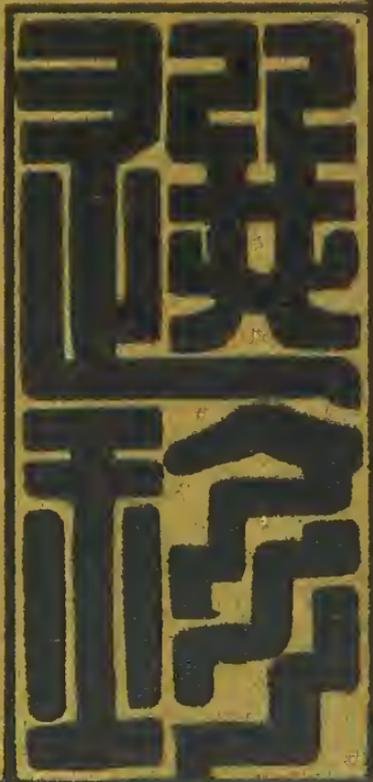
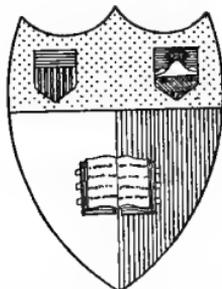


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GEMS OF

CHINESE LITERATURE

Chapman
3/19/15

BY

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Chinese Studio,' 'Historic China,' &c.*

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PREFACE.



THE present volume is a venture in a new direction. English readers will search in vain for any work leading to an acquaintanceship, however slight, with the general literature of China. Dr. Legge's colossal labours have indeed placed the canonical books of Confucianism within easy reach of the curious; but the immense bulk of Chinese authorship is still virgin soil and remains to be efficiently explored.

I have therefore ventured to offer an instalment of short extracts from the works of the most famous writers of all ages, upon which time has set an approving seal. These are chronologically arranged, and cover a period extending from B.C. 550 to A.D. 1650—two thousand two hundred years. Short biographical and dynastic notices will be found scattered through the volume in

their proper places ; also such brief foot-notes as seemed to me necessary to the occasion.

“Untold treasures,” says Professor G. VON DER GABELENTZ, “lie hidden in the rich lodes of Chinese literature.” Now without committing myself to exaggeration or misdirection as to the practical value of these treasures, I dare assert that the old pride, arrogance, and exclusiveness of the Chinese are readily intelligible to any one who has faithfully examined the literature of China and hung over the burning words of her great writers. The sickly praises lavished by passing travellers upon Japan and her fitful civilisations ; the odious comparisons drawn by superficial observers to the disparagement of China, of her slowly-changing institutions, and of her massive national characteristics ;—these are gall and wormwood to all who know under whose tuition it was that Japan first learned to read, to write, and to think. (See p. 249.)

I do not flatter myself that all the extracts given will be of equal interest to all readers. I have not catered for any particular taste, but have striven to supply a small handbook of Chinese literature, as complete as circumstances would permit.

In the process of translation I have kept verbal accuracy steadily in view, so that the work may be available to students of Chinese in one sense as a key. But with due regard to the requirements of a general public, impatient of long strings of unpronounceable names and of allusions which for the most part would be shorn of all meaning and point, I have eliminated these, wherever it was possible to do so without obscuring or otherwise interfering with the leading idea in the text. I have also been compelled sometimes to expand and sometimes to compress;—on the one hand, by an extreme grammatical terseness, intelligible enough in the original; on the other, by a redundancy of expression, which, while offering wide scope for literary *tours de force* (compare Psalm cxix.), contrasts strangely with the verbal condensation aforesaid. It must however always be borne in mind that translators are but traitors at the best, and that translations may be moonlight and water while the originals are sunlight and wine.

I can only trust that this effort will at any rate advance some English readers a step towards more intimate knowledge and warmer appreciation

of an ancient and wonderful people. With such hope it was planned, in the companionship of one whose greatest joy, were joy any longer possible to her, would be to know that object achieved.

HERBERT A. GILES.

THE SCOTTISH CLUB,
15th October, 1883.

NOTE ON CHINESE LITERATURE.



THE CHOU AND CH'IN DYNASTIES : 550-200 B.C.

THE literature of the above dynasties includes of course the writings of Confucius, Mencius, and Tso-ch'iu Ming ; but inasmuch as these have been already translated in full by Dr. LEGGE, and moreover occupy much the same extra-literary position as the Bible does with ourselves, I have confined myself to a few detached extracts only.

