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WILLIAM THE SILENT.*

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The sixteenth century was one of the most important epochs in the history of mankind. It was the age of Queen Elizabeth and Lord Bacon and William Shakespeare. It was the age of Martin Luther and John Calvin and John Knox. It broke the shackles of ignorance and superstition and tyranny which for centuries had bound down the human race. It introduced a new era in religious freedom and intellectual freedom and political freedom. The most powerful monarch in the world in the sixteenth century was Charles the Fifth. He had a vast empire. It included Germany, Austria and Lombardy, that is, the northern part of Italy. It included in the south also the kingdom of Naples, the kingdom of Sicily and the kingdom of Sardinia. It included the whole of Spain, at that time the richest and strongest country on the globe. It included Burgundy, that is, the eastern part of France. And it included the Netherlands, or what we now know as Belgium and Holland. It comprised, therefore, a very large part of the continent of Europe. Then, too, in the new world, it included the West Indies and Florida and Mexico, and also Peru in South America. The sun never set on his dominions. He was the autocrat of half the world.

* A Reformation Day Address to Young People, based chiefly on "The Rise of the Dutch Republic," by J. L. Motley.

CHINESE STUDENTS AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

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In the *Notes* written during his return journey through the Far East after his African explorations, Henry Drummond made the following brief comment on China: "China is an instance of arrested development. On the fair way to become a vertebrate, it has stopped short at the crustacean. The capacity for change is almost non-existent, and there is a powerful religion already in possession." Had the journey been made a few years later he would have recorded a very different impression. The series of rapid and radical changes with which this ancient nation has been astounding its western neighbors is primarily due, of course, to the increasingly intimate relations with these neighbors which they and destiny have forced upon her. But any attempt to trace the medium through which China has received these transforming ideas and influences would perhaps locate this chiefly in the new student class—itself a product of the times. As a matter of fact, the changes in China as a whole thus far have been more apparent than real. There is no material alteration in commercial life. Chinese have always been expert traders and, except for new articles of merchandise and methods of manufacture, they have little to learn from abroad. The government, too—despite the dramatic revolution which erased an ancient empire from the map and created a lusty young republic—is being administered very much as for centuries past. There has always been a strong infusion of democratic ideals in Chinese political life, notably in local affairs. On the other hand, the present policy, both national and provincial, is and must necessarily continue for awhile to be somewhat autocratic. The great majority of the people are—as has been wittily observed—neither monarchists nor republicans, but

simply Chinese. As such they care less about academic liberties and privileges than actual peace and prosperity. The landed gentry and the peasant masses, the old scholars, the artisans and coolies, all dress and work and think about as their ancestors did. But the students are a different proposition. Indeed the very word is significant of the new order. In the past, China had a scholar class, whose admirable virtues and amusing prejudices, whose naive ignorance and stilted dignity, have become a familiar portraiture. Now it is of the student class that men speak, and of these not as being such for life but as young men destined to occupy places of influence in China's future. The rise of this new type had perhaps its inconspicuous beginnings in the earliest mission schools. In the early seventies Dr. Yung Wing took 120 young men to America, but the times were not ripe and the mission was recalled, though the idea continued to germinate. The war with Japan (1894-5), the Boxer outbreak (1900), and finally the brilliant victory of Japan over Russia (1904-5), thoroughly aroused the youth of the country. The number of Chinese students in Japan ran rapidly from hundreds to thousands, and reached its zenith in 1907, when there were about 15,000. Since then the number has declined until now there are only some 3,000. This is due to the development of schools at home, to the desire of many to get their western education first-hand, to the elimination of many purposeless triflers and revolutionary hotheads, and to other causes. But those who go to Japan now mean business, and will in some respects exert more influence than returned students from the west. There were last year perhaps six or seven hundred students in Europe, over half of whom were in Great Britain. The remainder were chiefly in Germany, France and Belgium. In Germany the largest number were being trained in military science, though many others had been led thither by German achievement in industry and manufacture. The chief attraction in Belgium is engineering. Why so many go to France is not so apparent, as they are too practical to go in for French art and culture. But America has always had

