

iniquity is covered. Receive Him in the full confidence of your heart, and God Himself hath become your God, your Father; and you yourself have become an heir of glory—an inheritor of honour, immortality, and everlasting joys.

This is life indeed!

Altar to Heaven.

Among the wonders of the Chinese capital, the most wonderful is the "ALTAR TO HEAVEN," described by the Rev. JONATHAN LEES in the journal of his first visit to Peking. It is difficult, indeed, to form, from any description, an adequate conception of this spectacle; and when it is remembered that these surprising objects of power and skill were originally dedicated to the services of religion, the whole scene is adapted to awaken both admiration and regret, that a people distinguished by civilization and art should have been the victims of a system of idolatry so splendid, and yet utterly powerless, for the improvement of their hearts or their character.

"After breakfast," writes Mr. LEES, "two or three of our party went to the 'ALTAR OF HEAVEN.' It is impossible to reproduce in language one's feelings on visiting such a place. To me it is of all others in China the most intensely interesting, not merely on account of the rare artistic taste shown in the design and its execution, but on account of its being the sole remaining memorial of the ancient *Monothelism* of China. As I stood in the slaughter-house, and walked along the long covered way by which the victim was led to the altar, and, above all, as subsequently I stood upon the magnificent south altar, with all its associations, and looked round on the groves and temples, with the blue sky overhead, of which their glittering roofs were intended to remind me, I felt how strong was the impulse to worship, and how grand, defaced and mingled though it be by the accumulating superstitions of ages, is the traditional faith of the "Supreme Ruler," of which all these things are symbols.

"I attempt no description either of this or of other Peking 'lions;' one would need to write a book, and a great deal has ready been well said. I extract a few lines from Sir John Davis's 'The Chinese,' which is one of the best books for friends at home to read as a popular summary of information on China:—

"The 'ALTAR TO HEAVEN' stands in a square inclosure, measuring about three miles in circuit, near the southern wall of the Chinese city. The terrace (the altar itself) consists of three stages, diminishing from 120 to 60 feet in diameter, each stage being surrounded by a marble balustrade,

and ascended by steps of the same material. Towards the north-west of the inclosure is the palace of abstinence, where the Emperor fasts for three days preparatory to offering sacrifices to heaven at the winter solstice. On the other side of the great central street leading to the Tartar city, and just over against the 'Altar to Heaven,' stands the 'Altar to Earth.' This square inclosure is about two miles in circuit, and contains the field which is annually ploughed by the Emperor and his great officers, and the produce reserved for sacrifice."

"I may add, that Sir John cannot have visited the place himself, or he would have spoken of the slaughter-house, with its enormous pans for flaying the bullocks used in sacrifice; of the covered way, most elaborately painted, along which the victim is led in solemn procession to the place of burning; and of the smaller temples, marble and bronze, with their magnificent roofs, in which the tablet to Shang-ti, and those of the Emperors, are placed. The altar is wholly distinct, and at some distance from these. On the great day the tablets are brought out and arranged upon the altar, that of Shang-ti being in the centre, and the Emperor then, surrounded by high officers, in his own name, and as representing the people, worships the Great Supreme. The park, in addition to the avenues already named, contains many fine old trees, and has a fine herd of black cattle reserved for sacrifices, which we saw.

"30th.—We visited the famous *Wan-shen shan*, (hill of a ripe old age), or Water Palace. This is ordinarily called the *Yuen-ming-yuen*; but the truth is, that the true *Yuen-ming-yuen* is several miles distant. The whole, however, may be considered as one—an immense garden, probably fifteen miles round—and the whole was desolated by our troops; but the rest is closed to visitors. Much as I had heard of this place, I was not prepared for such magnificence. Advantage has been taken of site, &c., to form a spot of unrivalled beauty, even in ruin, and it is hard to imagine a scene more lovely than this must have been in its prime. There is one main hill, and this has been literally sprinkled with temples, grottoes, columns and statutes. It is thickly wooded to the summit, and the many-coloured tiles glitter in the sunbeams like countless gems. On the south side is a lake dotted with little islands, the largest of which has a mimic temple, and is joined to the shore by a beautiful bridge of marble, on the columned balustrade of which are sculptured lions, each different. Close by this bridge, now inclosed in a loose stone wall, which hides it from those who are not forewarned, is the image of a fine cow, of great size and fine workmanship, made of bronze. The hills around are all carefully