The texts of this period may be described as rude and rugged in style, but full of vigorous expression, and unmatched in dramatic power. Many scenes in the *Tso Chuan* are brought as vividly before the mind of the reader as are the incidents of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Unfortunately, such excellencies depend upon something beyond the reach of a translator, who has to be content with a barely approximate result.

In poetry, excluding the *Odes*, we have the beautiful but terribly obscure *Elegies*, chiefly from the pen of CH'U P'ING, who might not inaptly be compared with PINDAR in diction and wealth of words. In philosophy, the subtle speculations of CHUANG TZŪ and LIEH TZŪ, exponents of the doctrines enunciated by LAO TZŪ, would beyond all doubt have commanded a hearing in the contemporary schools of Greece.

THE HAN DYNASTY : 200 B.C. TO 200 A.D.

The literature of the Hans reflects the stateliness of the age. It is further distinguished by a tone of practical common sense, strikingly and logically expressed. The meanings of words were still however by no means accurately fixed, neither had the written language reached that

degree of grammatical polish it was ultimately destined to acquire. Consequently, the scrupulous translator often finds himself involved in a maze of impossible collocations, from which he has to extricate himself by the clue of sense alone. Yet it was under such conditions that SSU-MA CH'EN—truly named the Herodotus of China—committed to writing his most splendid history, and CH'AO TS'Ō drew faithful conclusions from long and elaborately worded premisses.

The poetry of the period may be dismissed as wanting in that essential which differentiates poetry from verse. The philosophers of the day occupied themselves chiefly in editing and commenting upon the sacred books. Their interpretations were duly accepted for many centuries until at length doomed to pale in the flood of a brighter light. (See p. 217.)

THE SIX DYNASTIES : 200-600 A.D.

This period was virtually an interregnum, an age of literary stagnation. Though covering no less than four centuries, it produced but one really great writer, in consequence, probably, of the disturbed and unsatisfactory state of public affairs, so unfavourable to the development of literary talent.

THE T'ANG DYNASTY : 600-900 A.D.

With the final establishment of the above dynasty authorship rapidly revived. It was the epoch of glittering poetry (untranslatable, alas!), of satire, of invective, of irony, and of opposition to the strange and fascinating creed of Buddha. Imagination began to come more freely into play, and the language to flow more easily and more musically, as though responsive to the demands of art.

THE SUNG DYNASTY : 900-1200 A.D.

This was admittedly the Elizabethan age of Chinese literature. More great writers in all branches flourished

under this than under any other dynasty before or since. Their styles are massive and grand, without grammatical flaw, exquisitely cadenced, and thrilling the reader with an inexpressible thrill. They exhibit to perfection what the Rev. ARTHUR SMITH, a most accurate writer on Chinese topics, calls "an indescribable loftiness of style, which resembles expression in music."

The poetry of the age is second only to that of the T'angs. The historians rank with, but after, their famous predecessor of the Han dynasty. But CHU HSI swept away the existing interpretations of Confucianism, and established his own for ever. (See p. 217.)

THE YUAN AND MING DYNASTIES : 1200-1650 A.D.

Under the Yüan (Mongol) and Ming dynasties, literary execution remained stationary as regards accuracy of structure and balance of sentences. But the imaginative power became visibly weaker, to decline later on to a still lower level of rule-and-line mediocrity.

With the Ming dynasty this volume concludes. The literature of the present dynasty has hardly passed beyond the limits of essayism and artificial verse. The book-market is flooded with collections of essays and poems on themes chosen from the sacred books, logically worded and correctly constructed, but wanting in the chief feature of the work of genius—originality of thought. Still from a literary point of view, there have been not a few elegant composers both of poetry and of prose. Chief among these we may reckon LAN LU-CHOU, author of the *Whole Duty of Woman*, and of a vast number of essays on a variety of subjects ; also TSENG KUO-FAN, the hero of the T'ai-p'ing rebellion, and father of the present Ambassador to Western Powers. As an actual specimen of the best style of modern composition, I may draw the reader's attention to the Chinese preface, in *cursiv-schrift*, which adorns the cover of this book. It was very kindly written for me by a rising young graduate of Foochow, named NIEN YÜN-TING, through the medium of

my friend, Mr. KAW HONG-BENG (M.A., Edinburgh), to whose wide acquaintance with the literatures and philosophies of China, England, France, Germany, and Ancient Greece and Rome, I am indebted for many luminous suggestions.* This preface runs as follows :—

“For sixteen years past I have been a diligent student of the language and literature of the Chinese people. I have now attempted to render into the English tongue specimens of their standard authors of past ages, in the hope that my countrymen may thereby learn something of the literary achievements of a great empire, whose inhabitants held learning in high esteem when our own painted forefathers were running naked and houseless in the woods and living on berries and raw meat.”†

* See pp. 176, 177.

