect.

On my way to the city gate, I noticed a gilded inscription on a marble arch at the entrance of a street, informing the passer-by that—"This is Poverty Lane, where Yen Hui, the favorite disciple, formerly dwelt." He died young, but left behind him the invaluable example of love of study and contempt for luxury.

Beyond the gate, pursuing for half a mile the graceful curves of the "Spirit Road," I came to a column marking a limit, where riders are required

to dismount and proceed on foot to the entrance of the *Campo Santo*. The wall of the holy ground encloses a space of about ten acres, shaded by great trees and filled with tombs of the Sage's descendants, excepting an area of two or three acres on the side facing the city, which is occupied by a mound so large that it might be described as a hill. This is the Sage's tomb. The earth of which it is formed is a more enduring monument than brick or stone; and a few spadefuls are added every year, so that, with the flight of time, the hillock may yet become a mountain. A paved court and a granite column comprise all that art has done in the way of embellishment.

On one side, an old tree leaning on crutches informs you that it was planted by the hand of Tze-kung, one of the most eminent in the inner circle of the Sage's school; and near it, a tablet marks the site of a lodge in which this devoted disciple passed six years, watching by the grave of his master. The very grass that grows within this enclosure is sacred, and supposed to be endowed with powers of divination much beyond that which we attribute to witch hazel. It gives rise to a brisk trade, which I encouraged by buying a bundle of stalks

(forty-nine in number, *viz.*, 7×7); not that I cared to learn from them the secrets of futurity, but to prove that I had won the honors of a *hadji*.

Though he has a temple in every city, Confucius is not deified. The honors paid to him are purely commemorative, and he is never invoked in the character of a tutelar divinity. The homage rendered to him is not, therefore, a direct obstacle to the acceptance of the Chistian Faith.*

* For an account of the family of Confucius, and particularly of his Ducal representative, see *Hanlin Papers* (First Series), or the edition by Harpers under title of *The Chinese, &c.*



XVII.

THE LUSIAD AND THE OPENING OF THE EAST. *



THE near approach of the fourth centennial of the discovery of America carries our thoughts back to what we may call the heroic age of maritime adventure. In that line of enterprise, the Portuguese were the forerunners and the rivals of Spain. The fame of Diaz, who, five years before, had penetrated to the southernmost extremity of Africa, had doubtless much to do with the resolution of Columbus to steer for the West; and the success of the latter impelled the Portuguese in turn to attempt to eclipse his renown by five years later opening the way to the East.

The accomplishment of that undertaking is the subject of the *Lusiad*. We take up the poem of Camoens as a literary study,—deserving, as a work

* *Yale Review*, December, 1890.

of genius, a liberal share of that attention which is accorded to the world's great epics ; but, aside from its literary merit, it challenges our consideration for the light which it throws on the canvas of history. It illuminates the track of Vasco da Gama with a phosphorescence that is not momentary ; and it affords us glimpses of Africa, which ought to be of special interest at an hour when Stanley is revealing the mysteries of the Upper Congo, and when three European nations are contending for the possession of that Eastern Coast along which Vasco was the first to sail.

The poem connects itself with China, not merely by describing the voyage that opened the way to her seaboard, but by the curious fact that it was written in part during the author's temporary sojourn in the south of that empire, about 330 years ago. Nor is its bearing on Japan of less importance. Not only does the poet allude to the early efforts made by St. Xavier and others to evangelize those islands, it is not improbable that he visited them himself, as an active traffic was at that time carried on by his countrymen between Japan and their new colony in China. It is to be regretted that this old poem, which deals with the earliest authentic periplus of Africa, and with the opening of the three great empires of Asia, has not commanded

to a greater degree the attention of studious men.

Its date,—only the length of a human life from the first landing of the Portuguese on the coast of Malabar, and only half that distance from their arrival at Canton,—forms an important epoch well suited for catching the spirit of the age, and conveying to posterity the impressions produced on the mind of a poetic observer, by one of the most startling revolutions in human history. A Chinese statesman, whose work I recently read, describes it from his stand-point as a greater change for China to find herself face to face with the great nations of the West, than anything that has occurred in her history since the Builder of the Great Wall abolished the Feudal States.

The terms in which Camoens depicts the impressions made on him by the unbarring of the gates of the Orient are equally strong and much more poetical. The adventurous expedition of the Argonauts to the Euxine, in quest of the golden fleece, he represents as quite cast into the shade by the exploit of his countrymen in doubling the “Cape of Storms,” and crossing the Indian sea. Even the invasion of India by Alexander and the fabled conquest of India by Bacchus are, in his estimation, eclipsed by the triumphs of Lusitanian arms.

He says but little of China, and that little mostly wrong,—his admiring gaze resting chiefly on the ephemeral dominion founded by his people in the south of Asia. Could his vision have taken a wider sweep, looking with prophetic foresight down on the unfolding centuries, his patriotic pride might have suffered by the revelation; but would not a nobler sentiment have supplied its place, leading him to hail the rise of British power in India, and the renovation through Western influence of the two independent empires of Eastern Asia? That he felt the grandeur of his theme, limited as was his faculty of prevision,—does it not prove that he was indeed an inspired *vates*?

It is somewhat singular that, in the whole of his ten *cantos*, Camoens makes not the most distant allusion to Columbus, though there can be no doubt that the maritime enterprise of the Portuguese was greatly stimulated by the success of his daring voyage.

As a matter of fact, Columbus aimed at the same objective as the Portuguese navigators; and, in the view of Camoens, his voyage was a failure,—the long, wild shore that barred his way to Japan, China, and India, being a discovery of utter insignificance, in comparison with the opening of a water-way

to the richest, most populous, and (at that time) most civilized nations of the earth.

Nor does he allude to the mariner's compass. Indispensable as a guide to the westward sailing fleet of Queen Isabella, the needle had little to do with the success of the Portuguese. Their voyage, portentous as it was in length, was after all nothing more than a prolonged *cabotage*,* or coasting voyage. At every point where they entered a port, their first inquiry was for pilots to conduct them to the next.

