

tested by his own experience, nor knows to have been tested and found satisfactory by the experience of others. He prefers what he knows, even though it be imperfect, to any untested novelty however seductive it may seem. It has been impressed upon him from the days of infancy. The nursery story of the little girl who played with the matches and was so burnt to death, is but an illustration of the wisdom of distrusting the unknown.

But while to distrust the unknown in a certain degree is a matter of the simplest prudence, such distrust may exist in so extreme a form as to bar all progress. So it has been with the Chinese. For a long time the Western world was to them only the realm of foreign devils, and the inventions of modern science only infernal arts. Engineering works in the earth might stir the wrath of dragons who dwelt there. A railway train or an electric telegraph might offend some evil spirit. The terror of the unknown, of the unknown foreigner and his ways, of the unknown spiritual world and its presumed hatred of novelties,—these fears long obstructed, and to a great extent still obstruct, even the most moderate progress in China. And what is pre-eminently true of China is in some degree true of all uncivilised peoples and of ignorant or prejudiced men even in