

the right-hand seat, nearest the door—the post of least honor. I urge him to go up higher. He declares that he is unworthy. Then I catch hold of him to force him to go higher, and he takes hold of me to prevent it. We have quite a vigorous struggle, lasting some time. Finally he accepts a compromise, and takes a seat half way up the side of the room. I sit down on the seat next lower.

"Before beginning our conversation I send for tea and the water-pipe, and when they arrive I say: 'Please use tea.'

"When he has taken some tea and a puff from the pipe we talk. He asks innumerable polite questions about myself. A Chinese gentleman never comes to business for a quarter or half an hour. Time never troubles an Oriental. He begins by asking:

"What is your honorable name?"

"I, of course, reply that my mean, insignificant name is Pott. The next question from him is:

"What is your honorable kingdom?" And I am obliged, much as I dislike it, to say:

"The small, petty district from which I come is the United States of America."

"How many little stems have you sprouted?" he says. That is the way he asks how old I am.

"I have vainly spent thirty years," I reply.

"Asking after my father, he says: 'Is the honorable and great man of the household living?'"

"It is shocking, I know, but I have to answer: 'The old man is well.'

"Then comes: 'How many precious little ones have you?'"

"I reply gravely: 'I have two little dogs.' (The little dogs are my children.) The last question is:—

"How many children have you in this illustrious institution?"

"My answer is: 'I have a hundred little brothers.'

"Then he comes to business, and says: 'Venerable master, I have brought my little dog here, and worshipfully intrust him to your charge.'

"The little fellow, who has been standing in a corner of the room, comes forward, kneels before me, puts his hands on the ground, knocks his head on the floor, and worships me. I raise him up and send him off to school, and arrangements are made about his dormitory, course of study, etc.

"The gentleman rises to take his leave. 'I have tormented you exceedingly to-day,' he remarks.

"Oh, no," I answer, 'I have dishonored you.'

"As he goes toward the door he keeps saying: 'I am gone; I am gone,' and I reply: 'Go slowly, go slowly.'

"As I follow him to the gate in the garden, he says: 'Please refrain your golden footsteps.'

"When we arrive at the gate we again shake our own hands, bow reverently to each other, and he is gone.

"Their politeness is sometimes carried to an extreme which seems amusing to us. I have seen five or six men enter a door at which they had chanced to meet. They all urge one another to go in first. And this ceremonious politeness is not confined to the upper classes. If two wheelbarrow men meet in a narrow path, and one has to go to one side to let the other pass, the one who kept the road will say, 'I have sinned against you,' and the other will reply, 'Don't mention it.'

"But while they are exceedingly polite among themselves, they are very rude as a rule to a foreigner."—*Selected.*

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## The Canadian Missionary Link.

### PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT TORONTO.

Communications, Orders and Remittances, to be sent to Mrs. Mary A. Newman, 115 Yorkville Avenue, Toronto.

Subscribers will find the dates when their subscriptions expire on the printed address labels of their papers.

### Subscription 25c. Per Annum, Strictly in Advance.

Subscribers failing to receive their papers will please make inquiry for them at their respective Post Offices. If not found notify the Editor at once, giving full name and address and duplicate copies will be forwarded at once.

Send Remittances by Post Office Order, when possible, payable at YORKVILLE Post Office, or by registered letter.

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