

"It is altogether a mistake to suppose the Chinese are deficient in physical courage. This idea has doubtless got abroad from the poltroonly way in which they have demeaned themselves when contending with European forces. But all the world knows that the bravest race on earth is nothing without discipline, weapons, and good leading. The native troops were woefully deficient in all these respects, and so they generally turned their backs on the 'white-faced devils,' as they termed our English soldiers. But experience has shewn that the same men, well trained, equipped, and led, will fight like tigers, and storm a breastwork or walk up to the cannon's mouth, with the utmost coolness and pluck.

"There is an immense difference between the Chinese and the 'mild Hind-doo' in this respect; and Europeans in China know it full well. In India a young 'griff' too often thinks it a glorious thing to kick and cuff the 'niggers' that serve him. He can do it with impunity, for the poor cringing wretch will only turn upon him with his folded hands imploring mercy. But let not the 'griff' try that on in China. If he do—why the chances are, he will have a *striking* proof that the Chinese is a *man*, and not a coward. We heard one amusing case of the kind. A certain young gentleman was assaying to belabour his 'boy,' when, lo and behold! the boy coolly took off his jacket, and said, 'Stop a bit, master; I am quite ready to fight you;' and fight him he did; and if we remember rightly, the master did *not* remain 'master of the field.'

"It is no unusual thing to meet with Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans who firmly believe that it is the destiny of China to become a leading, if not a dominant, nation of the earth. 'Yes,' said two such prophets in our hearing, 'the day will probably come when some Chinese Napoleon will lead his terrible legions to victory and conquest among the distant nations of Europe.' It may be so, who knows? but not, we trust and believe, in *our* day. We would fain hope that a far brighter and more glorious day is in store for both China and Europe,—the day in which the Prince of Peace shall assert his sway, and, binding all nations to Himself with the cords of faith and love, shall reign over a willing people, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same. Even now may be seen in China faint traces of the approach of that day. This will appear when we come to speak of the work of Missions in that land.

"Our stay was too short to give us any entrance into the language of the Celestials, but one linguistic puzzle we solved,—the meaning of the phrase 'pigeon English.' The term had its origin in China. It is the kind of English used by the natives in Hong-Kong and at the free ports of China. The Chinese language being so difficult to learn, and the dialects being so very numerous, none but Missionaries and Government officials ever dream of attempting the vernacular. In this way it has come to pass that an odd kind of *patois* is used in all business transactions. The words are chiefly English, interspersed with a number of common Chinese terms. But such a hash do the Chinese make of the English, that none but the initiated could readily understand them. Their difficulty in pronouncing our language is immense. As a specimen, take the word 'business.' The nearest approach they can make to it is 'pigeon,' hence the term 'pigeon (or business) English.' If they attempt to speak of the Bishop, they forthwith talk about 'Pea-soup.' But they have invented for themselves a far more becoming, if a less savoury definition for his lordship. It is their habit to describe the chief of a department, or the best of any number of objects, as 'number one.' Accordingly they call the General in command 'number one fighting-pigeon (business) man;' but the Bishop is spoken of as 'number one heaven-pigeon-man.'

"Although Hong-Kong itself is a charming and picturesque spot, its Chinese population is of a somewhat exceptional character. Hardly a specimen of a really high-born Chinaman is to be found in the colony. The majority of the people are of the lowest stamp, and are collected from all parts of the country.