

BOSTON'S LITTLE CHINA.

A Glimpse of the Curious Things That May be Seen in Boston's Chinatown.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF PROGRESS.

Boston is thoroughly cosmopolitan, as anyone knowing the city will admit, and one does not wonder very much at finding swartly sons of sunny Italy and hook-nosed exiles from Arabian sands jostling each other on the burning curbs. But not only are half of the inhabitants of the modern Athens unable to speak English decently, but the city itself is divided into three or four "towns", or as they are called, "quarters."

Not the least interesting among these is Chinatown, the abode of the mild-eyed celestial, who very often turns out to be not half as mild as his organs of vision proclaim him to be. This quarter is a tourist's Mecca, for to wander through its dark alleys and twisted passages is to enter the doors of the Orient in very truth.

It must be confessed that it was with considerable hesitation that I accompanied my friend the man who knows it all on an expedition to Chinatown, for I had in memory Bret Harte's old lines:

"For ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain,
The Heathen Chinese is peculiar."
and I was uncertain whether we would be feted or scalped.

Summoning up my courage I followed my friend into the portals of the store of S. Y. Tank & Co, bronze merchants, and the western world was left behind us. Mr. Tank himself, a fine type of the better class of Chinaman, met us with a courteous bow. Our pasteboards were tendered and received; our business stated; and the ice was broken.

Oriental luxury and western convenience harmonized agreeably in this remarkable store. From the ceiling depended delicately painted screens of lateen, and strings of hideous masks; which latter we were informed were used in both their theatres and religious ceremonies. In close conjunction were incandescent lamps and heating apparatus of the most modern style.

The floor was crowded with intricately worked bamboo settees, white porcelain vases of exquisite design stood ranged on yellow ivory. I rather expected to find some Chinese lettering on the sign board that surmounted the whole, but the staring gold letters were undoubtedly the work of some Boston artist.

The next store is kept by S. L. Lung & Co. and thither we proceeded. Mr. Lung received us with a bland smile, and together we inspected the endless variety of articles, ornamental and otherwise with which the place is filled. China and porcelain tea sets were displayed in profusion, of such an eggshell thinness that the shelves and counters. It was a veritable curiosity shop and the placid faced oriental in his loose fitting tunic quite completed the picture.

There was a slight incongruity about the whole that rather spoiled the effect, for on one show case were placed, side by side, a curiously colored porcelain urn which had come from Sain-Tow, and a cheap painted plaque from some Washington street novelty store. The windows were filled with huge jars of a peculiar patch work design (and delicately carved chessmen writer hesitated to pick up anything lest he might crush it, although he desired very much to closely inspect the handpainted design. Mr. Lung showed us a fish plate on which was depicted—so he said—a thrilling scene from one of their most ancient plays.

In a showcase were dozens of grotesque ivory images which represented a few of the gods in the Chinese Heaven. They were all very hideous and intended evidently to inspire fear rather than any tenderer feeling.

Even the almond-eyed Mongolians have imbibed some of our most "freaky" fads, for presently our guide showed us a most interesting collection of souvenir spoons from the cities of Shanghai and Canton. They are made of silver with golden bowl, and while undoubtedly of value to a collector, their beauty was an abstract quantity. While we were examining the spoons Mr. Lung handed us a brass tray embossed with a representation of a religious ceremony at the statue of Confucius. The god was crowned with a sort of halo and held in his hand the symbol of re-incarnation.

"Now, see," said our conductor, holding up a small vase. "Here is a real curiosity. It is a Krishnee vase made of blue clay. The flowers on it are outlined in fine gold wire, and the whole is dusted with gold dust. It is then baked, and comes out as you see it," and indeed it was a beautiful specimen of Eastern pottery.

A nickel plated water pipe or sort of sargileh caught my eye, and I asked Mr. Lung what its Chinese name was. "Sui-eyen Hong" he replied with a smile. Then seeing what an awful mess I was making of it he took the pencil and wrote it down as it should be, softly spelling it the while.

After thanking him we passed on to the next wonder, which was actually an image of the first man! Adam would not be flattered if he saw it, but fortunately the Chinese claim that this same Confucius was the first man, and that this is a very good likeness. As a matter of fact it looked more like a nightmare after a prolonged dose of Darwin; one arm being long and the other short, while the hands were claws and the legs but stumps. The features were of a most repulsive type, and the forehead was entirely absent. Plainly Confucius was no kind of a man to have for a neighbor.

Over the store of Messrs. Lung & Co. is the Oriental restaurant presided over by Ben Fong Low & Co. In this cafe you can be accommodated even if your appetite does run to such delicacies as Tien Moy and Yeung How, both of which figure on the menu. Although knives and forks are used, chop sticks can be obtained at the cashier's desk, and at all hours the click of the sticks can be heard as the patrons eat their Gham Ghet or their Mung Hi, for the Americans are quite fond of these outlandish dishes.