Daring beyond all precedent as was that long expedition, in which they four times crossed the equator, and drew a girdle round the African continent which thenceforth hung like a pendant from the belt of their king, it lacks the sublimity that attaches to the triumphs of science. Courage and skill are qualities which they displayed in a conspicuous degree ; but the manner in which Columbus divined the existence of a new way to the East, if not that of a new world in the West, was little less marvellous (considering the time) than Leverrier's prognostication of a planet outside of the orbit of Uranus.

* It reminds us of the leading part which Portugal took in maritime commerce, to find in common use a French word derived from the Portuguese *Cabo*, a headland, and the English word *Capstan* from the Portuguese *Cabre stante*, a standing goat.

“ Long lay the ocean paths from man concealed,
Light came from heaven, the magnet was revealed.
Then first Columbus with the mighty hand
Of grasping genius weighed the sea and land,
When, sudden as creation burst from naught,
Sprang a new world through his stupendous thought.”

In Genoa, one sees a magnificent statue of Columbus, who is represented as pondering the figure of a globe, and solving the problem of ages. That, however, is a recent work,—a tardy homage to make amends for the want of early recognition. Not only did the men of his time fail to encourage his undertaking; when it was crowned with success, they failed to appreciate the grandeur of his achievement. No Italian or Spanish bard of that day celebrated it in any considerable poem that has come down to our times. It is an English poet of recent date, who extols it in the noble lines which I have cited; and it was reserved for an American, almost of our own times, to make it the subject of an epic poem. Alas! the Columbiad of Joel Barlow, grand as is its theme, is wanting in the sacred fire that burns in every stanza of the immortal Camoens. More inspiring than a hundred Columbiads will be the great celebration of 1892!

But it is time to come to a closer examination

of the poem before us. In the composition of the *Lusiad*, we discover three leading elements :—

- 1.—A historic narrative.
- 2.—Numerous patriotic episodes.
- 3.—Mythologic machinery.

The consideration of these will prepare us to appreciate, in conclusion, the characteristics of the poet, and the fortunes or rather misfortunes of the man.

I.

The action centres in Vasco da Gama and his adventurous voyage. The poet, who was a poet of some renown before he took up this weighty theme, selected the exploit of Vasco as the most signal event in the history of his people. He was right; for, as their long wars with the Moors culminated in carrying the war into Africa, so their pertinacious conflict with the seas reached its climax in the opening of the way to India and the East.

“The discovery of the East,” says a Portuguese critic with pardonable partiality, “supplied Camoens with a theme not less grand than that which the Crusades gave to Tasso;” and its consequences, he asserts, were even superior in importance. Certain it is that few poets have been so fortunate

in the choice of a subject for the Epic Muse. His hero, in character, is less distinct and striking than Achilles, or even than Godfrey of Boulogne; but he compares favorably with the pious Æneas. It must not be forgotten that not Achilles, but the siege of Troy; not the Count of Bouillon, but the conquest of the Holy Land; not the son of Anchises, but the founding of Rome, were the real subjects of those three great Epics.

So lofty is the subject of the *Lusiad*, and at the same time so comprehensive, that it may well dispense with the special attractions of a single hero. Vasco, clad in a weather-beaten tarpaulin enthroned on his quarter-deck, trumpet in hand, making the voice of command ring out above the roar of angry winds, is, at all events, a noble figure; though, unlike the *impiger iracundus* Achilles, a trifle monotonous.

Our poet is not writing history, though his subject is eminently historical; and it would not be fair to exact from him a strict conformity to facts, any more than to bring Tasso to book for his account of the exploits of Tancred and Rinaldo. A poet does not relish a simple ascent in a captive balloon. He must be free to rise as high, and roam as far, as the divine afflatus may carry him, before returning to *terra firma*. It ought, however, to be

set down to the credit of Camoens that he distinguishes pretty clearly between fact and fiction. The latter, as it appears in his *Cantos*, always bears some mark of its aerial origin; and the former is related so truthfully that, were other records wanting, a pretty fair account of Portuguese maritime adventure might be made out from this poem alone.

Its sins are more those of omission than of exaggeration. It passes almost in silence over the remarkable performance of Bartholomew Diaz, who doubled the Cape of Storms; and it touches but lightly on other enterprises of the reigns of John and Manuel. An abortive attempt to reach India, made under the former of these kings, is, however, duly recorded. Allow me to condense the narrative, and give it in my own prosaic version.

"Johannes, our thirteenth king, eager to clothe himself with fame eternal, attempted that which mortal man had never essayed;—that was to find the limit of the rosy East." "The same," said Gama, "is now the object of our quest."* "His messengers, passing through Spain, France, and Italy, took ship in the port of Parthenope (Naples),—a city subject to many masters, and now

* When he says this, he is still on the East Coast of Africa.

a gem in the Spanish crown. Sailing through the sea of Sicily, they touch on the shore of sandy Rhodes. Thence they gain the coast on which great Pompey fell. They proceed to Memphis and lands watered by the overflowing Nile; ascending beyond Egypt as far as Abyssinia, where the holy rites of Christ continue to be observed, they next cross the Erythrean waves, which Israel of old passed over without the aid of ships. Having completed the circuit of Arabia, they enter the Persian Gulf,* where the memory of Babel and its confusion still abides. There the Euphrates mingles with the Tigris, both famed for springing from the fountains of an earthly Paradise. Thence through the waves of an ocean which Trajan never dared to pass, they go in search of the pure waters of the Indus,—a search," said Gama, "whose history is not yet finished."

"They saw there strange peoples, strange manners, and many monsters; but, alas! from wanderings so wide, it was not easy to recall their feet. They died there, and there they rest; and not one of them returned to his beloved home." "It appears," continued Gama, "that heaven was reserving this arduous enterprise as a reward for the merit of our King Manuel.

* Thus far, they seem to have gone from the upper Nile by land.

Manuel, in succeeding to the throne of John, inherited his lofty thoughts. In accepting the sceptre of the land, he accepted also the task of conquering the sea."

Here begins the narrative of Gama's expedition, which he himself is represented as relating to the Moorish King of Melinda. We shall follow him in outline, at the risk of being a little prolix.

