

As We See Ourselves

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WE have been looked at from an outside point of view for a long time; sweeping statements made by early observers founded on one or two occurrences are handed down with a truly Chinese persistency from one generation to another; and we are dissected by ready writers with more wit than insight, in all styles, from the column and a half of the fitting newspaper correspondent, to the fat volumes of the twenty years' resident.

Heretofore it has made but little difference so far as influencing our national character was concerned. Few, if any, read these numerous books, and the few could afford to laugh at the queer jumble. But at present when we are taking a keen interest in the opinions of the world in general, perhaps it would be well to look a little into what they believe us to be, since it is bound to shape us more or less, as is expressed in the common phrase—"give a dog a bad name and you hang him."

It is somewhat difficult to make out exactly what sort of a creature the Westerner conceives us to be, judging from the long list of contrary virtues and vices with which he characterizes us. One is fain to agree with him in the conclusion, which ends almost every book that I have ever seen on China, that the Chinese is indeed a mystery not to be understood, though he rarely fails also to give the impression that what is dark to his comprehension must of necessity be nasty.

Certain statements are repeated so often, that perhaps we may take them to be essential parts of their belief, but each has his own point of view based on his own personality, and I cannot take up more than the main ideas in a magazine.

It seems to be thought pretty generally that the Chinese are a stolid race, impassive, but subject to fits of fury at odd and inconvenient times; frugal and industrious in the extreme; without nerves, esprit, romance, love or much share in the emotions which play so large a part in the life of the Westerner, and which are supposed to elevate the human above the level of the mere brute; yet with a certain amount of ingenuity and intellectual capacity, which has produced some remarkable specimens of work that are a distinct addition to the art treasures of the world, but whose creative powers are past. He is furthermore, characterized by an obstinacy, which, whether one calls it flexible inflexibility or downright mulishness, is equally exasperating, when his apparent docility leads one to try the experiment of leading him in a way that he is not willing. The Chinaman's place in the world is that of a hewer of wood and drawer of water, to be made use of like a newly discovered forest or a tin mine, a source of industry, to recruit the labor reserves of the world. Once in a while, an author kindly endeavors to set forth the real Chinaman, and makes the very true statement, that in spite of all his astuteness and practical mind, in nine cases out of ten he will turn from the good advice of a friend to trust an undisguised adventurer, whose devices are too glaringly patent to deceive even the most unsophisticated of his own countrymen; and with but little persuasion from one who addresses him in a pleasing manner, he will acquiesce in what he knows to be to his loss. Those who have any degree of personal acquaintance, speak of the huge

bulk of Chinese classical literature as dignified, pure, and singularly free from anything that would shock the conventionality of the present day reader, and presenting all the main ethical truths known to humanity, whether in the mystical form of Lao-tzu's or the concrete form of Confucian doctrine; in the next breath we are told with equal sincerity, that Chinese are prurient to a degree. Women are regarded as being in a most pitiable condition, held in profound contempt, unwelcome from birth, and if allowed to live at all, are in virtual if not absolute slavery in their bound-foot seclusion. An author, who is struck with the dignity and decency of the models held up by the Chinese as worthy of being copied, comes a little nearer the truth when he says that in the old classical literature, women are not held in contempt, but are regarded as a function not to be mentioned in polite society, any more than the alimentary processes are mentioned in an English drawing room. But even this statement does not throw much light on the observations of another sinologue, who tells of the large and minute biographies recording the sayings and doings of women, nor explain how it comes about that *paifangs* erected to the memory of good and virtuous women form a far more salient feature of the landscape than the pagoda, nor how in a society thus constituted, men have served an Empress so long and faithfully, when in the many troublous times that have passed, the great viceroys might easily have been tempted to grasp at imperial power themselves.

Little, if any, account is taken of the vicissitudes through which we have passed; invasions that swamped Europe in the dark ages for centuries, from which Russia has not yet recovered according to their own accounts. We have weathered the storms, moulded the invaders to ourselves, and are ready to take a fresh start in a less dilapidated condition than Europe after the invasion of the Goths and Huns: yet until very lately the friends were fewer than are the fingers of one hand, who

believed that the Chinese would ever infuse new life into their country. The names of Secretary John Hay and President Roosevelt will go down in history as among the few who were broad enough to rise above the average conception, and think that though the Chinese might be an enigma, yet a people who could evolve so complex a social system that has stood the practical test of time, however different or distasteful it might be, contained force and vital power sufficient to justify a policy that would ensure them a trial at least.

There has been a sudden rise of an intensely nationalistic spirit. The respect and admiration that have been accorded these first efforts by the nations at large should show us that there is a genuine interest in our wave of fresh progress. The best of Western lands are ready to give us the friendly sympathy and kindly aid of fellow workers in solving the problems of national life, even though the foreign press within our gates gets "tired of hearing" about "China for the Chinese," bemoans the "anti-foreign spirit," and wonders at the suspicions of the Chinese with as much vigor as it advocated "spheres of influence" and denounced the "lack of patriotism" a few years ago.

We have faults, indeed; for our own sakes as well as for the sake of our friends, let us try to understand ourselves better, and not accept verbatim the dictum of the Westerner on a subject that he confessedly does not understand. It will be more pathetic than ludicrous, if we go down the long list of virtues and vices, supposed to be peculiarly Chinese. As a people we are not much given to that process which I think Spencer, if my recollection is correct, has compared to a monkey sitting before a fire, burning the tip of his tail, and objectively analysing the subjective sensations arising therefrom. I do not claim to have any special gifts in this direction, being thoroughly Chinese in temperament, much more given to feeling than to

stopping to analyse what is felt. Having lived in Japan through its early years of awakening to national life, and witnessed its struggles and difficulties; later, privileged to know, through personal friendship, the difficulties that leaders in American civic and political life have in keeping up the ideals they desire for their country; I may perhaps claim, as an elder sister's privilege the thoughtful attention of the Federation. I beg that they will pardon me if sometimes I drop into the third person in speaking of our country. It is not from any lack of sympathy, but distance occasionally gives one a better chance to look at things in their proper relations.