The different compartments of the restaurant are divided by curtains composed of bits of bamboo, glass beads, and

even rice, strung on strings. These screens are really beautiful and the figures formed by the different colored beads very artistic. The proprietor passed us a handful of "lichee" nuts which proved to be a dainty dish. These nuts are composed of a rough prickly hull, of a dark brown color, which encloses a soft meat, very like that of the date, and inside of which is a large pit. The size and shape of the lichee is about the same as that of a walnut.

The private dining rooms for the use of dinner parties are fitted up luxuriantly with marble tables and lichee wood settees. The marble slabs in the tables are set in narrow frames of that same wood which is also inlaid with designs in mother of pearl. The ceiling is divided by trellis work, and the walls are covered with Chinese inscriptions which welcome the visitor. The sideboards and other furniture wonderful creations of bamboo with gold leaf markings.

The good natured proprietor at last conducted us to his office and handed us each a cigar as a last favor, with a smile and the single word "Shanghai." A Chinese cigar was a fitting finale to the trip and so after shaking hands we took our departure, promising to come again. The Chinese may be bigots and inhospitable in China, but they are quite the reverse in Boston's "Little China."

Mrs. Gladstone.

It is a curious fact that the greatest of recent English premiers, Gladstone and his ambitious rival, Disraeli, should both have acquired their fortunes and estates through their wives.

Nevertheless, the festal joy of the double wedding sixty years ago, when Catharine Glyne was married to Ewart Gladstone and her sister to Lord Lyttleton, was marred by no cynical suspicions. The rising statesman and his handsome bride were

too unmistakably lovers.

Her husband's fame and her tireless devotion have naturally overshadowed Mrs. Gladstone's life in its other aspects. Yet she has been widely and wisely charitable. During the cholera epidemic in east London, besides procuring funds and helpers, she daily visited the hospitals, and made the little 'cholera orphans' her special charge. Many also received literally naked—since their clothing had been burned,—and carried, wrapped in her shawl, to her own house till homes could be found for them.

A temporary Convalescents' Home, which became a permanent one, grew from the needs of this time through her efforts. At Haverden an orphanage and a training-school for domestic service arose from her labors for destitute children and unemployed mill girls during the Lancashire cotton famine produced by our civil war.

Yet it is as the admirable wife she will be best remembered—for her wisely sympathy, her comprehension, the patient sagacity of her daily guardianship, and her high courage.

"She was as truly the grand old woman as he was the grand old man," declared an American, "when I saw them once, while an unpopular measure was pending, passing together through a hooting, hustling mob. Brickbats had begun to fly before they reached a place of safety, but neither flinched for an instant. Mrs. Gladstone's gray-gloved hand lay quietly on her husband's arm, and she regarded the howling crowd as tranquilly as if they had been merely playful children. It was fine!"

When the great prime minister was carried to his grave in the splendid shadows of Westminster Abbey, room was left for her to lie beside him, and assurance given the living that the couple so noble and so devoted should not be separated in death.

Facing a Shark.

Manifold are the adventures to be met

under water by one who has the courage to screw himself into a diving-dress and descend. Says H. Phelps Whitmarsh, speaking of his experiences as a pearl diver:

"Within ten feet of me, half hidden by a mass of oarweb corallines, was the bulk of an immense shark. It appeared to be about twenty five feet long, and although I knew its size was greatly exaggerated by the face-glass, the sight was none the less alarming."

The creature had evidently not perceived me. Save for a slight trembling of the side fins, it lay motionless.

My first thought was to give the signal to ascend. As fish, however, usually want a thing as soon as they see it taken away, I promptly rejected the idea; and lest my bare hands should attract the animal's greed, I hid them under my chest weight.

A sweep of its tail, and the great fish and I were face to face. Not daring to move, I stood like an image, my heart beating wildly and my eyes riveted on its cavernous mouth. He was inspecting me curiously, as if I were some new kind of fish.

Then I became aware, by the almost imperceptible motion of the flexible tail, that it was gradually approaching me, nearer and nearer came the leviathan, the shovel-shaped nose pointing directly to my face-glass, the gleaming under part now plainly visible.

Flesh and blood could bear it no longer. With a yell, I threw up my arms. Instantly there was a swirl of water, a cloud of mud, and my enemy had vanished.

"My boy," said the first proud papa, 'has a bad habit of interrupting me when I'm talking. Your kid isn't old enough for that yet."

"No," replied the other, 'my boy contents himself with interrupting me when I'm sleeping."



PLAYMATES.