

candidate who passed with honor the great old-style examination held every 3 years at Peking had been engaged for at least 12 years in a very careful study of the historical, literary, and philosophic records of China, and in order to pass these examinations, must have acquired a first-class knowledge of these records together with an ability to express himself in literary Chinese of a high order, free from all mistakes of composition, grammar, or even calligraphy. Only what the Chinese call superior men could pass such an examination, and they were immediately given high and important positions. In the old Chinese Government they automatically established among the vast army of civil servants of China a respect for the lessons learned by several thousand years of experience that might well be envied by the administrators of many modern western nations.

What is most needed in the world to-day is a credit balance in China's favor in the public opinion of the leaders of the world which will permit a calm and considerate study of what China's actual and future needs are and of her proper relations to the rest of the world. At the present time, when diplomatic, business, and missionary relationships have been pretty largely disrupted, it is perhaps a good time to undertake, in cooperation with the leading minds of China, a new appraisal of China from an entirely different standpoint; in other words, attempt to make a dispassionate appraisal of just what China has to teach the rest of the world as well as what China could, with advantage, learn from the rest of the world. Such a study would not be without obvious advantages to the western nations, provided the secret of China's apparently permanent civilization and orderly Government, maintained with a minimum of force, could be found out and elucidated. At any rate, the problem of how to understand and how to live in good neighborly relations with the Chinese people is of more than passing importance in view of the fact that they constitute nearly a third of the human race and occupy a vast region replete with natural resources of every description and still more so in view of the fact that they have an enviable reputation for hard work, sobriety, technical skill, and business ability. It goes without saying that one of the best ways to learn about the Chinese is to use the methods they themselves have used for ages with such good results, namely, to study the records of their illustrious past. These records, fortunately, are still obtainable and, furthermore, obtainable at very moderate cost. They are written in a language which has changed less since the time of Christ than the English language has since the time of Queen Elizabeth. It would seem, therefore, that the obvious and proper thing for this country and other western countries to do would be to obtain these records, study them critically and sympathetically with the idea of obtaining thereby a new basis for a proper appraisal and sympathetic understanding of the Chinese people and their attainments.