In the first place, let us recognize that we are of an emotional nature, excitable by temperament, but have chosen as an ideal a high standard of self-control. *Han yang puh ching puh ts'ao* 涵養不矜不躁, rules the emotions with a strong hand, so that under no circumstances shall they arise and disturb the serenity of the individual as he pursues the Path of 仁義禮智信. That this self-control is a cultivated article is seen in the repeated statement that only those, who are learned either in books or experience, possess it. Nor does it always follow that this intellectual knowledge is carried out in life, though it may be greatly admired and may exercise a certain degree of influence. I do not know that we fail more in this respect than the Westerner does in coming up to his ideals of Christianity, in political or business life. Upon the unlettered masses the influence is fully as great, to say the least. The catchy phrase "Oriental fatalism" with which the foreign writer terms the philosophic acceptance of the inevitable of the Chinese, is no more than the resignation with which the Western world accepted its plagues and earthquakes before the days of scientific investigation as a mark of God's wrath against mankind. This together with self-control has produced a shell as it were, and, it being the most visible and the first thing the foreigner comes in contact with, it is not

surprising that his impression should be that of stolidity, passiveness. This should be corrected on further observation; for if it were true, would we see people "seng ch'i" in all its moods and tenses as an every day occurrence; the frequent cases of violent hysteria; the so-called cases of demon possession; and the thriving trade of sorcerers, which advertise the same thing in western papers as spirit mediums, clairvoyance, etc.? The swift appreciation of keen sarcasm, or a dry joke, the power of a laugh to disarm anger, the love of color, and the daring combinations that reach such wonderfully picturesque effects when left to work freely with indigenous materials and motifs; the loyalty and generosity to those whom he likes, making him quite blind to faults; and the ease with which an adventurer with a pleasing address can flatter and cajole, show that it is emotion rather than judgement that rules the average Chinaman.

It is not possible for a nation fundamentally sordid and material to be uplifted by the sight of high mountain peaks, as the old Sung writers have left on record. Yet our lighter writing and classic literature teem with the emotions of people who were intensely moved by the passing clouds, moonshine, flowers, snow, and are full of dainty, charming fancies, which are as difficult and elusive to translate, as to catch the passing fragrance of *lan tsao* or *kwei hwa*, to bottle them up and send abroad.

The present movement would not be possible in a people lacking in esprit. It is hardly necessary to remind my readers that the nearly invariable impulse of a man to call for his mother when in sudden distress or in great pain, no matter how old he may be or how long she may have passed out of his vision, shows the strong impression that only real affection could make. The alternating gusts of temper and doting fondness are but another indication of the emotional temperament uncontrolled. In fact, it is the sweeping power of the emotions that has caused the

Chinese to raise such formidable barriers of custom in self defence, especially in the direction of women. The heavy burdens and exactions of the patriarchal form of social organization would be too much for even the patience of the Chinese, were there not the deep underlying love which makes all things bearable. The frequency with which we enter into "dry relationships," and the oft quoted proverb "a man will die for his friend," ought to be sufficient to convince any one, who knows what he sees, that there is no lack of love, though it is not demonstrative in the fashion as the West. An Englishman does not fall on the neck of his friend, kiss him on both cheeks and hug him warmly, as is the custom of scarcely more than casual acquaintances in Russia, but who doubts that the friendship of the former is quite as strong and will stand the wear and tear of daily intercourse as well?

The force of the ideals ruling China may be vaguely comprehended by any one who travels on the great highways, or looks over a market on a fair day; all that traffic, noisy gesticulation, frantic bargaining, is only a counter-part of what is going on in a thousand other places throughout the land. It is a wonder that the remark has not been made before, which appeared not long ago in one of the journals "China contains materials for a revolution, if she should start one, to which the horrors of the French revolution would be a mere squib." Yet this seething mass goes its way peacefully, business is conducted on grounds of justice and fair exchange, and as has been pointed out by one of our own writers, without any police supervision in these past centuries, or anything like what would be deemed necessary, outward control in Western countries. The general influence of this moral restraint goes much further than the preservation of order in the mass.

In individuals, it has produced the effect that leads the superficial observer to say that the Chinese have no "nerves." Certainly the average Chinese does not

happily possess much of what goes under the name of nerve but that does not mean he does not possess a highly organized nerve power. Perhaps I may be pardoned for a little digression in explanation of what is so commonly accepted.

The power of a strong impression, whether internal or external to the body, to suspend, pervert or control the physiological processes, is well known, though the laws governing it are not yet defined. This, the staple principle in the advanced treatment of many disorders, is the scientific basis of Christian science and kindred beliefs. Mischievous interference is removed, the body is left in peace to carry on its functions, which in turn react on the higher centers and break up what is termed in medical language "the vicious circle," (whereby one disorder aggravates the other till it is difficult to tell which is most out of gear), and health is restored to the complex human organization by getting one in order first. Physiologists are agreed that in a state of health, the individual is not too easily disturbed. Only in the abnormal do the impressions, that ordinarily pass without notice, force themselves on the consciousness. When the general health has been impaired and there is a lack of the controlling influence, the individual is at the mercy of any chance impressions that may strike him, producing a disproportionate reaction, which is termed nervous irritation,—not a sign of high nerve power, but of weakness. A common example is seen in cases of recovery from severe illness; the irritability of the convalescent is known to be but a passing phase of weakness, which, when health is restored, will result in indifference to the same small things that occasion so much present distress.