† “My poor friend, the young master of arts who indited the preface for your *Gems*, is dead, and has not left his peer.”—*Letter of 12th August, 1883.*

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'What work nobler than transplanting foreign thought?'

—CARLYLE.

GEMS OF CHINESE LITERATURE.



K'UNG FU-TZÜ.

(*Latinized into* CONFUCIUS.)

B.C. 551-479.

[Confucius was the Socrates of China. He taught virtue for its own sake, unsupported by reference to the supernatural, any reliance upon which he steadily, though indirectly, condemned. He seems, however, to have thoroughly believed in a Power higher than man; but whether as a force physical, or a force moral, or both, it is quite impossible to decide. Under no circumstances can he be regarded as the founder of a "religion" in the ordinary sense of the term.

Confucius held several official appointments, and finally rose to be chief Minister of Justice in his native State. He "became the idol of the people, and flew in songs through their mouths." But by the intrigues of a neighbouring prince, he found himself compelled to resign office, and went into voluntary exile, wandering from place to place, and employing himself in literary pursuits, until at length he returned home, where death came upon him in the seventy-third year of his age.

He was an editor rather than an author. He collected and edited the ancient national songs now known as the *Odes*. He arranged and edited those old records which form the *Book of History*. He compiled the annals of his own State, dating from some 200 years previous to the times in which he lived. His discourses were treasured up in the hearts of his disciples, and were committed to writing in later years.]

EXTRACTS FROM THE *DISCOURSES*.

THE Master said—

A plausible tongue and a fascinating expression are seldom associated with true virtue.

A youth should be filial at home, respectful abroad. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, but cultivate the friendship of the good. Then, whatsoever of energy may be left to him, he should devote to the improvement of his mind.

Let loyalty and truth be paramount with you. Have no friends not equal to yourself. If you have faults, shrink not from correcting them.

Learning without thought is labour lost. Thought without learning is intellectual death.

The study of the supernatural is injurious indeed.

Yu! shall I teach you in what true knowledge consists? To know what you do know, and to know what you do not know—that is true knowledge.

A man without truthfulness!—I know not how that can be.

In mourning, it is better to be sincere than to be punctilious.

He who offends against God* has none to whom he can pray.

* The indefinable "Power" mentioned on p. I, explained by the most famous of all commentators as "abstract Right."

Riches and honours are what men desire ; yet except in accordance with right these should not be enjoyed. Poverty and degradation are what men dread ; yet except in accordance with right these should not be avoided.

The faults of men are characteristic of themselves. By observing a man's faults you may infer what his virtues are.

If a man hear the Truth in the morning, he may die in the evening without regret.

[Chi Wên thought thrice and then acted. The Master said] Twice will do.

Man is born to be upright. If he be not so, and yet live, he is lucky to have escaped.

Those who know the Truth are not equal to those who love it ; nor those who love it to those who delight in it.

[A disciple having asked for a definition of charity, the Master said] LOVE ONE ANOTHER ! [Having further asked for a definition of knowledge, the Master said] KNOW ONE ANOTHER !

The Master said—

Rare are they who prefer virtue to the pleasures of sense.

The commander-in-chief of an army may be carried captive, but the convictions even of the meanest man cannot be taken from him.

[A disciple having enquired about serving the spirits of the dead, the Master said] You are not even able to serve living men. How then should you serve spirits? [Having further enquired about death, the Master said] You do not even understand life. How then should you understand death?

The Master said—

In hearing litigations, I am like any one else. I differ, in wishing to prevent these litigations.

[Some one asked Confucius, saying, Master, what think you concerning the principle that good should be returned for evil? The Master replied] What then will you return for good? No: RETURN GOOD FOR GOOD; FOR EVIL, JUSTICE.

[A disciple having asked for a rule of life in a word, the Master said] Is not *Reciprocity* that word? WHAT YOU WOULD NOT OTHERS SHOULD DO UNTO YOU, DO NOT UNTO THEM!*

* An attempt has been made to show that this is after all only a negative (and therefore comparatively worthless) enunciation of the Golden Rule as expressed positively by Christ. The worthlessness, if any, lies in the terms of such an argument. For instance, you would not that others should abstain from helping you in trouble. Therefore you do not abstain from helping them in trouble. Consequently, you help them; thus doing unto others what you would they should do unto you.