A vision of the old man of the Ganges invites the King of Portugal to a conquest, which already forms the subject of his waking and his sleeping thoughts. His counsellors approve the undertaking, showing that the heart of the nation is in it. He names Gama for his admiral, who replies:—"For thee, O King, I am ready to face sword, fire, and snow. It pains me that I have but one life to offer in the service of my Lord." The King assigns him four ships of war, and he places his brother Paolo in command of one of them. When ready to put to sea (July 8th, 1497), their last act is to march in solemn procession, preceded by a thousand monks, to a little church at the water's edge, and there receive the Viaticum, as if they were going to certain death. The parting scene is heart-rending,—wives, mothers, sisters, fathers, tenderly reproaching the hardy adventurers for seeking death in foreign climes; but not

one of them loses heart. Of each, it could be said —

Illi robur et aes triplex

Circa pectus erat.

Passing Madeira, they turn to the south, sighting the Canaries and the coast of Morocco. Cape Verde, Sierra Leone, and Mandingo land, are referred to as well known,—the latter as producing gold. The great rivers Senegal and Gambia are mentioned; the Niger is alluded to, but not named. A reference to the Congo is of special interest.

“Leaving,” he says, “the rough Mount of Lions and a headland, to which we gave the name of Cape of Palms, we plunged into a vast gulf (Gulf of Guinea). The greatest kingdom there is that of Congo, by us converted to the faith of Christ. Through this there flows, long and bright, a river called the Zaire, never seen by any of the ancients.”

He continues:—

“We now see opening before us a new celestial hemisphere, bestudded with new stars. Traversing that region over which Apollo passes twice in each year, we see the northern bears, in spite of Juno, bathe themselves in the waters of Neptune.”

“It were long to tell of wonders of the sea, which mortal men do not understand; for I have

seen things which rude mariners, guided only by experience, hold for certain, but which men of science boldly deny. I have seen that living light, which mariners take for the apparition of a Saint, in time of tempest.* Nor was it less a miracle to see the clouds, through a long tube, suck up the uplifted waters of the sea. But when the trombe gives back its floods, no taste of salt remains. Let the wise in learning see what secrets still remain hidden in the heart of nature ! ”

“ Five times the moon has renewed her horn when, from the main-top, a seaman sharp of sight cries *Land!* ”

Here, for the first time, they go on shore; and, by means of the astrolabe, “ a new instrument,† invention of a subtle brain,” they ascertain the height of the sun, and find the place to lie to the south of Capricorn. The natives of this region, he describes as “ bestial, brutish, and ill-disposed. From them, no knowledge could we gather of India, our goal.”

From this point, probably within the limits of the present British colony, sailing five days

* St. Elmo's fire, an appearance produced by the escape of electricity from projecting points of the rigging.

† The astrolabe was not “ new,” though its use in navigation probably was so.

through seas which, forgetful of Diaz, he speaks of as "never plowed by any other keel," they reach the Cape of Storms, henceforth called Cape of Good Hope. "Here, turning our prow to seek the burning median line, the antarctic pole remains behind us; and we pass the point of land (*ilho*), which a former fleet had sought and found, and made the limit of its discoveries,"—a disparaging allusion to one of the greatest achievements in the history of maritime exploration.

From this, their course lay over new ground; and, more anxious than before to obtain a pilot, after sailing a little distance on the Eastern coast, they go on shore "a second time," probably at Port Elizabeth or Algoa Bay. They meet a kindly welcome and receive supplies of food; but, adds Gama, "for want of a common tongue, none of my companions could gather any hint of the places we were seeking."

On Christmas they entered a spacious harbor, to which, from the day, they gave the name of Port Natal. Here they found fresh food and fresh water, but the Admiral repeats:—"Yet, withal, no sign of India we find, the people being dumb to us."

Slowly working northward against a powerful current as far as Sofala, they are cheered by the sight of sails, betokening a higher social state than

they had before met with on the coast of Africa. Hopes are kindled anew of gaining information, or of finding a pilot; and they are not wholly disappointed. The natives know a few words of Arabic—enough to tell us of a rich realm to the north—"whence come ships as large as ours, and whose people have skins like ours, the *color of day-light*."

The place indicated was Mozambique, a Moslem State, whose capital was built on an island near the coast. Here Vasco and his people came near falling victims to the treachery of the Arabs. Not ignorant of the hostility of the Portuguese to the faith of Islam, these Arabs, receiving them with a show of friendship, endeavor to draw them into an ambuscade. The fire-arms and prowess of the Europeans are, however, too much for them; and the whole population of the little island betake themselves to the mainland, leaving their houses and property a booty to the victor.

Foiled in one stratagem, the petty king resorts to another. With humble submission, he begs for peace, and offers a pilot, who knows the way to India,—a gift as dangerous as that of the Trojan horse. Vasco, whose wisdom is less conspicuous than his valor, accepts the pilot, and entrusts the fleet to his guidance, little suspecting that he

has instructions to cause them to perish in the sea, or to deliver them into the hands of some powerful enemy.

In answer to Gama's questions, the pilot imparts much correct information regarding India and its people, as also touching the east coast of Africa, along which they were then creeping. Learning that, at no great distance to the north, there is an island called Quiloa, inhabited by Christians, Vasco, as the traitor foresaw, gives orders to head for that place.

Through good luck or divine favor they are carried past by strong winds, and the pilot informs them of another island still further to the north, where Moslems and Christians dwell together in unity. Gama makes for the place and finds it to be Mombaça, a place which has recently acquired fresh prominence in connection with the East African colonization schemes of the English and Germans.

Learning caution from experience, he dispatches a couple of messengers to reconnoitre and report, before venturing into the harbor. These messengers, who curiously enough belong to a body of condemned criminals brought along to be employed on dangerous errands as *enfants perdus*, making a favorable report, Gama prepares to cross the bar.

As providence would have it, he fails to strike the channel, and so, says the poet, "escapes a second snare more dangerous than the first;" for, once within the bar, the fleet would have been at the mercy of the Moors, who were plotting its destruction. Discovering the meditated treachery, Gama proceeds further to the north, until, falling in with coasting vessels, he is conducted to Melinda, another island nearly under the equator. Here he is entertained so royally by the king, and served so loyally by the people, though king and people are alike Moslems, that one suspects the bloody collision at Mozambique of having been brought about by Portuguese aggression; and the treacheries, attempted there and at Mombaça, of being poetic fictions, introduced to vary the monotony of perils by sea.

