

## TEMPLE WORSHIP IN CHINA.

BY YAN PHOU LEE.

Of all the innumerable structures dedicated to religious uses there are none more quaint and splendid than the temples of Heaven and Earth which are found in Pekin, China. The Chinese call them altars, but they are really magnificent temples, built of costly materials and surrounded by grounds of vast extent.

The altar of the Supreme Ruler of Heaven is in the south-eastern quarter of the capital, on the eastern side of the road which, running north and south, cuts the city into two equal portions. It stands in an enclosure three miles in circumference and consists of a round terrace with three stages, each ten feet high and respectively 120, 90, and 60 feet in diameter. It is paved with marble and protected by balustrades. The tile roofs are painted blue to resemble the azure of heaven.

The illustration is that of the altar erected to the Spirit of the Earth, which stands on the other side of the road above mentioned and directly opposite to the Temple of Heaven. This building is similar in shape to the other, with the difference that it has two stages instead of three and the dimensions are also different. This altar stands in an enclosure about two miles round, in which may also be seen three other altars dedicated to the inferior spirits of the heavens, the planet Jupiter, Shun-Nung, the mythological inventor of agriculture.

It is a curious fact, illustrative of Chinese ignorance of the real shape of the globe, that the base of the altar to Earth is square, while that of the altar to Heaven is round.

The color sacred to heaven is azure, hence the robes worn by the emperor in worship rendered to it are blue. Yellow, on the other hand, is a color peculiar to the earth, hence, yellow gowns are worn in the ceremonies performed on its altar.

The sacrifices offered to heaven and earth were enjoined by Confucius, and the mode of conducting them are minutely prescribed by the ancient Book of Rites. They are not the only deities that constitute the Pantheon of the State, but everything in the material universe is worshipped, such as sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, etc., besides the spirits of deceased monarchs and Confucius himself.

The worship of these supreme powers of nature and of dead monarchs is confined to the Emperor, the imperial clan, the nobles and high officers of state, and is forbidden to the common people under penalty of whipping or strangulation. The monarch is the high priest of this State religion, while the hierophants who assist in the different services are all, like himself, Confucianists.

The time for performing sacrifices to heaven is at the winter solstice, while the earth gets its share at the summer solstice.

The preparations made are the same in either service and beat everything of the kind in elaborateness. They are interesting enough to merit a recital. In the first place, those who intend to participate must be free from recent crime against the law, and not in mourning.

The sacredness and solemnity of the oc-

casions are evidenced by frequent ablations, taking of vows and fasting for three days, with a complete change of raiment. Besides, the hierophants are obliged to occupy lonely but clean chambers, and at the same time abstain from judging criminals, from listening to music, from attendance at feasts, from drinking wine, and from eating onions and garlic. The punishment for neglect or omission may be forfeiture of salary, or the bastinado, which is generally commuted for a fine. The animals sacrificed to Heaven and Earth are heifers, bullocks, oxen and pigs or sheep. They must be healthy and without a defect. These victims go through a process of purification ninety days previous to their being brought to the altar.

Chinese sacrifices differ from those of the

ligion, with its cold ritualism, should have crushed all that is spiritual out of its blind adherents. It affords additional proof, if any were needed, of the utter inadequacy of natural religion to satisfy man's spiritual needs.

But there is one feature of this State worship which is deserving of praise, and that is the annual ploughing ceremony performed by the Emperor and the grandees of the Empire at the vernal equinox. Those who take part assemble together in the morning on a field sacred to agriculture, within the enclosure wherein the altars of the Earth and of Shun Nung stand, and there, one after another, take hold of the plough drawn by a water buffalo and plough a number of furrows, first of all the Emperor and after him the ministers. In this