What may be considered a normal standard varies greatly according to the individual conception. However, no one with any degree of experience has not sighed over cases of fretful neurasthenics, who, fondly cherishing their nerves as a

sign that they are made of finer clay that ordinary mortals, really need the influence of hard, steady, inexorable work, not excitement, to compel them to get up and do, in order to learn that "nerves," if not regarded too much, will cease to obtrude themselves on the attention. "Nerves" uncontrolled are *enfant terrible* indeed. The rarity of nervous prostration among the poor, who cannot afford the luxury, is well known, and to bring a patient, not amenable to such discipline, to a stage where within the limits of his natural strength, he is free to work, without having his equilibrium constantly upset by every trifling occurrence, is considered no mean achievement. How far pain may be eliminated by self control, rather than glossed over by the ever increasing list of drugs, is one of the questions looming up on the horizon of practical psychology.

We have reached a considerable extent in the practical working out of these two conditions. That our passivity does not interfere with the exercise of real nerve force, is seen in the relatively large number of skilled craftsmen plying occupations that require extreme nicety of handling, adjustment of eye and hand, and judgment of the purpose of the article they are making and of the market conditions governing it. The keenness with which the ordinary coolie will see a chance to make an extra cash, or give a nickname showing how well he has sized up the master whom he serves; the appreciation of the justice or otherwise with which he is treated; and the steadiness, with which under discouragements of all kinds he pursues his aims, show nerves of high powers.

This freedom from nervous irritability, leaving energy to expend itself in the maintainance of the body in general, contributes greatly to his endurance, and compensates for the insufficient food and other unsanitary conditions, as may be seen in a general hospital where the laborer is treated. In cases which test the power of the system to stand shock, like a

compound fracture of the thigh, a Chinese does not have as much power at his disposal as the better-fed, white workman, but in the run of lighter cases, where self-control is a factor in the progress of the case, he has by far the advantage. Just as in the lighter industries, fruit canneries and ranches, etc., the nerve restraint counts in his favor, so in the heavier work of mining, the Chinese laborers are at a disadvantage, though even here the greater steadiness and reliability may offset the lack of strength. To be sure the comparison heretofore has been with the Cantonese, and the capabilities of the wheat-fed, heavier-built northern Shantung man have yet to be found out, though the fact that he has been the only one able to stand the work in the South African mines would count in his favor. From casual observation, they seem to be the equal, to say the least, of the squat, bullet-headed German soldiery seen in the streets of Tsingtao.

It is a fact to be remembered, that though one may diminish friction and loss of energy in transmuting food into power and thus increase efficiency, yet the common law of mechanics holds good for the human as well as for other machines, and one cannot get any more energy out, of than there are calories in the food. Among the cultured, any one who has ever been admitted beyond the crust of conventionality, does not need to be told that the possession of "nerves" is not an unmixed blessing. One has but to look at the multitudinous lines and wrinkles on many Western faces far too young to bear such marks, hear the warnings of their own thoughtful people against the restlessness, that is fast becoming a master not a means, to realize what the "nerves" of the Westerner is costing them.

Let us not in these days of excitement in the new growth, give way to the irritation of the moment, which is justly condemned by the critic, however prone he may be to fall into the same error himself. But from the vantage ground of

our heredity, carrying out the ideal, let us strive to increase this power, knowing that restraint only adds strength with which to combat the causes that give rise to irritation.

Though the Chinese accepts the inevitable with philosophic resignation and has made the mistake of thinking some things inevitable which are not so, he is but little affected by what the Westerner means in using the term "Oriental fatalism." When driven to straits, he has turned his wits to solving the problems of getting a subsistence, which with our many centuries of life is a question of much severity, hard for less populated countries to understand. And again the casual observer is misled into thinking that we are an industrious and economical people, when it is dire necessity that drives them to work from dawn to dark, and devise so many ways of making a little go far.

The moment a family become affluent enough to be relieved from exertion to meet immediate wants, it is seldom one sees any effort beyond what is necessary for the enjoyment of the present. The sons with their wives and children live on the father, who prefers the prestige and honor of a large family circle about him, rather than to fit them to go out and make places for themselves in the world. The mandarin does not want the bother of looking after his subordinates and planning improvements; the business man is content with the same old rut, because it is too much trouble to hunt up new lines; the house wife is too lazy to keep house and children clean; and the extravagant expenditure of the larger households without any knowledge of income or outgo is amazing. This laziness is an old fault, as it is mentioned in the classics among a list of nine faults to be corrected, and it does not seem to be a matter of climate, for the Cantonese, who live in a notably hot region, are well known for an enterprise and energy beyond some of the colder provinces. It leads us to be satisfied with much less than we really are capable of,

and has marred the efficiency of many a good plan, yet it is not insuperable even in the tropics, for Chinese labor seems to be the only resource to be depended on to develop the tropical regions that the white man has taken to himself. The coming of the White Disaster, as a Japanese friend has called the Western invasion, certainly has had a most excellent effect in rousing us from our fullness, and as they have come to stay, we may be assured, to use the Christian phraseology, this "means of grace" will continue to exercise its beneficial effect. Whether we shall ever get inoculated with the Western aggressiveness is doubtful. The past history of the nation is against it, for we have absorbed and assimilated all the multifarious elements that have come to us, so that the fear of the Yellow peril is indeed a dream of Yellow journalism.