a peculiar fascination. Americans do by far the largest educational work in China. The Indemnity Scholarships have not only augmented their number, but this gracious remission has also done much to reveal our friendly feeling. So did our Recognition of the New Republic. Our national policies have been disinterested, and our political standards are the ideal and inspiration of patriotic Chinese. There are not less than 800 students here now, scattered through sixty odd institutions, and as a class doing splendid scholastic work. Of course recent events in Europe will result in a much greater influx to our country. Meanwhile there has been an immense development of government schools in China itself. Every village has the elementary grades, and in the provincial capitals can be found universities and all varieties of technical schools. True, these were badly deranged by the Revolution. True, also, that they are too often superficial, conducted by irresponsible spoilsmen, and morally rotten. But they are being quietly reorganized, and are often conducted with an efficiency which may in some not distant day put the mission schools as completely out of business as is already the case in Japan. Finally, missionaries and their institutions have exerted an immense if unobtrusive influence, and have now an opportunity—such as rarely comes in any nation and cannot long continue in this one—for moulding the life and training the leaders of this vast and virile people.

Students of all races perhaps resemble one another more in their mental outlook than those of any race resemble their own fellow-countrymen. It is a significant fact that the first international Christian organization is a federation of students. Two years ago the writer attended the annual banquet of the American College Club of Peking. Of some 150 alumni present over half were Chinese. The menu, the evening dress, the toasts and speeches, the college yells and songs and jokes, the entire atmosphere, were precisely what one would have found in any city of America. Chinese students are strikingly like students the world over—the same good fellowship and crude conceit, the same temptations and vices,

the same glowing enthusiasms and responsiveness to high ideals. They constitute somewhat a class by themselves as yet, though ardently patriotic and pulsing with pride of race.

Three facts about these students are of momentous consequence to the Christian cause in China.

I. *Their influence.* They are the leaven already permeating the nation and destined—as Bismarck once said of the German students—to leaven the entire lump. When we recall another remark of this shrewd old statesman-seer, to the effect that before long as goes China so goes the world, we can estimate the range of this new dynamic. The Revolution was effected and the Nanking Provisional Government manned almost wholly by students, most of whom had been educated abroad. They will have an increasingly prominent part in the political affairs of the nation. That they will mould its new educational life is sufficiently obvious, and the implications of this fact are tremendous. In its commercial and economic development they will figure extensively. They edit the newspapers, which are now another potent factor in shaping public opinion. In short, they are the quickening force which is making old China new. They interpret western civilization to their people. They largely determine the forms into which the nation will recast its science, literature and social institutions, its ethical doctrines and religious beliefs.

II. *Their present moral and religious status.* Recent changes in China have brought many alarming moral consequences. The students are naturally the first to be affected. The new education has broken down the old complacent insulation, but with the eschewing of Confucian intellectual concepts there has come an abandonment of Confucian moral standards. The so-called ethical teaching in the schools is weak and vapid stuff in comparison. The new contacts have brought a flood of novel temptations. Students abroad learn much beside the *curricula* of the universities. It is not only in Japan that seductive immorality, free from home restraint, can be indulged. Chinese student are quite capable of acquiring the various physical vices of their fellows. The mental reaction is still more

serious. European and American life as seen through their eyes, or as reflected in the standards they have learned abroad, furnishes a saddening revelation. One of them, a brilliant graduate of one of our great universities, was discussing all this with me a few days ago. We had talked of general conditions far into the night before he spoke of his own perplexities. "Granted that China can be Christianized," he said with deep emotion, "is this all that will come of it? Will it mean no more to our country than what we see here?" One wonders whether the majority of them are not more commercialized, made more utilitarian and selfish, by their western education. They first affect and then apply a cynical egoism. The philosophy of Nietzsche is quite in vogue among them. The President of China has had some disillusioning instances of this in his recent efforts at reconstruction. In religion the effects are even more radical. The ancient superstitions are of course quite airily rejected. Philosophic scepticism with a materialistic basis is the substitute. Their contemptuous ideas as to the lack of sincerity and vitality in the Christian profession of intelligent Americans is an active factor in forming their own religious attitude.

What has been said above refers to students abroad. But it is substantially accurate of those in the Chinese government schools which quickly reflect such influences. Their policy of closing on Sunday is also detrimental, for with no restraints and no occupations, and with fascinating adventures in vice prepared to meet the demand—on approved western models—the results can be left to the imagination. Their religious attitude is more negative. Indifferentism would be the category for the great majority. The following religious census of 5,000 Japanese students in the Imperial University at Tokyo illustrates conditions obtaining among Oriental students:

Shintoists (the national religion)	0
Confucianists	6
Christians	60
Buddhists	300
Atheists	1,000
Agnostics	3,600

Chinese would show a larger proportion of nominal Confucianists and fewer Christians, but the main alignments would not be dissimilar. Reasoned infidelity is by no means rare. At a student conference in North China last year the writer was amazed at the number of men—many of them either graduates of or at that time in attendance on mission schools—who were eager to discuss in personal interviews philosophic objections to Christianity. Indeed mission institutions are by no means exempt from the various tendencies mentioned above. Every effort is made to guard and guide those in attendance, but it is impossible to keep wholly immune.