TSO-CH'IU MING.

PROBABLY 4TH AND 5TH CENTURIES B.C.

[Very little is known of this writer. His most important work, the *Tso Chuan*, was a so-called commentary on the annals compiled by Confucius, mentioned on p. 1. Those annals consisted of bald statements of the principal events which took place in the successive years of each prince's reign. Tso-ch'iu Ming supplemented these by detailed accounts of the various incidents alluded to; and thus we have a vivid panorama of the wars and treaties, the intrigues and dissensions, the loves and hates, of China's feudal age. The style of the work is grand in the extreme, and is a perfect repertory of Chinese proverbs and familiar household words.]

THE BATTLE OF CH'ANG-CHŎ.

[In the tenth year of his reign, in spring, in the first moon, Duke Chuang defeated the army of the Ch'i State at Ch'ang-Chŏ.—*Annals.*]

THE State of Ch'i having declared war against us, our duke was about to give battle, when a man named Kuei begged for an audience. Kuei's clansmen had said to him, "The authorities will decide upon the proper strategy; what place will there be in their counsels for you?" To which Kuei had replied, "They are but a poor lot, and have no idea whatever of deep-laid plans."

Accordingly, Kuei was admitted to see the duke, and at once enquired, saying, "On the strength of

what is your Highness about to fight?" "I have never monopolized the comforts of food and raiment," replied the duke; "I have always shared with others." "That," said Kuei, "is a small favour, extending only to a few. The people will not rally round you on that account alone." "Then," continued the duke, "in the sacrifices to the Gods I have trusted more to earnestness of heart than to costly displays." "That again," objected Kuei, "is an insufficient basis. The Gods will not bless your arms on that account alone." "And in all judicial investigations," added the duke, "though oft-times unable to ascertain the precise truth, I have always given my decision in accordance with the evidence before me." "Ha!" cried Kuei; "so far you have done your duty to the people, and you may risk a battle on that. I myself pray to be allowed to accompany your Highness." To this the duke acceded, and took Kuei with him in his own chariot.

The battle was fought at Ch'ang-chö; and on sighting the enemy our duke would have forthwith given orders to beat an attack, but Kuei said "Not yet!" Only when the enemy's drums had sounded thrice did Kuei shout out, "Now!"

Our victory was complete; and the duke would promptly have given orders to pursue, had not Kuei again said, "Not yet!" The latter then alighted and examined the tracks of the enemy's chariot-wheels; after which he got up on the hand-rail in front, and following the flying foe with his eye, cried out, "Now!" Thereupon the order was given to pursue.

When the battle had been gained, our duke asked Kuei for an explanation of his tactics. "A battle," replied Kuei, "depends wholly upon the martial ardour of the combatants. At the first roll of the drum, that ardour is violently excited; with the second, it begins to flag; with the third, it is exhausted. Now, when the enemy's ardour was at this last stage, ours was at its highest pitch: therefore we conquered them. Still, against a formidable foe, one should be prepared for anything. I feared an ambuscade; but I found that their wheel-tracks were in evident disorder. I then looked at their standards, and saw that these also were in confusion. Therefore I gave the word to pursue."*

BURNING A WIZARD.

[Twenty-first year of Duke Hsi:—In summer there was a great drought.—*Annals*.]

Thereupon the duke wished to burn a wizard; but his chief minister said to him, "That will avail nothing against the drought. Rather mend the city walls; diminish consumption; be economical; and devote

* My first acquaintance with the sacred books of China was through the medium of Dr. Legge's translations; and when I subsequently came to make free use of native commentaries, I could not but be impressed by the strict verbal accuracy of his renderings, especially in regard to the *Tso Chuan*. To this rule there are necessarily exceptions, of a more or less serious character; but their grand total would be wholly insufficient to cast a shadow upon that which is truly a monument more lasting than brass.

every energy to gathering in the harvest. This is the proper course to take : what can a wizard do for you? If God now desires his death, he might as well have never been born. And if he can cause a drought, to burn him would only make it worse."

The duke followed this advice ; and in the ensuing season, although there was distress, it was not very bad.

HOW YEN-TZŪ WOULD NOT DIE WITH HIS PRINCE.

[Twenty-fifth year of Duke Hsiang :—In the fifth moon, in summer, Ts'ui of the Ch'i State, slew his prince.—*Annals*.]

Duke Chuang committed adultery with Ts'ui-tzŭ's wife, and Ts'ui-tzŭ slew him. Thereupon Yen-tzŭ planted himself at the door of the latter's house.

