

doubted if any people attach so much importance to questions of social propriety as they do. In an eminent degree they are thrifty and industrious. This of course is a dire necessity where there are so many depending upon so little. The degree of perfection to which the arts of peaceful life have been brought makes it quite unfair to speak of this people as savages. At the same time they cannot be called civilized. While we admire unstintedly many phases of their character, and much that they have accomplished, it is impossible to be blind to the dark side of Chinese life. The impression made upon one passing through the country is that it is half a millenium behind the time. He will observe that things are as they might have been in England in the Tudor times, or perhaps more correctly, as they were at an earlier period. Of course there is much here of a degrading, barbarous nature that could hardly have been true of that country at any time since the introduction of Christianity, and it must not be forgotten that there must have been a large number of learned, refined and holy men in that land, even in the darkest times. As the power of an endless life became more and more active, England moved forward, and her onward march is still unchecked. China has not during the same period made any progress, rather has she declined. One wonders why the one should advance apace while the other remains, at best, stationary. Confucianism and the wretched forms of religion must be held responsible for it. The Sage teaches China to look with a fond gaze to the past, to find her ideals there. Merit consists in a slavish, timorous following and imitation of the past in all things. Let everything be done as the Ancients did. Improvement, invention and discovery are not encouraged, and would not be rewarded. Had there been a steady stream of life infused into the people from their religions, the impulse would have burst the bonds of hoary

antiquity, and China would have made some progress in spite of the sages. A nation needs more than the memory and traditions of a venerable past. It needs a great, elevating hope for the future. The absence of such a cheering, strengthening hope has put an effective brake upon the wheels of progress in China, and is likely to do so for generations to come. As an illustration of the Chinese habit of looking to the past for their ideals I give a prayer which a friend at Tientsin gave me. There is a tradition that the ancients had a self-going cart, and this prayer has reference to that. The prayer was offered by a convert who had seen a bicycle. "We thank thee, Our Heavenly Father, that our eyes have this day seen the real pattern of the self-going cart of the ancients. What mysterious wisdom is thine! How willing thou art to impart knowledge to men! But our sins hinder thy revelations. How stupid we have become through serving Satan so long! Many years have we lived, and yet to-day for the first time have we seen this marvel of thy skill. Forgive our sins. Restore us to thy favor. Communicate to us also thy mysteries, and let us share in the wonderful inventions by which Thou dost make thy name glorious among those who serve Thee. Let us be entrusted with thy secrets, and possess the power of the ancients. So will all our countrymen come to know that we have found the right way, and are servants of the true God." Very likely China was better in the past than now. The dilapidation, squalor and disgusting filth of a Chinese village or city makes the impression upon one that the country is fast going to ruin. The very temples of the gods are in a tumble-down state as a rule. There seems to be no public spirit at all in the country. What belongs to the public is allowed to take its course, and even the government does not look after affairs that are of general interest. Millions of taels may be spent in re-