

infinitely more powerful and manageable. Nor was it until a still later period that man asserted his supremacy over that most delightful and congenial of all the elements—the atmosphere—which now bears our burdens and our bodies, from clime to clime, with such perfect safety, and with all the speed which our tremendous moving powers can bestow.

Erpias. To my mind, the tracing of these changes, and the revolutions consequent upon them, are the most interesting parts of human history. What vast changes, moral, political, and social, have, within the last two hundred years, metamorphosed the whole aspect of the world and its inhabitants!—and how contracted would be the policy that would limit our acquaintance with the elements of so mighty a revolution! How auspicious for the human race was the circumstance that from Britain—the land of liberty—emanated those inventions which, had they been disclosed in some of the many despotic states which then existed, especially in such a diabolically rapacious state as Russia, might have crushed a subjugated world, and banished liberty for ages. Even as it was, you may remember the struggles, vain and weak, of despotism aided by hireling ingenuity, against the might of science, liberty, and humanity.

Myrto. It is indeed a spirit-stirring tale how, by the spread of the electric telegraph, and of railroads and steam-navigation, and the consequently increased communication of ideas, the despots of the earth began to be troubled and dismayed and to double the chains of their thralldom. Other inventions followed. The navigation of the balloon was accomplished, and the crisis was precipitated. Then came that ever-memorable time, when, in one night, by a single flight of free war-balloons, the power of the Autocrat of Russia was paralyzed over all his vast domains—his Siberian captives freed—Poland, Circassia, and Persia, delivered from his galling chain—and the boon, then scarcely desired or understood by the degraded people, of personal and political liberty, conferred on the thralls and serfs of his realm—and all without the shedding of blood. It was speedily seen that all personal thralldom, and all those commercial restrictions, necessary under a different order of things, must be abandoned. The world speedily resolved itself into a vast community—the laws of justice and humanity were everywhere enforced—and thus has commenced the system which has ripened into our present state, so much transcending the golden age fabled by the poets of ancient times.

Erpias.—How it charms me to hear you speak with such enthusiasm! It has sometimes struck me that our present times are rather too unexciting—that there is too little left of that novelty and adventure which gave interest to the olden time. We have now no fond lovers or affectionate relations in ignorance of the fate of some long absent object of their attachment—the telegraph has destroyed all that source of interest since our antipodes can now communicate with us with the rapidity of speech. All the wonderful tales of miscreants fleeing from justice are now matters of mere history, since the arm of justice encompasses the globe.

Myrto. The interest of all these things lies in their history. They are most picturesque when viewed from a distance; but, could the story of our age have been told to our predecessors, what a marvel—what a miracle would it have appeared to them! The world all united in one community; harmony universally prevalent; and disputes decided not by the blind and ruthless arbiter War, but by a wise and just Council, whose authority extends over the whole world; the rights of all men respected; every human life valued and cared for; the glories and comforts of the earth, in all its regions, thrown open, as free as the light and air, to all the race of Adam; a universal language known and used by all, not in virtue of any despotic decree, but from a universal desire for it, produced by the most powerful of motives—universal convenience; and directed towards its end by the greatest wisdom and talent; the means of health and longevity understood and provided for all men; and human happiness incalculably increased.

Erpias. Yes, these, although familiar to us, are indeed are wonders, compared to which those of the ancients, such as the voyage of Jason in quest of the golden fleece, or of Columbus in search of what was called the New World, sink into child's play. Had such things been predicted to that conceited generation, the men of the nineteenth century, they would have treated the prophet as a silly dreamer. They, indeed, were so much occupied with the pursuits of money-making, or of personal enjoyment, that they would on no account, engage in any scheme, however excellent, unless, as the phrase was, it would pay. That age saw a large portion of the population of England degraded into the slaves of manufacturing capitalists, under a system infinitely more debasing than the avowed slavery of feudalism, or of Russian barbarism. In those days, many of the nobles of the earth expended vast sums in the course of a year, on objects of mere personal enjoyment or splendour, when one tithe devoted to the development of science, would have vastly accelerated the approach of such happy days as those we now possess, and been to themselves a source of intense gratification.