The former pilot having thrown himself into the sea and escaped to land, Vasco here obtains another, who conducts him faithfully through storm and calm to the port of Calicut (not Calcutta) on the coast of Malabar. This was his final goal, the crown of his great achievement.

Europe and India were henceforth inseparably linked; and each was astonished to find itself in communication with the other, though their slow-sailing craft required a year or more to

complete the voyage. What would they have thought, had some prophet foretold that in days to come the East and West would be linked together by a submarine cable, over which electric messages would course to and fro, in less than the twinkling of an eye ! Perhaps their surprise would not have been greater than it really was, for our capacity for astonishment has, like other faculties, its limits ; it can take in but one object at a time, and men who believed that the earth is flat could not have been more surprised, had they been told of other worlds suspended in the sky, than they actually were at seeing men who had sailed round the earth and proved it to be a globe.

The glory of being the first circumnavigators fairly belongs to the Portuguese ; for not only was Magellan a Portuguese in Spanish service, as Camoens takes pains to inform us, but the honor of having led the way should be awarded to Gama himself. When all the zones except the frigid had been twice crossed, and a pathway found across the Indian ocean, but few links remained to complete the chain.

In Calicut, Gama finds on the throne a Zamorin, some of whose ministers are Mohammedans. The old feud is not slow to break out. New perils and new treacheries beset the Europeans.

Gama is allured on shore and detained as a hostage for the surrender of his fleet; but, by dint of skill and courage, he secures his liberty, and, seizing some of the natives by way of reprisal, and to serve as living proof of his successful voyage, he weighs anchor for his distant home. On his arrival, he is honored not merely as the discoverer of a new route for commerce, but as the founder of a new empire; for, with the unscrupulous morals of those times, discovery was always regarded as the forerunner of conquest.

This terminates the direct narration. The progress of conquest in India, and the extension of maritime adventure to China and Japan, are related in episodes. To Japan the poet gives but a single stanza, in which he speaks of the triumphs of the Faith, St. Francis Xavier having already completed his wonderful mission. To China, though the name occurs more than once, he devotes no more than two stanzas.

“ Here, see China, whose proud empire,
Famed for its ample lands and wealth untold,
Extends its domain from the burning tropic
To the frigid zone.”

“ Behold its Wall, a structure huge past all belief;
Between two realms it forms the bound,—
A monument of princely power, pride, and wealth’

This is true of the extent of the empire in the days of Kublai ; but it speaks little for the knowledge of a poet, who is believed to have written these lines in China itself, that he should not have known that Tartary was at that time independent and at war with the dynasty of Ming. What shall we say of the next quatrain, in which he gives the leading feature of the state policy of China ?

“ The king who rules this people is not born a prince ;
Nor does the throne descend from sire to son ;
But they always choose for sovereign
A man who is famed for wisdom and for virtue.”

Is this an echo from the days of Yao and Shun, who set aside their own sons and chose successors from among the people ? Or, is it an allusion to the founder of the dynasty of Ming, who certainly was not “ born a prince ?” Or, is it an obscure statement of the fact that, in theory, the Emperor of China possesses at all times the power of naming his successor, irrespective of the order of consanguinity ? It reads, however, as if the poet were describing China as an elective monarchy, such as was the empire of Germany, or the kingdom of Poland ; and it must have been so understood by his earlier readers. But, is it conceivable that he could have spent a week—not to say a year—

in China without learning that, as a matter of fact, the throne is strictly hereditary, though not limited to the line of primogeniture?

II.

We come now to what, for want of a better designation, I have chosen to call the poet's patriotic episodes. Camoens is not a servile imitator, and his use of a model is always redeemed by striking evidence of originality. It is, nevertheless, amusing to remark how he not only conforms the action of his poem to that of the *Æneid*, but follows Virgil in his deviations from the main line of his story. His longer episodes betray a studied correspondence with those of the earlier Epic.

As *Æneas*, at the request of Dido, relates the story of the fall of Troy, so Gama describes the wars of Portugal, at the desire of the king of Melinda. The one begins *Regina jubes*; the other, *Mandas me O Rei*. One tells a tragic tale of ruin; the other, a history of triumph and expansion. The story is too long for one sitting, though the whole of a balmy night, on the waters of an equatorial sea, is given to it. It is accordingly resumed before another audience, on the waters of another sea,—on this occasion the Minister of Malabar being auditor, and Paolo, not Vasco, narrator.

When Virgil wishes to reveal the future glory of his country, he transports his hero to the Elysian fields, and makes him hear it in prophecy from the lips of his father Anchises; in this, following the lead of Homer, who makes Ulysses penetrate the world of shades, in order to learn from Laertes the secrets of the future. Camoens is not more of a plagiarist than the Bard of Mantua, when he carries his hero to an enchanted isle, where a sea nymph and a goddess, one after the other, sing the coming conquest of the East. Here again he puts the prophetic narrative into the mouth of two, instead of one as in the ancient Epics,—the idea being not merely that of relief from monotony, but that of expansion befitting an empire whose marvellous growth had stretched beyond the flight of the Roman eagle.

Besides these, there are minor episodes too numerous to mention. At the slightest suggestion, the thought of the poet wanderer takes wing, and revisits his native hills. The fervor of his affection for that *terra amada*, breathing as it does through every *Canto*, imparts a peculiar charm to the whole poem.

The "patriot passion," like other passions, is liable to dazzle the eye and warp the judgment; but, if untinged with hatred of other countries,

it is always amiable, and often the prolific mother of glorious achievements. He who is destitute of such a sentiment deserves the malediction of another patriotic poet :—

“Living, to forfeit fair renown,
And doubly dying to go down
To the vile dust from which he sprung.”

The want of it, in the case of one of England's most gifted sons, imparts a repulsive element to the finest productions of his genius.

To the countrymen of Camoens, the chief attraction of the *Lusiad*,—I can affirm without hesitation,—is found in these patriotic episodes. They find in them not the details, but the spirit of their history,—the characters of their great men, the triumphs of their people, glorified by the touch of a pencil of unfading light. It is said that, while engaged in the siege of Colombo, the weary soldiers were wont to revive their courage by singing those stanzas in which Camoens extols the exploits of the first Lusitanian conquerors. Of the martial poet, may it not be said, as truly as of the Scottish chieftain, that—

“One blast upon his bugle horn
Was worth a thousand men.”