"Are you going to die with your prince," cried his attendants. "Was he my prince only?" asked Yen-tzŭ, "that I alone should die." "Will you flee the country?" said the attendants. "Was his death my crime, that I should flee?" asked Yen-tzŭ. "Will you then go home?" enquired the attendants. "Where," said Yen-tzŭ, "is there a home for him whose master is dead? It is not enough for a prince to be merely above the people; the commonwealth is in his hands. It is not enough for a minister merely to draw his pay; the commonwealth is his trust. Therefore, when the prince dies for the commonwealth, his minister dies with him; when the prince flees, his minister flees

also. But if a prince dies or flees in consequence of matters which concern only himself, who, save his own private associates, can be expected to share his fate? Besides, if some one else, under obligations similar to my own, slays the prince, why should I die, why flee, why go home?"

By-and-by, the door was opened and Yen-tzŭ went in; and, pillowing the corpse upon his lap, gave vent to tears. He then arose, and striking the ground three times with his heel, went out. People advised Ts'ui-tzŭ to put him to death; but Ts'ui-tzŭ replied, "He is a popular man, and to leave him in peace will be to win over the people."

Ts'ui now placed another duke upon the throne, and became his chief minister, Ch'ing Fêng being appointed minister of the Left. And when the people were taking the oaths of allegiance in the State temple, beginning, "May those who are not true to Ts'ui and Ch'ing——," Yen-tzŭ, looking up to heaven, sighed and said, "May I, in whatsoever I do not submit to those who are loyal to the prince and true to the commonwealth, be answerable to God!" He then smeared his lips with the blood.

LIEH TZŪ.

4TH AND 5TH CENTURIES B.C.

[An exponent of the doctrines of Lao Tzŭ, in which line he was imitated and surpassed by Chuang Tzŭ (*q.v.*) Nothing authentic is known of his life.]

REST.

Tzŭ KUNG said to Confucius, "Master, I am weary, and would fain have rest."

"In life," replied the sage, "there is no rest."

"Shall I, then, never have rest?" asked the disciple.

"You will," said Confucius. "Behold the tombs which lie around; some magnificent, some mean. In one of these you will find rest."

"How wonderful is Death!" rejoined Tzŭ Kung. "The wise man rests, the worldly man is engulfed therein."

"My son," said Confucius, "I see that you understand. Other men know life only as a boon: they do not perceive that it is a bane. They know old age as a state of weakness: they do not perceive that it is a state of ease. They know death only as an abomination: they do not perceive that it is a state of rest."

“How grand,” cried Yen Tzŭ, “is the old conception of Death! The virtuous find rest, the wicked are engulfed therein. In death, each reverts to that from which he came. The ancients regarded death as a return to, and life as an absence from, home. And he who forgets his home becomes an outcast and a by-word in his generation.”

DREAM AND REALITY.

A man of the State of Chêng was one day gathering fuel, when he came across a startled deer, which he pursued and killed. Fearing lest any one should see him, he hastily concealed the carcass in a ditch and covered it with plaintain-leaves, rejoicing excessively at his good fortune. By-and-by, he forgot the place where he had put it; and, thinking he must have been dreaming, he set off towards home, humming over the affair on his way.

Meanwhile, a man who had overheard his words, acted upon them, and went and got the deer. The latter, when he reached his house, told his wife, saying, “A woodman dreamt he had got a deer, but he did not know where it was. Now I have got the deer; so his dream was a reality.” “It is you,” replied his wife, “who have been dreaming you saw a woodman. Did he get the deer? and is there really such a person? It is you who have got the deer: how, then, can his dream be a reality?” “It is true,” assented the husband, “that I have got the

deer. It is therefore of little importance whether the woodman dreamt the deer or I dreamt the woodman."

Now when the woodman reached his home, he became much annoyed at the loss of the deer; and in the night he actually dreamt where the deer then was, and who had got it. So next morning he proceeded to the place indicated in his dream,—and there it was. He then took legal steps to recover possession; and when the case came on, the magistrate delivered the following judgment:—"The plaintiff began with a real deer and an alleged dream. He now comes forward with a real dream and an alleged deer. The defendant really got the deer which plaintiff said he dreamt, and is now trying to keep it; while, according to his wife, both the woodman and the deer are but the figments of a dream, so that no one got the deer at all. However, here is a deer, which you had better divide between you."

