

LONGFELLOW'S HOME.

In a series of interesting papers, "Roamings in Classic Massachusetts," by "Fidelis," appearing in *The Week*, the following occurs:—

Longfellow's house, of course, every visitor sees, at least from without, and we had the privilege of standing for a few moments in the poet's library, which has been made familiar to many in illustrated magazine articles. The massive carved chair presented to him by the children, made out of the "spreading chestnut tree" under which "the village blacksmith toiled," catches the eye at once. In the hall, too, one notices instantly "the old clock on the stairs."

Half way up the stairs it stands,
And points and beckons with its hands.

And we seem to see that massive leonine head bent over the round study table as he translates for us its ceaseless burden, "forever, never; never, forever." It is evident that Mr. Longfellow was a lover of good pictures, as the rooms and corridors testify. A large picture that hangs near the door in the entrance hall, representing a Francis can monk leading a donkey which draws a load of green boughs, attracts special notice, and suggests the probability that it may have suggested the image in the second stanza of the "Old Clock on the Stairs."

The house, a spacious one, built of wood of a warm, cream colour picked out with white, and a white-pillared verandah at one side, stands

Somewhat back from the village street,

in a nicely-kept shrubbery, the gate flanked by lilacs and the door by rosebushes. At the time of our visit it was uninhabited by any member of the poet's family—his daughter, who usually resides there, being absent in Europe. The house overlooks the River Charles, being divided from it only by the road and a strip of ground, once belonging to the poet's property, now being planted with trees for a park to be called by his name. The river is not strikingly picturesque at this point. Doubtless the encroaching advances of commerce have tended to make it less so; still, there is enough of quiet, sylvan beauty about its winding course to enable us to understand the feeling that inspired the lines to the

River! that in silence windest
Through the meadows, bright and free,
Till at length thy rest thou findest
In the bosom of the sea!

We pass on from the home of Longfellow; and, a little further on, in the quiet of the soft June evening, we linger wistfully for a few minutes at the gate of Elmwood, then still the home of James Russell Lowell. Embowered in its "overarching vaults of shade," as Dr. Holmes has well described them—the quiet, old white homestead, with its spacious green fields and spreading elms, seemed an ideal home for such a man; and those who love his noble verse can often read into it the happy influences of this lovely and sequestered spot. As we look, a little golden-haired girl comes out, and stands petting a horse just driven into the ample court yard. She is doubtless one of the poet's grandchildren—such an one as he addresses in one of his sweetest poems. It is a pretty picture—seen in the soft evening light with the long shadows of the great trees stretching across the verdant lawn and about the quiet house. But the shadow of death is even then overclouding its summer beauty, and there is no hope of catching a glimpse of its suffering master, who is so soon to precede some of his older friends into the "Silent Land." A charming, shady lane leads from Elmwood to the charmed stillness of Mount Auburn, close by, and in this lovely and sacred spot, where so many "long walks" have come to a close, we appropriately conclude our roamings in "classic Massachusetts." Longfellow's tomb is the first we notice, as we traverse the winding paths amid bright blossoming shrubs. It is a plain, grey sarcophagus, of Grecian style and decoration—Charles Sumner's closely resembles it, though of different tint. Every now and then we come on some family name noted in the annals of New England. The tall, white obelisk that marks the grave of Charlotte Cushman seems to besit her pure and blameless memory. The turf is emerald velvet, and the shrubs and trees show the most untiring care; yet, partly perhaps because of its very trimness, Mount Auburn lacks the subtle charm of free, sylvan beauty which we find in Sleepy Hollow, with its cluster of venerated graves under the venerable pines that seem to sigh a perpetual elegy. The "Mount," which gradually rises towards the centre, is crowned by a round tower, from whence there is an extensive and beautiful view over the picturesque, undulating country for many miles; and from hence we can trace the River Charles, winding like a looped, silver ribbon through meadow and woodland, till it is lost in the smoky haze that hangs over busy Boston and its broad bay.

