

## CHINA AS I SAW IT.

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NEXT to the Jews the Chinese are the most wonderful nation of which we have any knowledge. My respect for their character, and my wonder at their solidity, increased in proportion to the length of my residence among them. From the very dawn of history they have always been the imperial race of Asia, and time will prove them to be the first and most competent of nations on that continent. As God selected the Jews to be the preservers of His will, as given by revelation and inspiration, so it seemed to me in China—and the impression grew stronger as my acquaintance with the people became more thorough—that God had chosen the Chinese to be the guardian of His law as written in the hearts of men. In the schools the children are taught to regard moral excellence as the great desideratum of life; to emulate the noble and virtuous examples of the past, and to prize mental perfection more than wealth. It follows that the moral rather than the material welfare of the people is the aim of the government, as witness the history of the destruction of the vine because it made the people drunk, and the war with England on account of the accursed opium.

## CHINESE CONTRADICTIONS.

Yet the Chinaman, chameleon-like, is full of surprises for the unwary. While professing to be profoundly impressed with the necessity of investigating all things, he yet regards a good style as of more importance than useful knowledge. Gifted with a massive intellect and much fertility of resource, he yet fails to see that his conservatism, which was once his guardian angel, now threatens to become his destroyer, and only consents to accept homeopathic doses of reform as they are forced upon him from without. Poverty stricken as the land is, at least in its northern provinces, the average Chinaman still regards it as the model for the whole earth and Confucius as the model teacher for all ages. While we cannot, of course, assent to such preposterous claims, we will readily unite in acknowledging the Chinaman's superiority in the matter of filial piety. The dutiful son in China acts in everything with a view to his parents, and no matter how little he has to live upon he always saves something from his earnings for the support of his infirm and aged relatives.

## LEAN AND HUNGRY GHOSTS.

On the other hand China is the land of uniformity. Anything new is dangerous. Whatever was unknown to the ancients is bad. When the Chinaman becomes a Christian he ceases to worship his ancestors and condemns their hungry ghosts to wander disconsolate through space, trying to pacify the cravings of hunger by nibbling at old gable ends. Failing to satisfy their appetite by feeding on house-rooms, these neglected spirits become more and more attenuated, while they fade into thin mist, but before that consummation, angry at the treatment they have received, they work all manner of ills on their ungrateful, degenerate Christian successors.

Absurd as all this is to us, you can readily see how such a belief and nothing in China is more firmly held—operates to keep the naturally sluggish Chinese mind from paying due atten-

tion to the unsearchable riches of Christ, especially when, as is the case in China, families are solid units, in which the individuals are not free to do as they please, each member being a cog in the family wheel rather than a self-acting free agent.

## THE WOMEN IN CHINA.

I found the state of woman in China a further terrible stumbling block in the way of Christianity. I have not time to deal with this, but let me say in passing that women there are slaves, knowing hardly any other motive than the power of habit, weary drudges whose gods no nothing of love. I have seen Chinese women so animalized that their countenances have almost lost all traces of humanity, and the minds of all are as crippled as their feet. None know anything of prayer except as a blind cry of fear when threatened by evil. And these are the mothers who mould the destiny of China's sons. Sisters, will you do nothing for these helpless, and, when you know them, most lovable, women in China?

## MY OWN EXPERIENCES.

With this brief and necessarily imperfect survey of the Chinese character, you will be prepared to listen intelligently to a few chapters from my own experience illustrative of a missionary's difficulties, a missionary's disappointments, and a missionary's delights.

I must preface these stories by stating that I had the honor of laboring in China for eight years, under the auspices of the English Baptist Missionary Society, and had it not been for the serious breakdown of my wife, necessitating a removal to California, I should be there to-day. The English Baptist Mission in China is confined to the northern section of the empire, where we have occupied the provinces of Shantung, Shansi, and Shensi. In these provinces we have between thirty and forty male and female missionaries. In Shantung Province, where I lived, we have a native church of about 200 members, supporting its own native pastors, educating its children, caring for its poor, and doing a large amount of unpaid evangelistic work.

## A MISSIONARY'S DIFFICULTIES.

Here is a story illustrating a missionary's difficulties. The first time I met Tan Ju Fang he assured me that he had closely studied Christian books for ten years, and that his matured convictions after such study were, that Christianity was inferior to his own Buddhist faith. Thereupon he began to preach Buddhism. I listened carefully and respectfully, for unless you know the workings of a man's mind you cannot skillfully work upon his mind. He tried to prove that it was a fallacy to suppose that each individual had an individual soul. There was only one universal soul in the essence of which I and all men shared.

I said little but presently he startled me by taking up his copy of the New Testament and saying, "Elder-born, Jesus, your own sage, taught this very thing." "Where?" I asked astonished. "In the fifth verse of the fifteenth chapter of John's gospel," he answered, "Jesus said 'He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.' How could Jesus abide in His disciples, and His disciples abide in Him, unless there was but one universal soul as I have said?"

I tried to explain the true sense of the passage, but for ten years he had been reading his own creed into that sublime chapter in John, and it was not to be easily rooted from his mind.

Finding that our talk was becoming too metaphysical to be profitable, I turned it into another channel by saying, "Reverend sir, your honor-