

the black cloud of life, which, if not silver, is at least lighter than the prevailing hue.

But we may certainly call bright silver the joyous smile of an innocent child, the true love which children give to and receive from their mother, vigorous health with few nerves, and the natural love of life, which is the portion of all God's creatures. Add to this an apathetic disposition, an astonishing lack of envy of those in better circumstances, and the fact that a quarrel, which would drive an American woman into a long siege of nervous prostration is but meat and drink to the ordinary Chinese woman, and one has a clearer insight into their lives.

Many deeds of unselfish and even heroic kindness are performed in heathen homes, of which the world hears nothing. In no other land are daughters more carefully guarded from impurity of action—the purity of thought or word is considered unimportant. Although the children do not render the cheerful obedience which Christianity demands, yet the care and protection of infirm and aged parents is a rule rarely departed from.

But notwithstanding all these ameliorating circumstances, it is with a feeling of distinct relief that one leaves a heathen home, too often filled with a "darkness that can be felt," and enters the home of a Christian.

In this connection a short story, which I have already told in *The Independent*, is so apt, that perhaps it is worth repeating. After a morning spent with a Chinese woman, she interrupted my Gospel message with the question, "Is your mother-in-law living?" "No," I answered. "Does your husband get drunk?" "No." "Does he smoke opium?" "No." "Does he beat you?" "No," I replied. "He has never struck me a blow in his life." It took her several moments to become convinced of this astonishing fact, and then she turned to me, saying impressively: "You have been talking to me of heaven and hell in the world to come. Your life now and mine are as heaven and hell."

Those who have seen the changed lives and happy homes of many Chinese women can testify gladly that nothing but Christianity could perform such miracles. One of the strongest proofs a Christian Chinese woman can make of her sincerity is in unbinding her own or her daughter's feet. In Shantung, with the exceptions of a few slaves or prostitutes and Manchus, all women, whatever their condition of life, bind their feet. It requires an enormous amount of moral courage for a Chinese woman to go about with natural feet, thus incurring the curiosity, ridicule, and evil insinuations of everyone she meets. The change, therefore, is very slow, but it is surely coming, owing to the influence of Christian

schools and antfootbinding societies, or rather to the influence of Christianity.

An old godly elder, in the church at Chefoo, whose Christianity was real enough to break an opium habit, strong with the practice of many years, was very fond of telling of the change Christianity wrought in his wife: "Before she became a Christian she had a most violent temper," he would say, in his slow, gentle manner. "She would scold and revile most abusively, and we were all afraid of her. But since she has become a Christian all has changed. Why now she hasn't even a disposition left," was always his quaint conclusion.

Truly in a heathen land is most clearly illustrated the truth, "By their fruits ye shall know them."—*Mrs. George S. Hays, in Missionary Review.*

NOTES ON CHINA.



THE present emperor of China, reigning under the style of Kwangsu, was born in 1871, and succeeded to the throne January 22, 1875. The young emperor has lately shown more of a progressive spirit than usual, and has awakened much opposition thereby, and the Empress Dowager Tszehi, the mother of the previous emperor, has lately assumed control, professing by request of the emperor, her nephew. She is a remarkable woman, and for thirty years has been either regent or the power behind the throne. She is now over sixty years of age, and her full name is Tszehi Toanyu Kangi Chaoyu Chuangcheng Shokung Chinsih.

The population of China and its dependencies is estimated at 402,680,000. At the close of 1896 there were 10,855 foreigners resident in the open ports of China, about one half being in Shanghai.

Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism are three religions acknowledged and believed in by the people, many of whom practice all three religions. The Confucian is the state religion. Roman Catholicism has about 1,000,000 adherents, and the Protestants about 75,000 communicants, of whom over 20,000 are members and probationers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The first protestant missionary to China was Rev. Robert Morrison, who in 1807 went to China as the representative of the London Missionary Society. In 1894 there were 389 foreign ordained missionaries, 294 foreign unordained male missionaries, 641 foreign female missionaries, nearly 4,000 native missionary agents, and 55,093 communicants.—*The Gospel in all Lands.*