

only of far greater antiquity — with a population much denser and more industrious than that of any European empire, everything that marks Chinese history and literature has hitherto given a distressing sort of impression of *charred humanity* that has only choked us in the attempt to get it down.

Their history seems utterly devoid of the rhythm and human depth which characterizes more or less that of every other Oriental as well as Western people. Like their language, it appears to be bandaged up out of stifling monosyllables. There is nothing, even in the national crimes, to inspire the awe and consternation which invests the sin of other nations; its blackness is the dead blackness of charcoal, not the darkness of those perverted affections which usually make national guilt as majestic as it is fearful. All this kind of impression, which may have arisen to some extent from want of sympathy and intelligence on the part of Englishmen, as well as from Chinese peculiarity, has, at all events, been tolerably universal amongst us. Tartars and Hindoos, Turks and Egyptians, and even the savage Dyaks, the negroes of Dahomey, and the inarticulate Bushmen, all of them touch chords of interest which the elaborate civilization of China has failed to reach. The poor cheated Mongols — mere tools of the Chinese — seem in *their* neighborhood like simple estimable human beings, beside shrill, artificial dolls, whose very knavishness is thin, passionless, and monotonous. Even Chinese religion seems to have been utterly devoid of tender or majestic elements — their prophetic mood never rising above pithy and sensible Proverbialism — and their ritual being linked with the most dreary and craven superstitions. In short, the