Myrto. Had the gentlemen of England devoted to scientific invention one hundredth part of the money annually expended on the single article fox-hunting, it would have told on the destinies of humanity. Yet we know there were some splendid exceptions, although too few for any general effect. Another cause of the tardiness of improvement, was the timorousness of scientific men. They fear-

ed to peril their reputation by joining in or encouraging any great scheme. And here let me make an honourable exception of a chemical professor of Edinburgh, Dr. Hope, a man of high reputation, who, at a dinner given in his honour by the most eminent citizens of Edinburgh, publicly avowed his belief that, in the course of time, the electrical telegraph would be established and adopted. I believe it was from this species of cowardice that the absurd idea of the impossibility of navigating the balloon through the atmosphere was so long allowed to prevail, and inventive ingenuity diverted from the attempt. But I fear it is time to turn, as Paulina and her friend will be expecting me soon—and you will accompany me.

Erpias. With infinite pleasure; yet, as we return, I trust you will continue the interesting conversation in which we have been engaged.

Myrto. Willingly. I may mention that the subject of the arrangements of the Universal Council itself will become matter of discussion at its next meeting. Last year it took place in the great plain at Texas, and was attended by four hundred millions of persons; but, although the arrangements were such as completely to prevent all confusion, it was found difficult for a single speaker, even with all our inventions for increasing the volume of sound, to make himself heard by so great a number. A proposal is to be submitted for remedying this evil.

Erpias. Look, my friend, is not that Paulina whom I see in the air, about twenty or thirty miles off?

Myrto. Lend me your glass. It is so; she is giving our little boy a practical lesson in the geography of Japan, by way of recreation; for at present he has the holidays. Poor little fellow! he takes to his studies with right good will. He and his sister, accompanied by their tutor, have already been four times over the globe, while engaged in successive courses of modern history, geology, botany, and geography. How delightful it is that instruction is now combined with exercise, fresh air, and happiness!—how much manly energy was formerly lost by the exclusively bookish system of education!

Erpias. I shall be truly happy to meet with my excellent friend Paulina. Where are you living at present?

Myrto. In the ancient city of Queatay. You may now see its towers and domes gilded by the setting sun. How different (excuse me for so often reverting to these historical discussions) from the same city, indeed from all cities, three hundred years ago, when every house poured into the polluted atmosphere its complement of smoke, destroying its healthfulness and defiling its architecture—when filth, fetid odours, narrow streets, and a low and vicious class of population, dishonoured and degraded every city, driving many refined minds into constant residence in the country! These evils our ancestors considered inseparable from large cities. The physical ones, however, have been remedied by science; and it has now been found, that, if vice and discord have a tendency to concentrate in cities, so also have their antagonist forces, wisdom and virtue; that the later influences, if fairly and vigorously brought into the field, are ever an overmatch for the former; and that, by the adoption of sound principles and systems, the just and virtuous regulation of a city is rendered easier than that of a rural district. The social appetency of human nature is good, and tends to good; negligence and ignorance alone have led to its producing evil. But I see Paulina has recognised you, and is hastening towards us. I shall leave you with her for a few minutes, until I have a short telegraphic communication with a mercantile friend at Cape Horn, regarding some commodities which he is desirous of purchasing.—*Au revoir.*

CUSTOMS OF THE UNITED STATES

LETTERS OF LILIAN CHING, TO HIS BRETHREN IN THE ISLAND OF LOO-CHOO; WRITTEN DURING HIS RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.

LETTER V.

Mount Discovery, 11th month, 1825.

While writing of the inconsistencies of Christians, I know not where to end. But as in the preceding letter I mentioned more than one inconsistency, I will now state another, which has occurred to my mind. *Religious liberty* is a privilege which the people of this country profess to regard as a natural and inalienable right; and they have so formed their constitutions as to allow every man to worship God in that manner which is most agreeable to his own mind. No man is exposed by their laws to any penalty for not attending meetings for religious worship. A law which would expose any man to pay a fine of two or three dollars every time he neglects the stated meetings for the worship of God, would be regarded by this people as unjust, tyrannical, and cruel. In like manner, they would regard a law which should expose the people of any sect to penalties for not conforming to a religious ceremony which they believe to be offensive to God. This you will say is right, and as it should be, and be ready to ask, where or what is the inconsistency?