Bugle tones prevail through these portions of our poet's work, but they are interspersed with passages plaintive and tender,—tales of love and sorrow. What, for example, in the whole range of literature, can exceed the pathos of the story of Inez de Castro, whom the king, returning from a campaign, caused to be taken from her tomb and seated on the throne to receive the homage of his subjects, in order to fulfill a vow that he would make her his queen? This incident, borrowed from Camoens, forms the subject of one of Mrs. Hemans' most touching poems.

In the opening of these historical digressions, the poet invokes the aid of Calliope; and of all of them it may be affirmed that the elevation and force of his style are not unworthy of the Muse of Epic Poetry.

III.

The third component of this great poem is its supernatural machinery.

Here it is impossible to accord any portion of that praise, which we have freely bestowed on the poet's narrative of facts. He is not to be blamed for adhering to the traditionary belief that the employment of supernatural agents is essential to the creation of an Epic. Had not Virgil woven the old mythology, like a silver thread, into the texture

of his *Æneid*,—disguising and embellishing that which would otherwise have been coarse and repulsive? And if Virgil, why not Camoens? The answer is obvious. That which was silver to the Roman had become dross in the days of the Portuguese poet. The old mythology was dead; and to mingle its faded shreds with the fresher elements of Christian poesy was a blemish,—not a beauty.

The servility (for there is no weaker word to express it), with which Camoens has done this, is truly pitiable; and the effect is decidedly comical. Venus is chosen as the patroness of Vasco, apparently because she had been the tutelary divinity of *Æneas*. Bacchus, instead of Juno, plays the *rôle* of persecuting power,—his reason for doing so being simply [the fear that the Portuguese might eclipse the fame of his own expedition to India.

Jove, as of old, summons the parliament of Olympus, and despatches Mercury to announce his decrees. Neptune, Tethys, Amphitrite, and the Nereids, continue to rule the waves, and favor or obstruct the voyage, as they are gained over by one party or the other.

All this nonsense is set forth in language of exquisite beauty. One could enjoy it thoroughly,

if he could only forget its glaring anachronism. The theology of Christianity refuses to blend with the mythology of paganism; and their forced union produces a turbid compound, like the mixture of oil and water.

To enhance this incongruity—at the epoch of this composition—Christian theology was dominant in the policy of nations far more than it now is. The struggle with Islam had been a question of life and death for all Europe, but especially for the states of the Iberian peninsula, which did not succeed in ridding themselves of the incubus until after a conflict of nearly eight centuries. To them, every contact with people of another faith took the form of a crusade. The world was to be conquered for Christ, in a carnal as well as a spiritual sense.

This is set forth as the leading aim of Vasco's voyage. In the exordium, "The glorious memory of kings who spread the faith"—stands conspicuous as a leading theme; and, in some form or other, it is repeated on almost every page. With this end in view, the adventurers take the holy communion before embarking. Yet, it is a pagan deity to whom they look for protection, in the perils of the sea. At Mombaça, Gama prays for succor:—

“O guardian divine, take thought of those
Who, failing thee, have none to guard them;
Vouchsafe to show the land we seek,
Since solely for thy service do we sail abroad.”

Now, to whom is this prayer addressed, and in whose service do they brave the dangers of the deep? The poet answers—

“The lovely Dione heard these touching words,
And, moved thereby, she brought the needed aid.”

Such passages are innumerable, and the unseemly jumble of religions never fails to produce an impression akin to burlesque.

Dante makes abundant use of heathen gods, but he puts them in his *Inferno*. Milton uses them, but he employs them as Satan's retinue. Tasso, who wrote a century later than Camoens, makes no use of pagan mythology except in the way of allusion. With him, the Blessed Virgin and the holy saints take the place of gods and goddesses,—a usage which, even in our age, could not offend the taste of Protestant or Catholic. How much his poem would have gained in the beauty of consistency, had Camoens committed the voyage of discovery to the patronage of the mother of Christ, with the aid of the holy angels,—the abortive opposition being led by Satan and spirits of evil!

IV.

Judged by the *Lusiad* as his *opus magnum*, the question rises—How does Camoens rank as a poet? It is a weakness of all poets, and of some who are not poets, to think highly of their own genius. From this, the author of the *Lusiad* was not exempt. If, at a feast of poets, he had been called on to choose his place, I am not sure that he would not have had the assurance, like Piron, to march out at the head of the company. Witness one of his closing stanzas, in which he says to the king—

“In such high strains my Muse shall sing of thee,
That all the world shall Alexander see,
Nor of Achilles need he envious be”—

alluding to the saying of the Macedonian, that, of all the heroes of antiquity, the one he most envied was Achilles, because he had a Homer to celebrate his victories. Camoens was no Homer, nor even a Virgil. Without the creative genius of the one, or the sustained dignity and faultless grace of the other, he yet possesses high qualities which assure him no mean place among the masters of Epic song. Of course, he does not approach anywhere near to our Milton, of whom it was happily said—

“The force of nature could no further go,
To form a third she joined the other two.”

He does not even rise above the author of *Jerusalem Delivered*; because, as the Portuguese assert, it was his misfortune to precede Tasso, and to be the first of the moderns to produce a genuine Epic poem.

The poet of the Crusades acknowledges Camoens as a kindred spirit; and, in terms that recall the speech of Alexander, he praises the fortune of Gama in having for his poet *il buono Luigi*.

“And now the Muse of Luis de Camoens
Extends her glorious flight
Far beyond that of your white-winged ships.”

There are poets whose fancy forms their speech and clothes their thoughts in a robe of many colors. Their separate words are aglitter with bright images,—gleaming like the facets of a diamond, or like a falling shower lit up by sunbeams. The diction of Camoens is not of this description. Its beauties are, however, of a noble order, not unlike the massive grandeur of a Doric structure, which spurns the ornament of sculptured flowers. In force and fervor, it reminds us of a swollen river, rather than a babbling brook,—a torrent of majestic eloquence, by which the mind of the reader is irresistibly borne away.

