

pairing the banks of rivers, after which they are not looked after until the country is once more deluged by the breaking of dykes. The worst phase of all this stagnation is that the people have become satisfied with it. They are purposely unprogressive, and vainly think matters are all right. The present war has made a revelation of the inherent weakness of China, such as may well make her best friends despair of her future unless radical changes are brought about very speedily. Never in the world's history was a great country laid low and helpless in such a short time. The Chinese have made a total collapse. The great men seem to have lost mind and heart all at once, and to have given up in despair. Had China but adopted the ways and weapons of more advanced nations, as her clever rival did, there would have been a different story to write now. As I write, soldiers are on their way to Tientsin, who were summoned four months ago. They passed by here a few days ago, cold and hungry, and will not be very formidable when they reach Tientsin, even if their services are wanted. If there had been decent roads, if the canal were kept in decent repair, if there had been a railroad to the heart of the country, all these might have been at the seat of war in a few days. The sons of Ham are proud, prejudiced and patriotic. Patriotism that shall lead a man, readily and bravely and through love, to serve the country, is unknown, or if it does exist, it is so rare that the above statement is practically true. The people here laugh at the calamities that have befallen their country, and they care very little so long as they are left unmolested. They mock the soldiers for their foolhardiness in risking their heads in a losing cause. They evaded the recent proscription by adopting the extra sons into other families where there were no sons. Truly the condition of China, from whatever point of view, is unspeakably sad. The blight of death

rests upon all her institutions. The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint. The nation as a body politic would very soon perish if a more rigorous one were ready to pounce upon it and undertake to set up a new government. Probably Japan will not want to have anything to do with that, yet surely the present status quo will not be of long duration. The good in the Chinese systems was not productive, its force was expended ages ago, and there is now imperatively needed a power that shall put such life into the fainting heart of the nation as shall make the utmost bounds of the empire feel the throb of a new life, and then shall there be solid, satisfactory progress, but not till then. Alas for the Chinese! Between poverty and social and political evil their lot is a hard, hard one. Those who have never been into an ordinary Chinese dwelling, and who do not know how they live, can have no adequate conception of their destitution. Many of them get along with one meal a day, and that of a very poor quality. They have very little fire in their houses, and those not well clad must suffer terribly. It is perfectly certain that there is no such general poverty in any Christian land. While China has been sleeping for ages a sleep of death, other nations have awakened up to newness of life. They have advanced apace. Their progress is astounding. As we think of the improvements made in all departments of life in Britain during the past century, we get bewildered, and still the work of improvement goes on. The condition of the people has been vastly ameliorated. The British peasant is not the helpless, hopeless child of fate that his dusky brother in the Middle Kingdom is. He takes an active interest in the affairs of Church and State, realizing that both have an intimate bearing upon his welfare. He has hope in the future, even if the present be a time of great distress. On the other hand, the Chinaman has scarcely any hope either for