When the Prince of Chêng heard this story, he cried out, "The magistrate himself must have dreamt the case!" So he enquired of his prime minister, who replied, "Only the Yellow Emperor and Confucius could distinguish dream from reality, and they are unfortunately dead. I advise, therefore, that the magistrate's decision be confirmed."

WHY CONFUCIUS WAS SAD.

Confucius was one day sitting at leisure, when Tzŭ Kung went in to attend upon him. The disciple noticed

that his master wore a sorrowful air ; but not venturing to ask the reason, went out and told Yen Hui. Thereupon Yen Hui seized his guitar and began to sing ; at which Confucius called him in and said, "Hui, why are you alone glad?" "Master," retorted Hui, "why are you alone sorrowful?" "First answer my question," said Confucius. "I once heard you declare," explained Yen Hui, "that he who was contented with his lot and prepared for the appointments of destiny, could not be sorrowful. Accordingly, I am glad."

The master's expression for a moment changed. Then he answered, saying, "I did use those words. But you are misapplying them here. Such utterances are of the past. Rather adopt those which I deliver now. Alas ! you know only the superficial principle that he who is contented with his lot and prepared for the appointments of destiny cannot be sorrowful. You do not perceive the deeper sorrow entailed by this very absence of sorrow. I will tell you all.

"You cultivate yourself. You accept success or failure as they may come. You see that life and death are independent of your efforts. You maintain your moral and mental equilibrium. And you consider that under such conditions of contentment and preparedness you are without sorrow.

"Now, I edited the *Odes* and the *Book of History*. I defined the functions of Music and Ceremonial. I did this in order to benefit the whole earth, and to be a guide for posterity. I did not do it merely for my own personal advantage, nor for that of my own individual

State. But now, even in my own State, the obligations between prince and subject are forgotten; charity and duty to one's neighbour are passing away; and right feeling is all but gone. If then the truth cannot prevail for a brief space in a single State, how is it likely to prevail over the whole earth through all generations to come? I know now that all I have achieved is in vain; and I am utterly at a loss to discover the true remedy. Therefore I am sad."

KU-LIANG SHU.

4TH CENTURY B.C.

[Author of a commentary upon the annals compiled by Confucius.]

PRAYING FOR RAIN.

PRAYERS for rain should be offered up in spring and summer only; not in autumn and winter. Why not in autumn and winter? Because the moisture of growing things is not then exhausted; neither has man reached the limit of his skill. Why in spring and autumn? Because time is then pressing, and man's skill is of no further avail. How so? Because without rain just then nothing could be made to grow; the crops would fail, and famine ensue. But why wait until time is pressing, and man's skill of no further avail? Because prayers for rain are the same as asking a favour, and the ancients did not lightly ask favours. Why so? *Because they held it more blessed to give than to receive*; and as the latter excludes the former, the main object of man's life is taken away. How is praying for rain asking a favour? It is a request that God will do something for us. The divine men of old who had any request to make to God, were careful to prefer it in due season. At the head of

all his high officers of State, the prince would proceed in person to offer up his prayer. He could not ask any one else to go as his proxy.*

* A commentator adds, "If we are not to ask favours of God, how much less may we ask them of one another. Persons who recklessly ask favours, should not be treated with the consideration to which they would otherwise be entitled."

YANG TZŪ.

4TH CENTURY B.C.

[A heterodox thinker who taught the doctrine of *egoism*, as opposed to the *altruism* of Meh Tzŭ, another philosopher of the same age, also a dissenter from Confucianism pure and undefiled. Mencius says of them, "Yang Tzŭ was all for self. He would not have sacrificed a hair to benefit the whole world. Meh Tzŭ was all for others. If it would have benefited the world to have sacrificed his body from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he would have done it."]

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

A HUNDRED years are the extreme limit of human life,—an age which not one in a thousand attains.

Let us take the case of a man who does. His helpless infancy and his helpless old age will together occupy nearly half the time. Pain and sickness, sorrow and misfortune, actual losses and opportunities missed, anxieties and fears,—these will almost fill up the rest. He may possibly have some ten years or so to the good; but even then he will hardly enjoy a single hour of absolute serenity, undarkened by the gloom of care. What, then, can be the object of human existence? Wherein is happiness to be found?

In the appointments of wealth and luxury? Or in the enjoyment of the pleasures of sense? Alas! those

will not always charm, and these may not always be enjoyed.

Then again there is the stimulus of good report, there is the restraint of law, in things we may do and in things we may not do. And thus we struggle on for a breath of fame, and scheme to be remembered after death; ever on our guard against the allurements of sense, ever on the watch over our hearts and actions. We miss whatever of real happiness is to be got out of life, never being able even for a single moment to relax the vigilance of our heed. In what do we differ, indeed, from the fettered captives of a gaol?