In his opening invocation to the Muses of the Tagus, alluding to the humble minstrelsy of his early days, he prays :—

“ Give me now a voice sublime and lofty,
A style both grand and flowing ;
A sort of sonorous fury ;
Not like the rustic reed, or sylvan flute,
But trumpet-toned to sing the scenes of war.”

Such was his ideal ; and who shall say that his performance falls below it ?

It is, in fact, the sustained elevation of his style that most strikes the attention of a reader. No poet, ancient or modern, surpasses him in skill to “ build the lofty rhyme.”

His marvellous facility sometimes betrays him into negligence. Faulty stanzas are not rare ; because, to Camoens, as to all such fertile minds, the *labor limae* was irksome. A kindred fault, into which he often falls, is excessive diffuseness. One grows weary of broad fields spread over with a thin covering of cloth of gold. Happily his gold is not all in the form of superficial gilding. Many of his couplets and single lines (mostly at the end of a stanza) possess the weight and compactness of solid nuggets ; or rather, of minted coins, which, to this day, provide a currency of proverbs for those who use his tongue.

The eight-lined stanza—the *Ottava Rima* of the Italians—he wisely chose in preference to any other measure, as equally adapted to the genius of his language and the nature of his subject. He was not, however, the first to import it into Portugal. To an earlier poet, Sa-e-Miranda, belongs that distinction; but Camoens has the honor of connecting it inseparably with the glory of his country.

The language, to the use of which he was born, was to our poet a precious inheritance,—a circumstance which ought not to be overlooked in the enumeration of his natural advantages. Harsh in comparison with the dulcet tones of Italy, or even with the more polished *lingua castellana*, the Portuguese is characterized by a certain wild energy superior to either; while it possesses in a high degree that sonorousness which Cicero describes by *ore-rotundo*, and Dante by the expressive term *rimbombo*. Take, for example, the following passage:—

“ *A disciplina militar prestante,
Nao se aprende, Senhor, na phantasia,
Sonhando, imaginando, ou estudando ;
Senao vendo, tratando, e pelejando.*”

Does not the alliterative roll of the last two lines rival that of the best of our Latin hymns?

In fact Camoens claims, with no little pride, that his national speech is "Latin in the least corrupt of its modern forms." Portuguese is not, however, a direct offshoot of Latin; but rather a dialect of the Spanish,—standing related to the Castilian of the upper Tagus, much as low Dutch does to the German of the upper Rhine. The nations that settled on the sea-coast, near the embouchure of both rivers, distinguished themselves above their neighbors by the boldness of their maritime enterprise. Their dominions, at first confined to a strip of coast, expanded to the dimensions of empires; and their dialects, originally a kind of patois, rose to the dignity of cultivated languages. Both nations imbibed the spirit of freedom from the waves of the wide-rolling deep; and, in the rough, strong tones of both tongues, one hears the echo of the sea resounding on their storm-beaten shores.

V.

We come, in the last place, to take a parting glance at the fortunes of the man who, as poet, soldier, and adventurer, embodied in his own person the spirit of his people.

Born in 1525, the young hidalgo was early introduced at court, where, scarcely arrived at man's estate, he conceived a romantic passion for one

of the maids of honor, the beautiful Donna Catharina. All great poets have had such passions. Petrarch had his Laura, Dante his Beatrice, Tasso his Leonora; and it was in Catharina that Camoens found the woes and the bliss of his existence. It was to her that he addressed many of those minor effusions which, for tenderness and elegance, are not unworthy to compare with those of Laura's lover.

Happy in having his affection reciprocated, he was less happy in being sent into exile on that account. Nor was that his only experience of the hardships of banishment. Exiled again in later life to the Colony of Macao, his eventful story connects itself with China as well as India.

After fighting the Moors in Morocco and losing an eye in battle, he enlisted for India, whether from chagrin or ambition it is not easy to conjecture. This much is certain, that, during an absence of sixteen years, through perils by sea and conflicts on land, he remained faithful to his early flame, and was inconsolable on hearing of her death. The passion of Dante for his beautiful mistress was not more pure or noble; nor, to complete the parallel, were the wanderings and sufferings of the Florentine more pitiable or more painful than those of Camoens.

Returning from India with his completed Epic, on which he had been building rhymes, while others had been amassing wealth, he failed to win at court the favor he so confidently expected. In extreme penury, he retired to a convent, where his last sigh was breathed into the ear of a sympathizing monk, and where he owed the distinction of a grave-stone to the charity of a stranger.

Rest thee, noble Bard; and let it comfort thee, in thy elysium of fame, that a grateful posterity has sought to make amends for the ingratitude of thy fellows!

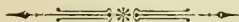
The poem, which, when ship-wrecked on the coast of Cochin-China, buffeting the waves, he bore to land as his only treasure, has survived the storms of three centuries, and serves to form the speech and cultivate the heart of successive generations on both sides of the Atlantic. The sceptre of India has long since slipped from the hands of Portugal; but in Brazil, of which he scarcely deigns to speak, there is now rising a greater empire, and the *Lusiad* of Camoens will continue to be the favorite Classic of its growing millions.*

* *Pelos Portuguezes preferido a todos*, says a countryman of the Poet. There are two or three translations of the *Lusiad* into English, but the writer has not seen them; and, of Portuguese editions, he is not acquainted with any but that of Lopes de Moura.

APPENDIX *

THREE

FAMOUS INSCRIPTIONS.



I.

THE MYSTERIOUS WATER VESSEL.

THE text of the inscription describes the vessel, and relates a visit of Confucius to the temple in which it was preserved. It is also embellished by a pictorial representation of the Sage and his disciples. For the photographic reproduction of it, I am indebted to my friend Dr. McCartee, formerly Professor in the University of Tokio, Japan. He obtained it from a native photographer, and has not been able to trace the inscription to its original place in Japan.

That it came from one of the palaces, there can be no doubt, from the nature and design of this document.

Of the wonderful vessel, ascribed to Duke Chow, of China, I had previously heard, and made unsuccessful efforts to obtain a picture or diagram of it. The Japanese picture is a fancy drawing, attached to a text borrowed from China, and is of no value,—not fulfilling the hydrostatic conditions stated in the text. The text is found in the *Family Traditions* of Confucius, a work which,

* Referred to as Chapter XVIII.

though semi-apocryphal, contains some grains of traditional history. In this case, the germ of the narrative, which is much expanded, is the existence of such a vessel, and the fact of its having been seen by Confucius.

