

anxious to learn all he could about the strange colonists. He despatched two Chinese Catechists. After an absence of many weeks they returned, saying they had found the people. They described them as being totally isolated from the natives both in habit and religion. They knew very little of their past history, and could not tell when their ancestors had come to China. The Catechists visited their temple, and copied as well as they could an inscription over the door-way in an unknown character. They also noticed in the temple a number of sacred books, each rolled up as a scroll. The Bishop's suspicions were confirmed. A glance at the copy of the inscription shewed him that it was a text from the Hebrew Scriptures. He at once concluded that the scrolls could be none other than the writings of Moses and the prophets. Again he sent forth the Catechists with money to effect, if possible, the purchase of some of the holy books. They returned with six of those sacred treasures in their hands. With trembling delight the Bishop opened those ancient manuscripts. Wherever he turned he found it was the same "old, old story" which his own Hebrew Bible recorded. Here, then, was a striking confirmation of the integrity of the Book of books. It may be that this body of God's ancient people found their way to China soon after the Babylonian captivity. It is difficult to suppose how they could have gained admission at all during those long centuries that China was rigidly shut out from the rest of the world. Be that as it may, they have at least been there from time immemorial to themselves. Yet we find in their hands the same blessed Oracles that we have studied and loved from childhood upwards. It was with solemn and gratified feelings that we took one of those sacred scrolls in our hands, and gazed on its venerable inscription.

A word about the *ladies*. We beg pardon for keeping them in the rear so long. We would not for the world show them any disrespect. As it is best even on a sublime subject not to aim too high, we will begin, if you please, at *their feet*. All the world seems to be agreed that ladies are all the better for having small feet. China is one with the world in this respect; but, whilst the rest are content to admire small feet when nature bestows them, China says she cannot possibly do without them. She regards them as *sine quâ non* to her perfection and felicity. If nature do not give small feet, man must manufacture them. But man is sure to bungle when he presumes to criticise and improve nature. Who has not heard of the *iron shoe* worn by the poor Chinawoman from infancy? Shocking enough if *it were true*; but in point of fact the *iron shoe* owes its origin to the inventive genius of somebody who knew nothing of China. It has no existence anywhere. The process is—when a little girl is about three years of age, to bind its feet in tight linen bandages. These are taken off once a week for the feet to be washed. They are immediately rebound to the very same proportion as before. This goes on till the girl reaches womanhood, when she is privileged to substitute shoes for the bandages. Thus a really genteel foot is never larger than that of a child of three or four years of age. We have seen many such. But it is a mistake to suppose that the diminutive shoe contains the whole foot. The process of compression has forced the heel up towards the calf of the leg, so that nothing more than the toes and fore part of the foot enter the shoe. The sight of the poor women as they hobble along is to *barbarian* eyes painful and revolting. Their feet more nearly resemble the feet of goats than those of human beings.

Infant marriage is not known in China. Women never marry before fifteen or sixteen years of age. Alas! great care is taken that many do not reach that age. Female infanticide is, no doubt, frightfully prevalent in the country. Infants in no case are buried, in China. A sort of round tower stands outside the large towns. This has openings in the sides about six feet from the ground. Through these holes the bodies of infants are thrown, and there they decay in promiscuous confusion. We could not gaze on those grim towers without an inward shudder, as the thought struck us how many a hapless little one had