III. *Missionary aspects.* These can only be briefly suggested.

First, as to students abroad. There is no large amount of sympathy with this tendency among missionaries. But—whether we approve or not—it is a fact which must be recognized. Not only so, but since the number is steadily increasing, it should be made possible for a few of the choicest Christian students to have the same advantages. Among those who have been given such opportunities are many of the most influential and devoted Christians in China to-day. They are invaluable in mission work also, as teachers, literary workers, student secretaries, &c. Names occur to me of men who are the peers of any of their fellows in western scholarship, and not below the most earnest missionaries in the reality of their consecration. There is also a steady effort through the Chinese student Christian organizations in England and America on behalf of their non-Christian mates. The Y. M. C. A. summer conferences in America are also productive of fine results, as has been the exceptionally effective association work in Japan. The influence of the Christian home could be a powerful asset. The late president of the Indemnity College, one of the very few Christian officials under the Manchu *regime*, traced his conversion to the kindly care of two maiden ladies with whom he boarded while attending a Massachusetts academy.

Secondly, as to government school students in China. A beginning has been made by the Y. M. C. A. through scientific lectures, evangelistic meetings, summer gatherings, all of which are most hopeful. Mr. Sherwood Eddy's campaign in Nanking two years ago was typical. A great mat-shed hall was crowded daily, some 400 men signed cards expressing their willingness to study Christianity, the majority of these were organized into weekly Bible classes conducted by our theological students, over sixty of these took a definite stand as believers or inquirers within three months, and two of them are now studying for the ministry. Mr. Eddy is conducting a similar campaign this fall in the great student centres of China, reports of which indicate greater and more tangible results than before.

Thirdly, as to students in mission schools. Some missionaries oppose all educational work. Our own mission stultified itself in the earlier years by the "evangelism only" theory, and we are now almost destitute of competent Chinese workers, as one obvious result. Others advocate educational institutions provided a controlling proportion of the student body is Christian, this being a preventive measure against a too pronounced non-Christian atmosphere, and a duty to the children of the Church. Others, realizing the evangelistic possibilities in holding the doors open wide to all who care to enter, aim to attract young men of promise by maintaining schools equal to any in equipment and instruction. Each of these policies has its special weaknesses and advantages. But speaking generally, in the matter of leading their students to accept Christ the mission schools have had a splendid fruitage.

Fourthly, as to the outlook for Christian service. The severest test of the worth of missionary education and the most convincing evidence of reality among Christian students lie alike in the number and quality of those who are led to give their lives to Christ. Especially are the facts regarding the Christian ministry a reliable registrar. The report of the Edinburgh Conference on "The Church in the Mission Field" contains the following suggestive remark: "Perhaps we may venture to say that in no department of mission work

are the efforts at present made more inadequate to the necessities of the case than in that of theological training." A reading of the reports of the series of conferences recently held under the leadership of Dr. Mott, gives one the impression that this finding of the Edinburgh Commission still holds true in large measure of the China Mission Field. But in all of these reports, the sections dealing with Chinese Christian Leadership reveal a discontent with present conditions, a willingness to apply even radical remedies, and a splendid idealism demanding the very best both as to students and scholarship, all of which indicate that the situation—whatever may be the imperfections of present attainment—is full of hope for the future.

Notable is the work of Rev. Ting Li-mei, a Presbyterian pastor, in consequence of whose efforts the now thoroughly organized Chinese Student Volunteer Movement for the Ministry has developed. This article is already too long to permit anything more than a summary of the results of the four years since this movement had its beginning. After the most rigorous examination of the records the following figures are accurate: Fourteen "volunteers" have already entered the ministry, 87 are now in theological seminaries, and 430 are enrolled in schools, with 87 more who fall below the age limit. This recent growth, while only a fraction of what could be wished, is indicative of a changing attitude among Christian students, and marks the beginning of the final stage in the evangelization of China.