The men of old knew that with life they had come but for a while, and that with death they would shortly depart again. Therefore they followed the desires of their own hearts, and did not deny themselves pleasures to which they felt naturally inclined. Fame tempted them not; but led by their instincts alone, they took such enjoyments as lay in their path, not seeking for a name beyond the grave. They were thus out of the reach of censure; while as for precedence among men, or length or shortness of life, these gave them no concern whatever.

CHUANG TZŪ.

4TH CENTURY B.C.

[A most original thinker, of whom the Chinese nation might well be proud. Yet his writings are tabooed as heterodox, and are very widely unread, more perhaps on account of the extreme obscurity of the text than because they are under the ban of the Confucianists. What little is known of Chuang Tzū's life may be gathered from some of the extracts given. He is generally regarded as an advanced exponent of the doctrines of Lao Tzū.]

LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

I.

FOUR men were conversing together, when the following resolution was suggested:—"Whosoever can make Inaction the head, Life the backbone, and Death the tail, of his existence,—that man shall be admitted to friendship with us." The four looked at each other and smiled; and tacitly accepting the conditions, became friends forthwith.

By-and-by, one of them, named Tzū-yü, fell ill, and another, Tzū-ssü, went to see him. "Verily God is great!" said the sick man. "See how he has doubled me up. My back is so hunched that my viscera are at the top of my body. My cheeks are level with my navel. My shoulders are higher than my neck. My hair grows up towards the sky. The whole economy

of my organism is deranged. Nevertheless, my mental equilibrium is not disturbed." So saying, he dragged himself painfully to a well, where he could see himself, and continued, "Alas, that God should have doubled me up like this!"

"Are you afraid?" asked Tzŭ-ssŭ. "I am not," replied Tzŭ-yü. "What have I to fear? Ere long I shall be decomposed. My left shoulder may become a cock, and I shall herald the approach of morn. My right shoulder will become a cross-bow, and I shall be able to get broiled duck. My buttocks will become wheels; and with my soul for a horse, I shall be able to ride in my own chariot. I am now working out my destiny on earth: I shall then be completing it in the inevitable. Content with the natural sequence of these states, joy and sorrow touch me not. I am simply, as the ancients expressed it, hanging in the air, unable to cut myself down. I am bound with the trammels of material existence. But the material has ever given way before the immaterial: why, then, should I be afraid?"

By-and-by, another of the four, named Tzŭ-lai, fell ill, and lay gasping for breath, while his family stood weeping around. The fourth friend, Tzŭ-li, went to see him. "Chut!" cried he to the wife and children; "begone! you balk his decomposition." Then, leaning against the door, he said, "Verily God is great! I wonder what he will make of you now. I wonder whither you will be sent. Do you think he will make you into a rat's liver* or into the shoulders of a snake?"

* The Chinese believe that a rat has no liver.

"A son," answered Tzŭ-lai, "must go whithersoever his parents bid him. Nature is no other than a man's parents. If she bid me die quickly, and I demur, then I am an unfilial son. She can do me no wrong. She gives me form here on earth; she gives me toil in manhood; she gives me repose in old age; she gives me rest in death. And she who is so kind an arbiter of my life, is necessarily the best arbiter of my death.

"Suppose that the boiling metal in a smelting-pot were to bubble up and say, 'Make of me an Excalibur;' I think the caster would reject that metal as uncanny. And if a sinner like myself were to say to God, 'Make of me a man, make of me a man;' I think he too would reject me as uncanny. The universe is the smelting-pot, and God is the caster. I shall go whithersoever I am sent, to wake unconscious of the past, as a man wakes from a dreamless sleep."

II.

How do I know that love of life is not a delusion? How do I know that those who fear death are not mere lost lambs which cannot find their way back to the fold?

A daughter of the Governor of Ai, when first captured by the Chins, saturated her robe with tears; but afterwards, when she went into the prince's palace and lived with him on the fat of the land, she repented having wept. And how do I know that the dead do not now repent their former craving for life?

One man will dream of the banquet hour, but wake to lamentation and sorrow. Another will dream of

lamentation and sorrow, but wake to enjoy himself in the hunting-field. While men are dreaming, they do not perceive that it is a dream. Some will even have a dream in a dream; and only when they awake do they know that it was all a dream. And so, only when the Great Awakening comes upon us, shall we know this life to be a great dream. Fools believe themselves to be awake now.*

III.