The *Family Traditions* dates from the Han, but the vessel is made the subject of a discourse by Suen Ching, who lived two centuries earlier. A Chinese archeologist of some note asserts that the mysterious vessel was preserved in the Capital at Loyang, until the end of the Han period, when it was lost or destroyed in the overthrow of the dynasty.

The inscription is as follows :—

“In the temple of Duke Huan of Lu, Confucius saw a vessel hanging obliquely. What is this vessel, he inquired of the temple-keeper. It is, replied the latter, what is called the Guardian of the Throne. I have heard, said Confucius, of the Throne-guarding vessel. When empty, it hangs obliquely; when half full, it comes to an erect position; and when filled to the brim, it suddenly turns over and spills its contents. Wise Princes looked on it as the best of monitors, and always had it placed by the side of the Throne.

Turning to his disciples, he said :—Pour in water and try it. They did so. When half full, it became erect;

and when full, it turned over. The Master heaved a sigh and said:—Alas! Is there anything which, when full, is not overturned? Is there not, asked Tsze Lu, a way to preserve that which is full from being overturned?

The Master replied:—For eminent talent, the safe-guard is in affected ignorance. For exalted merit, the safe-guard is in modest self-abnegation. For great courage, the safe-guard is an aspect of timidity. And for wealth, such as he possesses who owns all within the Four Seas, the safe-guard is humility. Thus, things are preserved by loss,—*i.e.*, by affecting the opposite."

I conclude this notice with two remarks.

1.—In Chinese, fullness (自滿) is a synonym for pride; and, as "pride comes before a fall," the vessel, which, when full, turned over and spilled its contents, was an impressive warning against pride and ruin. As such, it was named the Guardian of the Throne, and kept in the Throne Room at Loyang, as we are expressly told. The pictorial scene, presented in this inscription, was no doubt an ornament in the Throne Room of the Emperors of Japan.

2.—The reverence with which the vessel was regarded, and the air of mystery that surrounded it, shows that the ancient Chinese were more addicted

to moralizing than to physical investigation. With our knowledge of the centre of gravity and the principles of hydrostatics, it is easy to construct a vessel which will fulfill all the conditions of the problem ; still it is disappointing that the Japanese artist has given us a common cylindrical bucket, instead of the true figure of the vessel seen by Confucius in the temple of Lu.

INSCRIPTION.

以力守敢夫則顧明宥曰。夫子觀於魯桓公之廟。有欹器焉。謙。振之以愚。功。被天下。守之以讓。勇。此世守之。以怯。富有四海。守之道也。所謂損之又損之。道也。物惡有滿而不覆哉。子路進曰。呼。則正。滿則覆。夫子喟然歎曰。鳴呼。顧謂弟子曰。試注水焉。乃注之。中側。明君以爲至誠。故當置之於坐側。宥坐之器。虛則欹。中則正。滿則覆。曰。此蓋爲宥坐之器。孔子曰。吾聞對夫子問於守廟者曰。此謂何器焉。孔子觀於魯桓公之廟。有欹器焉。夫子問於守廟者曰。此謂何器焉。

II.

A HYMN TO THE CHUZENGI WATERFALL.

NOTE.—I first became acquainted with this beautiful poem, by reading it on the monolith overlooking the cataract. On mentioning it to the Rev. Dr. Knox of Tokio, he kindly procured for me a rubbing, from which this translation is made. The author is a man of genius, well known in Japan. The poem is in excellent Chinese.

Of all under heaven, the sunlight mountains take the lead
in scenery ;

And of all their scenery, the crown is the Kegonotaki
Waterfall.

How great is the true God, who created these cliffs and
chasms,

And, between the two, made a place for this great lake !

The lake has a gap in one corner, like the fabled gap in
the corner of the sky ;

Through this, the water rushes with violence, takes wings,
and flies,

And the cataract hangs suspended.

At the first plunge it leaps a thousand yards, and then leaps
ten thousand more.

Its angry roaring shakes the earth, and thunders echo from
the sky.

Is it water or not water, snow or not snow,

Which in wild confusion scatters these pearly gems ?

Struck by a gust from the foot of the fall,
 They dissolve into smoke in the slanting sunbeams that
 peep over the mountain tops.
 The beholder's eye is dazzled with rainbow hues, and his
 ear deafened by the thundering roar;
 It chills the stoutest heart.
 Its strength is like that of Mêng-k'o, whose spirit blended
 heaven and earth;
 Its rapidity is like that of Hiang-yü,
 Who in the battle of Chü-lu slew men and horses ten
 thousand thousand.
 Of a truth, the universe has no finer spectacle.
 Alas! that the poet who descended from another sphere
 is no more; and that there is none to inherit his
 genius.*
 How can I, with unblushing face, dare to indite these
 verses?
 I have heard that, of the Books of Buddha, the Kegono
 is the most esteemed;†
 Its name is not unfittingly bestowed on this wondrous
 Waterfall.

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

This Kegonotaki Waterfall has long been famed;
 but recently the Brotherhood of Heart-Sincerity have
 proposed to set up a monument on its brink.
 I accordingly offer them this Inscription.

(Signed) Chogen.

11th Year of Meiji (1878).

* Li Tai-po, described as 謫仙.

† 華嚴經.

INSCRIPTION.

華嚴瀑布歌。

晃山勝槩甲天下。華嚴瀑布冠晃山。偉哉真宰造巖壑。更作大
 湖滙其間。湖缺一隅如天缺。水勢奔飛大瀑懸。一落千丈又萬
 丈。怒號撼地雷霆鬩。是水非水雪非雪。亂爲珠玉散爲煙。山日
 倒射溪風激。使人耳聾目眩心膽寒。壯則如孟軻直養之氣貫
 天地。今古快則如項羽鉅鹿之戰殲人馬萬千。不數廬岳天台
 勝。斷爲宇宙真大觀。嗚呼謫仙逝矣仙才絕。欲敢題詩原厚顏。
 我聞佛有諸宗華嚴居第一。乃以名瀑非偶然。

華嚴之瀑聞於世舊矣。頃者誠意社諸子謀立一碑於其
 側。因書此贈焉。

明治十一年戊寅七月

湖山小野長愿撰

III.