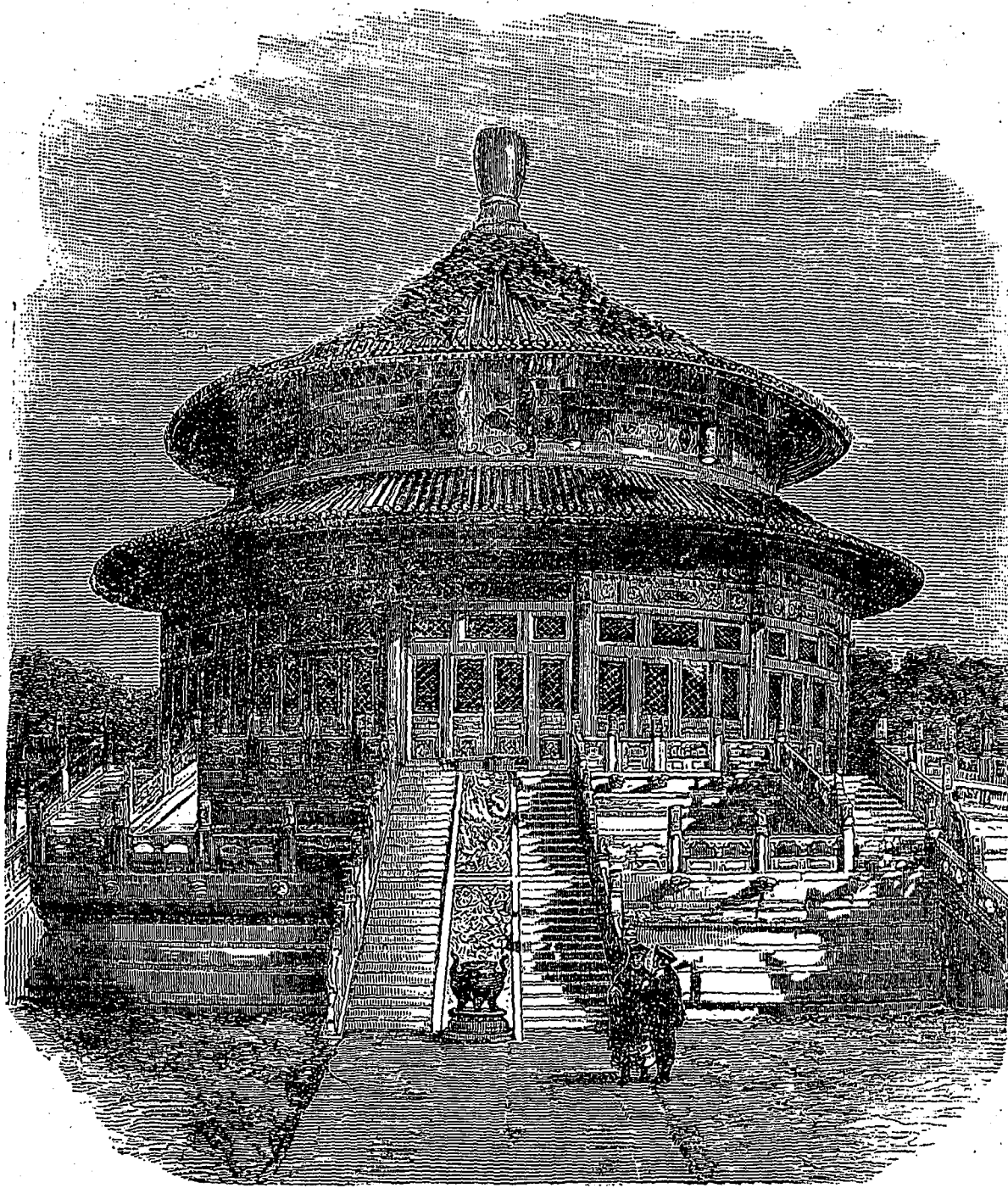
About a fortnight, however, after her disappearance from Glasgow, her well known mew was heard at the street door of her Edinburgh mistress; and there she was, with both her kittens. They were very fat, she very thin. It is clear she could only carry one kitten at a time. The distance from Glasgow to Edinburgh is forty-four miles, so that, if she brought one kitten part of way and then went back for the other, and thus conveyed them alternately, she must have travelled one hundred and twenty miles at least. She also must probably have journeyed only during the night, and must have resorted to many other precautions for the safety of her young. The story seems incredible, but the *Children's Friend* gives it as a fact.

## A THRILLING EPISODE

One of the impressive incidents that characterized the closing session of the recent annual meeting of the Woman's Presbyterian Board of Missions of the North West, held in Davenport, Ia., was the following, as reported by *The Interior*:

Mrs. Van Cleve, of Minneapolis, who, though about eighty years of age, has strength of body and mind that is wonderful, saying that she wished to tell a story of interest to the delegates, stated that in her travels in Northern Dakota, she once saw, near one of the old Hudson's Bay Company's trails, the grave of a woman, a missionary, who was murdered by the Sioux Indians about thirty years ago, being shot twice through the lungs as she was attending to her sick babe in the night, the light of her candle showing her form to the savages who were lurking outside her cabin. Her husband buried her there, and placed a tombstone, properly inscribed, at her grave. A settler took that slab, broke it in two, and made steppingstones of it for the back and front doors of his house. Mrs. Van Cleve then told of her search for further information concerning the martyred missionary, and of her obtaining it through a package of letters sent from India, by a correspondent of the husband of the murdered woman. Mrs. Van Cleve's object in her address was the raising of a fund by the Presbyteries in the North West to build a suitable monument over that grave. Mrs. Well, of Oxford, Pa., to whom the letters were forwarded from India, had sent a dollar for the purpose.

At this point in the narrative a lady's trembling voice inquired, "May I say a word?" "Certainly," replied Mrs. Douglass. "Your name, please?" The voice, still trembling, but giving no name, continued: "That missionary was my brother, and his murdered wife was my sister-in-law! He was David Brainard Spencer. The elder child in the cabin that night has been a missionary in Turkey ten years. The babe that Mrs. Spencer held in her arms when she was shot has been a devoted minister in Illinois a number of years!" The speaker's name was afterwards given as Mrs. Drew, of Evansville, Ind., who stated that Mr. Spencer died about three years ago in Benzonia, Mich. It is said that it didn't take that crowd long to raise and hand to Mrs. Van Cleve a grand "starter" for a fund for a new and suitable monument to the memory of Mrs. Spencer.



THE TEMPLE OF THE EARTH, PEKIN.

Romans, Greeks and Jews, in that the victims are butchered the day before and afterwards brought to the altar all dressed and ready to be cut and distributed to the hungry worshippers.

The imperial high-priest does not deign to perform the highest act of homage to the Supreme Powers of the Universe, strange to relate. That is the so-called *kou-tow*, consisting of three kneelings, nine bows and nine knocks of the head; but the last are omitted by the Son of Heaven.

All the ceremonies being involuntarily performed show a lack of heartiness and sincerity which we associate with the idea of worship. They are so precise, cold and formal, that the common people may congratulate themselves on being exempt from them.

It is no wonder that such a heartless re-

manner does the Chinese Government dignify the labors of the husbandman, and sets an example for all its subjects to follow. It is worthy of mention as a piece of consummate statesmanship.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly*.

## A DEVOTED MOTHER.

A lady residing in Glasgow had a handsome cat sent to her from Edinburgh. It was conveyed to her in a close carriage. The animal was carefully watched for two months, but having had a pair of young ones at the end of that time, she was left to her own discretion, which she very soon employed in disappearing with both her kittens. The lady in Glasgow wrote to her friend in Edinburgh, deploring her loss, and the cat was supposed to have found a new home.