It has been remarked by someone, I forget who, that when there is trouble in making both ends meet, the man will hustle around and see how he can add to the income, while the woman likes to see how she may diminish expenditure. In some way Chinese frugality is apt to spend itself on the smaller operations, and in things requiring a large outlay there is the same thriftless extravagance, so frequently seen in large families. When in the end of any enterprise, we have a sense of having been defrauded in some way, let us remember that with all due respect to the proverb "a penny saved is a penny earned," a penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy means loss in the end, and economy means not penuriousness but eternal vigilance.

I do not wish my readers to imagine that I do not appreciate the notable exceptions on all sides, men who have literally worked to death in public service, nor that there is no enterprise among our merchants or industrious housewives, but as a nation I do not think we really deserve to be thought either industrious or economical.

The stranger on first acquaintance is struck with the racial physiognomy, black hair, almond eyes and yellow skin, and finds some difficulty in distinguishing individuals, and in the mass of general conventionalities unlike any he has come in contact with before, is apt to think that there can be no individuality where the unit is the family. But though the family ties are stronger than in the West, and the family is the unit of comparison, yet nowhere is there more allowance made for the individuality.

The written language, (which by virtue of its graphic form permits of an unusual breadth of connection,) yet denotes precisely the intention of the author, conveying his mood with the least intrusion of his personality as such, and depends on the individual imagination of the reader, which if it has been roused at all, will carry him far beyond the most carefully chosen verbiage. The value set on the "stop short" of poetical form is an extreme example. We quote the words of Dr. Giles: "The Chinese have made a clean sweep of every thing except the essential roots, leaving the unessential harness to the imagination; in short, they have reached the perfection of simplicity with the maximum of clearness."

He goes on to analyze the plaintive song of a homesick Princess, remarking, "It is impossible to say that this little poem does not leave a perfectly clear image in the mind, and it is equally impossible to confine this image within any given limit. The art of writing Chinese consists in knowing how to create these images tastefully, and can no more be taught by the rule of thumb, than the art of writing such poetry as that of Burns."

That a literature like this presents many difficulties to those accustomed to have every form of expression carefully bounded goes without saying, though at first it would seem an easy task to learn to read a language where one word can be an adjective, noun, verb, or participle without any change of form. In truth

it is far more difficult, for unless the reader can furnish the individual background that the author depends on, the whole falls flat. In the translations that have been made so far, there has been little attention given to finished expression, thereby the works losing more than half their value. Those of our own people who have any knowledge of western languages are being drafted at once into the stress of political life, or plunged head over heels in the practical problems of working modern scientific progress into the social organization. No one has performed for us the kindly office that Lafcadio Hearn has done for the Japanese.

The various series of readers, constantly being revised and added to, which condense greatly what it used to take a decade to learn by the old method; the new words daily incorporated to meet the new needs; the strong movement towards unifying the spoken language into a common mandarin, which shall be the medium of instruction in the public schools, of which movement the President of this Federation is a champion leader, all show that not only is the language capable of changing to meet the new demands, but that we also have the men to do it. The craze for English is a passing phase, from which the Chinese will awaken as soon as he finds that knowing a little English does not mean one is thereby enabled to manage a gunboat or machinery, or placed on the high road to fortune. However, it will have accomplished much good in spite of some of its absurd aspects, if it turns some of the literary activity, of which we have such a superabundance, in the direction of exploring English as a literature. A world of delight lies before them, and also for the west, when we shall have minds, each with its own individuality, at the task of putting into fitting dress our stores of fact and fancy, instead of the very few sources at present by which there is any exchange of ideas, —when instead of one we shall have a dozen Herbert Giles.

This dependence on the individual response prevented for many years the recognition of Chinese art. And it is noteworthy that the first to appreciate it were the French, of all European nations the most emotional and given to expressing themselves in a polished form.

Here, as in writing, the artist uses the least possible amount of scaffolding to build the structure of his imagination. The lightest washes, the fewest strokes, often the merest outline, just enough to convey his mood, yet without the carelessness of a sketch, instinctively reveal that the artist's province lies with the emotions, is not to teach natural history or anatomy. That what goes to market of our present productions is purely decorative is quite true, the work of *hwa-tsiang* paid so much per sq. inch. But there is this to be said of our *hwa-tsiang* that he is master of his style of conventionality, and with the great store of symbolism and folk lore to draw upon, according to the pleasure of the beholder, who in turn is ready to respond, it means far more than the decorative art of the West.

By dint of much travelling in the country, people have come to realize that the Japanese pictures of their landscapes, with stunted, artificial-looking pine trees and quaint people, are perfectly true. So the conventionality that seems so queer is perfectly true; the coast people accustomed to the flat alluvial plains may not be aware of it, but the scenery of picturesque China is really often made up of odd piles of rocky peaks rising up one another with but little foliage, and that stuck around in bunches scattered haphazard. The trees are peculiarly shaped with long slender trunks, bare of branches till near the top, where there is a feathery plume. Even the willow partakes more or less of these features, though in other lands the same thing grows differently.

But that there is still work done of genuine artistic merit I know from personal observation. It is very small in quantity

at any given time, and the collector must recollect that the pictures and old bric-a-brac and porcelain, in which he revels, are the carefully hoarded product of centuries; they never were, never will be turned out wholesale to meet a cablegram order. It is individual, not work *en masse*.