Reluctantly we bid farewell to lovely Auburn, its shady alleys, and tiny lakelets tenanted by happy ducks instead of swans, and return to Boston—baking in the heat of an intensely warm summer day. The slightly cooler eventide finds us steaming out of its spreading environs—the setting sun that streams in upon us reminding us that we are westward (and homeward) bound. And charming as our roamings in classic Massachusetts have been, we are by no means disposed to prefer even its beauty to our own wilder and more rugged land. A visit to New England does not make one a whit less a Canadian; but it does make us feel the tie of kindred, of true family feeling,

that binds us to those who, despite all political changes, all foreign admixture, are yet *no foreigners*, but our *brothers* in tongue, tradition and literature! On all deep and vital questions the great Anglo-Saxon heart must beat in sympathy, whether in the country of Wordsworth and Burns or that of Lowell and Whittier—in the smaller or the greater Britain—the Old England or the New. We can live amicably side by side in the close commercial relations which seem the only natural and mutually beneficial ones for countries continuous for so long a line of frontier, without any necessity or special motive for political union. And though many thoughtful Americans would prefer union with Canada to extension further south, they would have no desire to force it. Their territory is large enough already! But amicable relations we must have, and those who would hinder these by cherishing jealousies or animosities, can scarcely be considered truly loyal to our country's best interests, or to those of the commonwealth of nations!

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

THE DECADENCE OF RELIGION IN CHINA.

The history of China is a striking instance of the downgrade in religion. The old classics of China, going back to the time of Abraham, show a wonderful knowledge of God. There are passages in those classics about God worthy to stand side by side with kindred passages in the Old Testament. The fathers and founders of the Chinese race appear to have been monotheists. They believed in an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God, the moral governor of the world, and the impartial judge of men.

But gradually the grand conception of a personal God became obscured. Nature-worship crept in. Heaven and earth were deified, and God was confounded with the material heavens and the powers of nature. Heaven was called father, and earth mother, and became China's chief god. Then the sun, moon and stars were personified and worshipped. China bowed down to "the hosts of heaven." The great mountains and rivers were also deified and placed among the state gods.

This nature-worship continues in full force to the present time. In the southern suburb of Peking stands a great marble altar to heaven, where the emperor, accompanied by his high officials, worships on the morning of the winter solstice and other occasions. In the northern suburb is a large square altar to earth, where he worships on the morning of the summer solstice. In the eastern suburb there is an altar to the sun, and in the western suburb an altar to the moon. But nowhere in Peking, and nowhere in China, is there a single temple or a single altar dedicated to the worship of Shang-ti, the god of the ancient classics. Nature has taken the place of God.

Polytheism and idolatry followed. From the dawn of history the Chinese worshipped their ancestors, regarding the dead as in some sort tutelary deities. This naturally led to the deification and worship of deceased heroes and benefactors, till the gods of China, increasing age by age, became legion. Her well-stocked pantheon contains gods of all sorts and sizes. There are gods of heaven and earth: gods of the sun, moon, and stars; gods of the mountains, seas, and rivers: gods of fire, war, and pestilence; wealth, rank, and literature; horses, cows, and insects.

But the degradation did not stop here. The Chinese sank lower still and became demon-worshippers. Charm-long strips of paper bearing cabalistic characters in black, green, and yellow—hang from the lintels of most doors, to protect the house against evil spirits. Night is often made hideous, and sleep impossible, by the firing of crackers to frighten away the demons. Almost every village has its professional exorcist and devil-catcher. The fear of demons is the bugbear of a Chinaman's life, and much of his worship is intended to appease their wrath and propitiate their favour. And once a year, during the seventh moon, a gigantic image of the devil himself is carried in solemn procession through every town and village, followed by the populace, feasted, and worshipped.

Animal-worship, too, is rife. In some parts of North China certain animals are more worshipped than the most popular gods. The tame of even the largest temples is often due not to the gods they contain, but to the supposed presence of a fairy fox, weasel, snake, hedgehog, or rat. These five animals are believed to possess the secret of immortality and the power of self-transformation, and to exercise great influence over the fortunes of men. Their pictures hang in thousands of homes, and there shrines exist everywhere.

I have seen crowds of men, women, and children worshipping at an ordinary fox burrow. And I have seen one of the great gates of Peking thronged day after day with carriages and pedestrians going to worship a fairy fox supposed to have been seen outside the city walls. Any day small yellow handbills may be seen on the walls and boardings of Peking, assuring the people that "prayer to the venerable fairy fox is certain to be answered."