INSCRIPTION ON THE PORCELAIN PAGODA OF NANKING.¹

(From the Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society).

This great pagoda, built on the finest site of a famous mountain, being happily preserved, and displaying a sincere reverence for the teachings of Buddha, which open our intelligence, proclamation is made as follows:—

At the south gate of Kingling (Nanking), where² precious things are collected, when the wind moves, the bells send forth wonderful tones,³ ever rejoicing in the rebuilding of Asoka's tower, the renovation of Buddha's idea, and the manifestation of imperial reverence.

Do you with the whole heart repeat the praises of Amida Buddha, with reverence and understanding, asking yourself—"What in reality was I in the beginning?" This phrase, do you think you understand?

It is to know whence came the inward consciousness of one's own heart, and what it is

1.—This Pagoda, erected about 1,420, and rightly deemed a Wonder of the World, was destroyed by the Taiping rebels about 1860.

2.—The name of a place taken in its first meaning.

3.—Or, in the reign of Yung-loh, the characters being taken in a double sense.

to say—"I know what I know, and whether my goodness is thorough."

Truly this is my heart's most marvellous point.⁴ Its nature, what and whence? Its original aspect, have you realized? This, to compare with other books, is called—"having the pure spirit unobscured."⁵ What this says it originally was, do you fully apprehend? To be obscured or unobscured, is not that the shadow of self-knowledge?

You must not resist, and in your haste foolishly let go, your heart's original. Is not this (original) really the Buddha of the West? His rainbow glories and the relics of his body have been transmitted to this eastern land, so that men may seek happiness, and know the fountain of understanding.

The relics and their rainbow light, all men can plainly see. Earlier and later dynasties may differ; but the tower and its stores firmly abide, the same through all ages. The Emperor's merit is infinite in building this most noted Pagoda, to repay the grace of Buddha.

4.—The symbol of the dual powers, or mundane egg, is here introduced into the text as the original of human nature.

5.—A phrase from Chu Fu-tse's Commentary on the *Ta Hio* (大學).

The relic's precious light is true beyond a doubt. The first right principle is the boundless presence of Buddha's person. To know this is truly to be "unobscured." It is what we men originally possess, and no one is without it.

Therefore, it is said the wise differ from the common herd, in being free from error; yet, in our original perceptions, what difference is there between the good and evil?

You must have no obstacle to your knowledge before you can understand the grace of Buddha, and his boundless renovating purpose.

Therefore, this is called—"The Tower of the Temple of Gratitude,"—"The Tower of Buddha's Hidden Relics."

The Tower is sublime in height; through its good luck, its relics, even till now, have not lost their light.

Of old, Asoka's faith erected 84,000 pagodas; but the Princes of Han and Tsin sometimes built and sometimes destroyed.

A HYMN OF PRAISE.

- 1.—The spiritual mountain of our ancient Buddha is
neither far nor near,
When heart is not divided from heart.
All ye who are grounded in faith,
Awake and ascend the spiritual mountain, and gain
merit in this Pagoda.

2.—His body formed a crystal tower, containing seven precious things.

He was torn from his mother's side and sat in a lotus-flower, filling the world with fragrance.

Genii, Buddhas, and Bodisatwas had previously awaked. The reflection of their early light took shape in his person.

3.—Of old, some are spell-bound, and some awake ;

The spell-bound are hard to renew and convert.

Good and evil originate in the human heart ;

But high and low are always the work of fate.

4.—If you penetrate the original of man, right and wrong are empty names ;

If you awake to a sense of gratitude, your heart is good, And you get the full-orbed light of a better life.

5.—The Buddhas of all lands are ready to save the world, But men's hearts do not receive the light.

If only a touch of spiritual consciousness awakes, It is like the ringing of a morning bell.

6.—May harmonious winds and gentle waves propel your boat !

On the hill-tops of either shore, you hear the voice of birds.

The matin-bells of the ancient cloister anticipate the morning sun,

Which causes this crystal Pagoda to gleam with auspicious light.

分明凡人信得自身基悟登靈山塔下修云又身成七
 寶琉璃塔透坐蓮池滿界香仙佛菩薩先悟醒極早
 回光已出身云又古往今來有迷悟迷人難化轉回心
 善惡兩字人心作貴賤從來命裡成云又若能參透本
 來人是不是非只是空悟得報恩心地好光明圓滿
 舍那身云又十方諸佛度凡人無奈凡人心未明指覺
 本來圓一點有朝敲悟法鐘聲云又風和浪靜把船行
 兩岸山頭聽鳥音古寺晨鐘催曉日琉璃塔瑞放光
 明

遺傳東土使人求福知悟根源舍利毫光五色人人
見明先朝後代性相不同塔藏萬固聖德無窮爲佛
報恩第一塔也是舍利寶光真不思議第一義諦卽
無量法身之身真不昧也卽吾等人人本有箇箇不
無故曰有凡有聖迷悟不同然其本體之明何分善
惡悟之不隔絲毫之相方知佛恩感化無窮之意故
曰報恩寺塔佛藏舍利塔高衛衛其量福也至今舍
利不昧古有育王信造八萬四千之塔而漢晉兩朝
興廢有時也頌曰云又古佛靈山無遠近心心不隔兩

名山勝地大塔祥存敬誠佛教開悟心智示曰
金陵聚寶定南門風動鐘聲出妙音永樂重建阿育
塔重整佛意帝皇敬一心存念南無阿彌陀佛恭
悟心乎確我本來誰也此句君謂悟麼是認自己自
心之心覺者誰自所知曰知者何我仁是透麼信此
一點自心之妙●其性本何誰自本來面目公醒悟
麼此叅叅看書云虛靈不昧此言其原何物有悉認
得麼知自知麼有味無昧自知影乎公莫違忙忙愚
失自心之本也信爲西聖佛耶毫光五彩佛身舍利

NOTE.—There is no certain indication of the authorship of the first of these compositions; but it must have been either written or authorized by the Emperor Yung-loh, who erected the famous Tower on which it was inscribed, as an expression of gratitude to his Grand-mother.

The second is without doubt the composition of that Emperor. Both contain grateful allusions to his parents, and are not unlike in style.

The text is probably not free from errors.