It has been a delight to find as I live among the people in Szechuan to discover true artists, for in common with the rest of the world I supposed they were a thing of the past. These are scholars, coming from families that have been cultivated for generations, and have been able to keep their means, some times in a nominal official position. They only work when the mood seizes them, never for sale, only to give away. These gifts are highly prized, and unless poverty overtakes the family, the pictures do not come to public view, when they are at once taken up by Chinese themselves at higher prices than the agents of collectors are willing to give, even should they be so fortunate to get a glimpse of them.

In fact this tacit acceptance of the individuality is carried to extreme; it is the foundation of the "cha puh to" quality which is trying enough when one has to fit the work of many people into any given piece. It stands in the way of large organized effort much more than the suspicions, usually supposed to be the root of the trouble. Far from needing any more individuality we need to understand where it ceases to be useful. Though very lovely in art, it is not wise in many other places, and we shall have to pass many a hard experience before we learn the lesson of union, in spite of our trades and merchant guilds. The advent of steam, electricity, machinery and railroads will do much. The Westerner might do more than he does in helping us, but his unfortunate "nerves" stand in the way; even in the rare cases where he recognizes that we possess this human trait of individuality in common with himself, either he gives up in despair at the "tinacy" of the Chinese, or else he loses his temper, gives way to the



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brute that lies in every human, and pursues a cure that is best described in the words of the Blackburn Commission (pp 337) "Other governments and their agents only too readily make every possible circumstance a pretext for concessions or indemnities which are carried out in an aggressive spirit, which becomes more implacable as the embarrassment of the country increases." Though this quotation refers to the French government, and the writer goes on to give a specific incident illustrating the truth of his assertion, yet the average Briton in the East is far from being the man as he claims, "who graciously yields the better half of the road to every individual pedestrian," and the condition which he states so clearly of others is much too true of British dealings in China. The high-sounding phrases that "Chinese character is only

amenable to firmness tempered with justice," "any weakness is immediately taken advantage of," etc., do no more than rouse a smile at the inconsistency of human nature, which would take the mote out of the brother's eye without seeing the beam in his own.

By the above remarks I do not wish my readers to imagine that I think the foreigner can teach us nothing. That is a great mistake born of ignorance, for technical knowledge of the various Western machinery, whether engines or school systems, we must learn of them, but the application of the principles to our own organization and discipline we must work out for ourselves. I trust that the time is not far off when with better mutual knowledge the foreigner will lay aside the attitude of censorious mistrust and aggrieved surprise for a frank, manly recognition that we have the right to work out our own problems; and on the part of our younger spirits especially, they shall understand that bluster does not conceal real fear, nor does strength consist in strutting around with a chip on one's shoulder ready to pick a quarrel. In the consciousness of sufficient strength to meet the emergency, which always holds a far greater reserve than appears on the surface, we will move with dignity, albeit the occasion may require haste, and not confront whatever circumstance that may arise to prove us, with loud vociferations against injustice, resulting in no action but a string of querulous complaints undignified as it is weak.

(To be Continued.)

going to some other schools. The Provincial Commissioner of Education has recently sent instructions to his subordinates in this wise:—

“Beginning from the first moon of this year let the following rules be enforced rigidly:

1.—If a student does not resume his studies after a protracted absence, if he abandons his studies when he is already half way through, whether he be from a private or government

school, he must be punished according as the proper regulations provide.

2.—No other educational institution is allowed to receive such a student.

3.—If he has not paid up his school fees the president of his school will prepare an accurate account of the expenses he incurred and the debts he owed, and demand the same from his guarantor—whether an official or a member of the gentry—for payment.

This is to teach the delinquent *that he should never neglect his own education.*”

As We See Ourselves

(Concluded)

BY YAMEI KING, M.D.

WITHOUT reproaches for the by-gones, only hoping that the bitter lessons of the past may not be repeated, let us turn to the most important problem that confronts us. It is not a question of men and women, nor is it a question of national independence. The problem is to create or maintain a foundation that will support the advanced civilization of China.

That we have not been entirely satisfied with the results of our own inspiration is seen in the fact that we are borrowing as fast as we can the products of Western thought, from steamboats to schools; and the West is more than generous in her desire to give. Nor need we be ashamed to take. Is not the best as they believe of the ethics and religion in their civilization summed up in the word Christianity? And that is a thoroughly Asiatic production. The great Pali scholar, Rhys David, traces the steps by which Esops' fables travelled from the folk lore of India which Buddhism had appropriated under the name of the Jatakas; and that the life of Buddha under a modified name

was widely circulated in Europe was one of the factors in preparing the minds of the people for the Protestant Reformation headed by Martin Luther, and as late as the time of Pius IX was included in the annual calendar in the list of saints to be worshipped. Schopenhauer speaks of his indebtedness to Indian philosophy, and whether acknowledged or not, Indian thought is steadily permeating Western religious views. Though it scarcely does any active work in propagandism, yet it is helping them to bridge over the breaks that modern scientific investigation is constantly making in the structure of theological dogma that has been reared on the foundation of the imported religion.

While busy trying to assimilate the material products, we should not forget that the foundation of our civilization is ethical, and growth must be along the lines natural to us.

We are relinquishing much that belonged to the past, laying aside the Li Ki, as not suitable to the present needs; and the expanding in others, as the desire to educate the women, which though not forbidden

by Confucius was not urged, is one instance where his doctrine was larger than the man himself.

Since we have thus admitted that our former views were not sufficient, have we seriously considered along what lines we must change to fill the present and allow for future growth?