Thus low have the great Chinese people fallen, literally fulfilling the words of the apostle Paul: "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." This is the result of 4,000 years of continuous national life. During those long centuries China has grown enormously in power, wealth and intelligence. But in religious know-

ledge the rolling centuries have witnessed only gradual degradation and decay. China, "by wisdom, knew not God."

Once upon a time a wise man and a simple child of nature were put into a labyrinth without a clew to see which would find his way out first. Both perished in the vain attempt. Neither wisdom nor simplicity prevailed. The Chinese, with his civilization and learning, is that wise man, and the African savage is that child of nature. Both have failed to find God, and have become worshippers of blind nature, dead men, evil demons, and dumb animals. Without the Bible man is without a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. The Bible is the only clew to the perplexing problems of life, and the only light through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

A new era has begun in China, an era of railways, telegraphs, and science-schools. Before the fierce light of modern science the gross idolatry of China must gradually disappear. But science, like the sun, conceals more than it reveals—it shows us earth, but shuts out the heavens with their infinite starry depths. Science may destroy the idols, but will not reveal God. It may breed scepticism, but will not inspire faith. And I would rather see the Chinese polytheists than atheists. Superstition is better than unbelief. Only the Bible can give back to China the lost knowledge of God, and we have now a grand opportunity of giving her that Bible. The whole of that great empire is now open to us, and we are free to preach the Gospel and to distribute the word of life among its teeming millions.—By Rev. George Owen of Peking, in *Missionary Chronicle*.

THE INDIAN CENSUS.

A remarkable article appeared lately in the *London Times* on the disclosures which are being evolved from the Indian census. One of these disclosures is that Christianity is progressing much more rapidly than is generally believed.

"Missionary after missionary," the article says, "comes home from India, and quite honestly laments, on British platforms, the fewness of his conversions. The annual reports of several of the great missionary societies tell the same frankly despondent tale. Unsympathetic critics please themselves by reckoning up the cost of each convert at so many pounds sterling in three figures. The Government of India does not concern itself with conversions, but its census officers had to ascertain the facts regarding the native Christians, exactly as they had to ascertain the facts with reference to any other class of the population. They scrutinized the figures supplied for earlier years, with the help of those officially ascertained by the first general census of India in 1872, and compared the whole with the returns of the second Indian census in 1881. They found that the native Christians in British India were increasing at a rate unknown among any other considerable section of the population, at a rate more than four times higher than the population of India as a whole. It appeared also that this increase of the native Christians was much greater than what may be termed the machinery for their supervision and control. While the number of mission stations had increased only threefold between 1851 and 1881, the number of native Protestant or Anglican Christians had multiplied more than fivefold, and the number of native communicants (the most closely cared for class) by nearly tenfold. During the nine years from the first general census of 1872 to the second, in 1881, it was found that the native Christians in British India had increased by over thirty per cent., while the general population of British India had increased by less than seven per cent.

"These figures were startling, but behind them were figures still more significant. The maximum of care and supervision over the native Christian communities is unquestionably given by the vigorous and comparatively youthful missionary bodies in the British provinces; it is given in a less degree among the more old-fashioned mixed Roman Catholic and Protestant native Christians in the native states; it is given in a still smaller measure among the ancient Christian settlements of Portuguese India, where the Christians form the ordinary peasantry rather than a specially cared for class. The rate of their numerical increase appeared to coincide with the degree of supervision or protection accorded. While in British India the native Christians had increased from 1872 to 1881 by 30.2 per cent., they had increased in the native states by only 11.9 per cent., and in Portuguese India by 7.4 per cent. The census, however, can deal only with numerical increase. But the results of a protected status on an Indian community appear not only in a growth of numbers—it also tends to raise its social position. A recent report on public instruction in Madras, one of the earliest fields for Protestant missionary enterprise, directs attention to this aspect of the case. The *Madras Times*, commenting on the official returns thus furnished, states that, while among the non-Christian population only thirty-eight per cent. of the boys of school-going age are actually receiving education, the proportion among the native Christian boys is as high as sixty-one per cent. The report on public instruction in Madras sums up the situation in the following weighty words: 'There can be no question, if this community pursues with steadiness the present policy of its teachers, that, with the immense advantage it possesses in the way of educational institutions, in the course of a generation it will have secured a preponderating position in all the great professions, and possibly too in the industrial enterprise of the country.'