To make you understand this, I must observe, that in each of the states, there are a few people who dissent from the majority in respect to war, and the propriety of learning the art of manslaughter. Their consciences forbid them to fight, and also forbid

them to cultivate a fighting spirit, or to attend the appointed meetings, for what are called trainings or reviews—that is, meetings for teaching men how to kill one another. Now observe the inconsistency.—In several of the states, the laws expose these peaceable men to fines or imprisonments for omitting to attend these trainings or reviews; or in other words, they are fined for being of so peaceable a character that they cannot learn to imbue their hands in human blood! Thus, while this people allow free liberty of conscience in regard to the worship of God, they deny this liberty in respect to obeying their Maker's command—"Thou shalt do no murder"—at least, all must *learn to kill*, or be fined for their neglect. Thus they make it a greater offence to neglect learning to fight, than totally to neglect all appearance of worshipping their Maker; and while the people are allowed the rights of conscience in almost every other respect, they are exposed to penalties for conscientiously refusing to cultivate the spirit of war and violence!

A law which exposes men to penalties for being of peaceable opinions and dispositions must be both inhuman and impolitic. If all men were of such opinions and dispositions, war could never occur, and all the pretenses of necessary preparation for it would be entirely removed. Insurrections, civil wars, and wars between different states, would be alike impossible. If then peace be the object which rulers desire, they should do all they can by precept and example, to cultivate and render popular, peaceable principles and dispositions. This course would tend to their own security, and to the happiness of their subjects. But as if war were the chief end of man, there is no other thing for which Christian nations have been at so much expense, or to which they have made such enormous sacrifices. A hundredth part of this expense, if wisely applied, would long ago have rendered war the abhorrence of Christendom, if not of the whole world. L. C.

LETTER VI.

Mount Discovery, 12th month, 1825.

I have had opportunity to read in this country what was published in England by Capt. Hall and Dr. McLeod, of the British ships of war, relating to our Island, and the character of its inhabitants. The following extracts will show that our people made a favorable impression on the minds of the British warriors.

"Many of these Islanders displayed a spirit of intelligence and genius—they all seemed to be gifted with a sort of politeness, which had the fairest claim to be termed natural, for there was nothing constrained, nothing stiff or studied in it."

"It was interesting to observe, indeed, how early the gentle and engaging manners of all classes here, won upon the sailors, no less than the officers. The natives from the first were treated with entire confidence; no watch was ever kept over them, nor were they excluded from any part of the ships; and not only was nothing stolen, but when any thing was lost, nobody even suspected for an instant that it had been taken by them."

"These islanders are represented as being remarkable for their honesty and adherence to truth, and to this character they appear to be justly entitled. That proud and haughty feeling of national superiority, so strongly existing among the common class of British seamen, which induces them to hold all foreigners cheap, and to treat them with contempt, often calling them *outlandish* lubbers in their own country, was at this Island, completely subdued and tamed by the gentle manners and kind behavior of the most pacific people in the world."

"Although completely intermixed, and often working together both on shore and on board, not a single quarrel or complaint took place on either side, during the whole of our stay. On the contrary, each succeeding day added to friendship and cordiality."

"The administration of the government seems to partake of the general mildness of the people; and yet it appears highly efficient from the very great order which is always maintained, and the general diffusion of happiness."

"Crimes are said to be very unfrequent among them, and they seem to go perfectly unarmed; for we observed no warlike instruments of any description! Not even a bow or an arrow was to be seen! And when they observed the effect of our fowling pieces in the hands of some of our gentlemen, they begged that they might not kill the birds, which they were always glad to see about their houses. An order was immediately issued to desist from this sort of sporting."

"We never saw any punishments inflicted at Loo Choo; a tap of a fan, or an angry look was the severest chastisement ever resorted to, as far as we could discover. In giving orders, the chiefs were mild, though firm; and the people, always obeyed with cheerfulness."

"There is not an act of these excellent and interesting people, which the mind has not pleasure in contemplating and recollecting."

The clerk of one of the ships wrote a poetical "Farewell" on leaving our Island, which was published in Dr. McLeod's account of our people. This also is much in our favour. One of these stanzas I will transcribe:

"Farewell, dear isle! on you may breathe
Of civil discord never blow!
Far from your shores be plague and death,
And far—oh far—the hostile foe."

It was gratifying to me—and I presume it will be so to you, to know that the Britons gave so favorable an account of our country.