Filial piety is the key to our organization, through which we reached peace and order out of the chaos of early days; and it is one of our best and strongest characteristics. Have we developed the reverse side of filial piety and considered the duty of parents to the children? To be sure Confucius taught that parents who left their children to grow up without teaching, were doing little better than raising animals; yet it has never been emphasized as the duty of children to parents has been, but left to the fitful haphazard of personal inclination, till in the enjoyment of the submission and service of the children the parental duties were quite forgotten, like the *yin* and *yang* of the men and women. Our officials have been indeed the "fathers and mothers" of the people in requiring support and submission, but even less than the private parents, have they considered the good of their children. The new measures are a most cheering sign. The great officials are awakening to the other side of filial duty, though it is still very far from permeating the mass. But China is long past her feudal days. Every man is accustomed to earn his living and manage his local affairs; and with the flood of new literature pouring in, giving fresh impetus to thought, it will not be long before the time-honored right of armed uprising will give way to more peaceful methods; and we shall have a ministerial crisis, instead of rebellion, when matters need a change. Moreover, we shall enjoy the added advantage of being able to remedy evils at an early stage rather than wait till they become unbearable, since people will endure much in preference to going through the horrors of warfare.

The custom of visiting punishment on the local officials and various members of the family for any great crime was intended to be an efficient deterrent and has had good effect doubtless, but just as we have perceived that the seclusion of women has not worked to the best advantage, so there is need to awaken public sentiment on this subject, for that is all we can do for the protection and aid of the individual children at present.

Nor will this reverse side of filial piety lessen the existing bonds; on the contrary it will add gratitude to the present affection between father and son and both gratitude and trust to the relations of government and people, which elements are necessary to the smooth running of government machinery.

Ancestral Worship—as it is called,—is another of our strong ties, and so closely connected is it with filial piety that it does not now make any difference, whether it is the root or the result of filial piety.

The *k'ou tou* which is an invariable accompaniment, is performed to the living parent. It is the mark of extreme formality between friends and to officials on occasions when there is not the smallest shadow of any divinity connected with it. It is also used before idols and spirits, who are supposed to be endowed with more than human power. The significance of the *k'ou tou* must, therefore, lie with the individual. With the advent of modern life and less leisure for strict ceremonies it will pass away as have many of the punctilious forms of the West. But whatever the grade of intelligence, there is never any asking of benefits or dread of punishment. Among the lettered in China, however it may vary in other Asiatic countries, there is no more idea of dependence than might be expressed by a son who returning from abroad says to the living parents, "Owing to your kind instructions, I have attained success." And the only fear is that as he fails in the remembrance of his ancestors, so his

posterity will forget him ; and his emotional temperament cannot bear to think that what has been so sweet in life shall be utterly lost forever.

This daily communion if we may so call it, is performed at the same time that worship is given to some family image or to nature in general, which is represented by a tablet to heaven, earth and all spirits. Although they all show forth the strong Oriental characteristic of belief in the invisible and immaterial, they are hoary with numberless superstitions, degraded with terrors, and many of the observances connected with them are also attached to the ancestral communion. Shall we make no attempt to sift the true from the superstitious but leave all to the relentless hand of scientific logic? As the people become educated and understand natural phenomena better, this logic is apt to set itself as the only and final appeal of the human consciousness, leaving but two alternatives, namely to discard all reason and wander in the labyrinths of any old faith, or to shiver forlorn on the peak of stoical materialism, caring for nothing but the things of the sense and touch, without anything to which we can appeal except self-interest. To a certain extent this has already happened. Many have been keen enough to see through the superstitions of idolatry.

Those who have a common ancestor have a strong feeling of kinship, which, whether the individual is pleasing or not, gives a very real claim to the aid and sympathy of the family, no matter how distant the connection may be. It is constantly urged on us to give this up for the wider scope of the national kinship. Why try to break one of the strongest bonds we have, simply because Western nations have lost their patriarchal family bonds so long ago that they cannot understand the tremendous significance in ours? Is it not wiser to be true to the basis of Confucian doctrine, that man's nature is divine, conferred by Heaven

upon whom is our common dependence ; to believe in it with renewed faith, and take the communion of our spirits to the Heaven from whom we derive the fine imperishable divine part, our Ancestor, whom our sages have declared to us so faithfully to be the only *Tao* ; and out of the smaller idea of family life to rise to the greater of national life, knowing that it is high enough, and broad enough to go on growing to the whole human family? And when we shall have arrived at that stage, lo! the West, having waded through seas of bloody Anarchy, multitudinous phases of Socialism, and fierce battles between Labor and Capital, will be ready to greet us, and to embody in their institution the Brotherhood of humanity. Shall we not try to take every possible means to understand better this Heaven, the Great Father of us all?

A tendency to fixedness is one of our great failings. Perhaps it is due to the climate. The American is fond of attributing his restless activity to the dry, stimulating atmosphere of his country. Certainly no other part of the globe gets up such an almanac as ours, where the year being divided into short periods, we may calmly await specified dates for the insects to stir, the stopping of heat, the first white dew, etc, knowing that these occurrences will not vary a day from year to year. Whatever be the cause, the concrete manifestation of this tendency is seen in the fondness of building walls, which, however well they may do the work of keeping out evil intrusion, keep us from getting any breadth of view, and from knowing when the walls have outlived their usefulness. We need especially beware of crystallization, for however beautiful a mineral may be, it has no life ; but, however shapeless an amœba may be, yet it possesses the powers of assimilation, making things outside contribute to its growth, which is life.

Though the *arbor vita* of the old cemeteries may not appear to change in its outward shape, yet there is a continual

flow of sap up and down. When this ceases it dies.

So we must look over the walls that other nations have raised to guard their treasures; enlarge our boundaries to enclose new beauties, and search far and wide for all the phases through which humanity has seen the Great Ancestor—to learn more of Heaven and the Path—which Confucius called getting knowledge. For this reason it is necessary, while studying the material inventions, also to understand the historic Christ through which the Westerner obtains his view of Heaven and his ethical principles.

This is by no means an easy task, for such an enormous church has arisen on his life and sayings of such dimensions and complexity, that many who come to expound him are lost in its mazes, and it is no wonder that we are confused. But that should not blind us to the fact that he was the last great Teacher that has come to the world. Though chronologically Mohammed was later, yet his doctrines do not now possess the active influence of Christianity. It is quite open to us to go to the original books and interpret for ourselves his life and teachings. It may be necessary for us to do so before we can get an adequate idea, for the style and method of Oriental teaching is common to us all in Asia, but not easy for the Westerner to understand. Moreover, we have many traits more true than flattering to our vanity in common with the Jews, of whom he was a part. The West has received its chief ethical teaching as well as its religion through this medium, and can scarcely comprehend how the two are separate. The ethical lessons we have in a different form, but what we need to understand is the warmth of the conception of the Father, which transmuted by the energy of the Western mind has enabled him to rise above the fetters that bound him, albeit these were cast in the name of the church bearing the name of Christ. This conception gives the intelligent man—who

accepts science as the latest exponent of Truth yet who believes that the complete man should have faith in the invisible as well as in the intellect, and that the two are not opposed,—an ideal, which has warmth enough to satisfy the craving of the human heart for love and remembrance, yet is free from superstition and flexible enough to permit of growth as the mind reaches greater intelligence.

That they all do not avail themselves of their privileges, but a large proportion are as sordidly materialistic as any of our own people, or still cling to superstitious forms and ideas, is only a proof that human nature is everywhere the same. Have not our sages always bewailed that people did not follow the *tao li*?

The difficulties that confront us are not small in this recasting of our ancestral worship and religious consciousness so that they shall focus together in the One Father, the Ancestor, the Heaven above whose nature we share, whose majesty and attribute we can never know in full, and yet whose decrees all mankind must obey.

But Confucius and the other sages have never been regarded as other than men, revered and honored above all as expounders of the truth by which we live. We are quite as free as the philosophers of the Sung dynasty, who had no science to shed a new light, to make new commentaries, or accept discoveries and advancement in arts and literature as had the T'ang or Yuen dynasties, while the Western philosopher has constantly come into collision with the church from the days of Copernicus to the present. The nature of the difficulties in the way of the religious consciousness of the West may be judged from the following extract:

“The religious consciousness of former generations was based on divine revelation. It laid emphasis on miracles and signs. Divinely given interpretation was held to be the indispensable object of a genuine faith, so that often enough the revealed Book became itself almost a God.

This whole conception of revelation has now disappeared from religious thought; it was a product of religious reasoning under the form of an antique philosophy. No longer do heaven and earth stand opposite each other as two worlds. We do not now believe in a lower world of hell. There can no longer be any claim to a revelation in the old sense of the word, and the idea is not in harmony with the certain results of modern scientific research. It is beyond doubt that the investigations of science and of history, and the unprejudiced researches into the character of original Christianity, which have been going on for about seventy years, without regard to dogmas and doctrines, have made religion something entirely different from what it had traditionally been supposed to be. It has been found too that Christ is a historical person, and that his activity and work can be plainly understood in the light of his day and surroundings. The historical Christ without the signs and wonders, and without the later Christology, is what the religious consciousness of to-day must deal with. The deification of Christ has not stood the test of real historical investigation. Such great problems as those of creation, providence, prayer and its answer, and the personality of God wear an entirely new aspect in the light of modern science. The new truths must be recognized in our pulpits, and become a part of the religious instruction in the schools."

The dynamic force of a conception of Heaven that will stand such an upheaval is well worth considering. We have no great property or money interests wrapped up in any form of ethics or religion; we shall teach in our schools what is now before England in the Non-Conformist Bill; nor are those whose special function it is to keep up the sense of the beyond, the immaterial, so mixed up with political questions that the government must in its self-defence disfranchise them, as has lately occurred in France.

Looking back at the early Nestorian and other Christian efforts, the three hundred years of Roman Catholic propaganda and approaching centenary of Protestant work, though the missions are well equipped, splendidly organized with an immense expenditure of money, energy, devotion, and life, backed by political and military forces; yet, compared with real results and not mere statistics, I do not think we are warranted in thinking that any form of the Christian church as it now exists will be established to a wide extent in China. The individualism of the Orient, based on the conviction that every soul has its personal relation to the immaterial, which differs in each, and may not be interfered with, is too marked.

It will always be in the future as it has been in the past, that individuals will make groups of kindred beliefs. These communities, products of missionary labor will in proportion to their general enlightenment, all contribute towards the culmination which will be a widening and reviving of Confucian ideals, a carrying of ancestral worship to its logical end, to the Ancestor of our true selves, the Father of all humanity, who will inspire fleshly father and son into a closer union of a common service; give fresh power and breadth to the family with the warmth and tenderness that shall satisfy the craving for love and remembrance that lies at the roots of the present form; produce a sense of dependence on a higher than earthly human aid that lies at the root of image worship, that shall develop woman so she shall fill her place efficiently, in the family, be it the smaller or larger. And with science at hand to train the intellect and reason that belief shall not stray into superstition, we shall have the basis on which to remould our institutions:—in a word to embody once more in state and family life the truths that lay at the foundation of our ancient civilization. Let us not forget that though we must have some walls, and conventions, yet, unless we are filled with the

Tao, we will forget again their object and waste our effort on such things as the *Pakku* 入股, while the great essentials of truth, faithfulness, sincerity are matters of parrot routine.

Self-defence takes on a new aspect, since it is not only to preserve home and country for personal enjoyment, but to work out the problem of making ethics and religious consciousness the foundation of our modern as well as our ancient civilization.

Material development which is dazzling us now, will then keep its proper place as a means, not an end.

India is the mystic of Asia, and has well been called the mother of religions, but while influencing others, she has shrunk from the foreigner, even when rendering him treasure, labor and loyalty.

Russia, midway in more senses than the geographical one only, is an instance how between two stools it is possible to fall to the ground. She was not able, like the rest of Europe, to drive back the hordes of Mongols; and while not half assimilating them as we have, has added more barbarian elements, and however much we may admire the fine qualities of the Russians; the heroism, perseverance, and courage of the people, they are at present engaged in a deadly struggle with their indigenous rulers for the mere permission to live, which, as it was conceded so long ago by the ethics of both East and West, seems an anachronism to have to fight it over again.

Japan has given a splendid example of the mobility necessary to advancement, and assimilated the Westerner's pet science of warfare with marvellous rapidity and thoroughness, and rendered Asia valuable service. We may well take lesson by her experiences. Perhaps one reason for her mobility lies in the fact that she had not much time to get into very fixed grooves after swallowing whole the products of Chinese thought, before being confronted with the Western.

But nations live by peace and not war, and with the utmost respect for quick perceptions, strong qualities, and great charm of the Japanese, anyone who has had personal experience will admit that neither in industry nor commerce, as laborer or merchant, are they the equals of the Chinese; nor are they in physical and intellectual vigor, or the traits that go to make up what is called character.

She has chosen as the strongest tie to bind her people together, ancestor worship in the shape of Shintoism, centering in the lineal descent of the Mikado from the great Sun goddess. Whether she will remain at this stage is yet to be seen in the future; certainly it has served them well for the purpose their statesmen had in view. But it is not open to us to follow the same course, for though we call our Emperor the Son of Heaven yet it is more of the office than the person, and his descent is not lineal. We reserve to our selves also the right to dispossess the incumbent if he does not follow its decrees. In any case we surround him with a Board of Censors, in all the ordinary filial duties of the private individual, and historians do not hesitate to hand down in minute detail to posterity, the extremely weak human frailties of our sovereigns so that we cannot regard them as other than mortals like ourselves. Besides, one cannot place the religious consciousness where the feeling of dependence is past.

It devolves on China which is neither mystic nor warrior, but with its great body of skilful farmer, artizan, merchant, unpicturesque, and often as uninteresting as his British congener in Europe, to solve the practical problems of Asiatic life.

The difficulties that beset us are greater than any we have ever yet met. This time it is not a savage nomad horde, who have nothing except physical energy to add, but nations of high development, with a wealth of science, arts, and letters.

If we keep our inspiration and thus assimilate truly, out of the past, the present, and future injustices, blunders and misunderstandings on both sides, we shall weave not a thing of shreds and tatters,—a Western patch here and there on the torn and faded finery of past glory,—but a fair garment, whole and adequate for human needs, comfortable for us, and beautiful with true Chinese characteristics.

And if we do not keep our inspiration, we shall go down before the fearful flood of materialism that the West ever sends as its advance guard, to be tossed hither and thither on the uncertain waves of other people's opinions; and our people will have no root whereby they may stand the blasts and put forth fresh growth: and after the storms of economic and political stress that threatens to burst any moment, we shall be scattered to the four winds, slaves of the "dominant white man," who will pay dear for his victory, by the increased glorification of brute force and pelf that his better nature is striving against.

For our own sakes, for the sake of the world, let us not fail in the task, though

the magnitude of it may well make us quail, and the mere size alone is appalling. I have only blocked out in the roughest fashion the main line of thought, it will take the ripest scholarship, most profound thinkers and strongest characters that we can produce, to do the task thoroughly. Nor will they complete it in one generation; but is not the object worthy the best that the nation can produce?

And when body and soul faint by the wayside, and dangers loom dark on the horizon, let us remember that as the sun has risen day after day, shedding warmth and life, and the seasons have revolved, so the Ancestor Father will not fail his children, though sometimes his lessons are written in so large a hand that we must get off to a distance to read them, and however much we may be discouraged by the failure of the earthly fathers to do their duty, with the Heavenly Father we have but to do what belongs to us, or as in the words of the old Buddhist saying,

"If a man be but a man, the mills of heaven and earth shall grind him not to destruction, but to perfection."

Record of Important Chinese Events

(FROM MARCH 14TH TO JUNE 2ND, 1907.)

COMPILED BY CHANG NIEH-YUN

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| <p>March 14th.—School at South Tungchou burned by villagers.</p> <p>15th Ili Railway contract between Taotai Huang and British Syndicate concluded. Experimental gold standard currency in Chihli decided on by Ministry of Finance.</p> <p>16th Rice riots at South Tungchou and Taipingfu.</p> <p>17th Abolition of Russian Military Administration at Changchun.</p> | <p>18th Ministry of Justice telegraphs for eighteen foreign-educated students. Waiwupu requires full returns of mission property made throughout China. Anti-Christian riot at Hsiangshan, Chêkiang, and pastor captured.</p> <p>19th Memorial by Viceroy Yuan Shih-k'ai for permission to employ Shanhaikuan Railway profits for Mukden-Hsinmiutun Railway ex-</p> |
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