Chuang Tzŭ one day saw an empty skull, bleached, but still preserving its shape. Striking it with his riding-whip, he said, "Wert thou once some ambitious citizen whose inordinate yearnings brought him to this pass?—some statesman who plunged his country in ruin and perished in the fray?—some wretch who left behind him a legacy of shame?—some beggar who died in the pangs of hunger and cold? Or didst thou reach this state by the natural course of old age?"

When he had finished speaking, he took the skull, and placing it under his head as a pillow, went to sleep. In the night, he dreamt that the skull appeared to him and said, "You speak well, sir; but all you say has reference to the life of mortals, and to mortal troubles. In death there are none of these. Would you like to hear about death?"

* "To any one who objects that all we see, hear, feel and taste, think and do, during our whole being, is but the series and deluding appearances of a long dream, and therefore our knowledge of anything be questioned; I must desire him to consider that, if all be a dream, then he doth but dream that makes the question."—LOCKE.

Chuang Tzŭ having replied in the affirmative, the skull began:—"In death, there is no sovereign above, and no subject below. The workings of the four seasons are unknown. Our existences are bounded only by eternity. The happiness of a king among men cannot exceed that which we enjoy."

Chuang Tzŭ, however, was not convinced, and said, "Were I to prevail upon God to allow your body to be born again, and your bones and flesh to be renewed, so that you could return to your parents, to your wife, and to the friends of your youth,—would you be willing?"

At this, the skull opened its eyes wide and knitted its brows and said, "How should I cast aside happiness greater than that of a king, and mingle once again in the toils and troubles of mortality?"*

IV.

Life is a state which follows upon Death. Death is a state which precedes Life. Which of us understands the laws that govern their succession?

The life of man is the resultant of forces. The aggregation of those forces is life: their dispersion, death. If, then, Life and Death are but consecutive states of existence, what cause for sorrow have I?

And so it is that all things are but phases of unity. What men delight in is the spiritual essence of life. What they loathe is the material corruption of death.

* Reminding us strangely of *Hamlet*.

But this state of corruption gives place to that state of spirituality, and that state of spirituality gives place in turn to this state of corruption. Therefore, we may say that all in the universe is comprised in unity; and therefore the inspired among us have adopted unity as their criterion.

THE DEATH OF LAO TZŪ.

When Lao Tzŭ died, and Ch'in Shih went to mourn,* the latter uttered three yells and departed.

A disciple asked him, saying, "Were you not our Master's friend?" "I was," replied Ch'in Shih. "And if so, do you consider that was a fitting expression of grief at his loss?" added the disciple. "I do," said Ch'in Shih. "I had believed him to be the man (*par excellence*), but now I know he was not. When I went in to mourn, I found old persons weeping as if for their children, young ones wailing as if for their mothers. And for him to have gained the attachment of these people in this way, he too must have uttered words which should not have been spoken, and dropped tears which should not have been shed, thus violating eternal principles, increasing the sum of human emotion, and forgetting the source from which his own life was received. Such emotions are but the

* Of course only in the Taoist sense—*i.e.*, more to take note of the death than for purposes of condolence, etc.

trammels of mortality. The Master came, because it was his time to be born; he went, because it was his time to die. For those who accept the phenomenon of birth and death in this sense, lamentation and sorrow have no place. Death is but the severance of a thread by which a man hangs suspended in life. Fuel can be consumed; but the fire endureth for ever."

THE DEATH OF CHUANG TZŪ'S WIFE.

When Chuang Tzū's wife died, Hui Tzū went to condole. He found the widower sitting on the ground, singing, with his legs spread out at a right angle, and beating time on a bowl.

"To live with your wife," exclaimed Hui Tzū, "and see your eldest son grow to be a man, and then not to shed a tear over her corpse,—this would be bad enough. But to drum on a bowl, and sing; surely this is going too far."

"Not at all," replied Chuang Tzū. "When she died, I could not help being affected by her death. Soon, however, I remembered that she had already existed in a previous state before birth, without form, or even substance; that while in that unconditioned condition, substance was added to spirit; that this substance then assumed form; and that the next stage was birth. And now, by virtue of a further change, she is dead, passing from one phase to another like the sequence of spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

And while she is thus lying asleep in Eternity, for me to go about weeping and wailing would be to proclaim myself ignorant of these natural laws. Therefore I refrain."

ON HIS OWN DEATH-BED.

When Chuang Tzŭ was about to die, his disciples expressed a wish to give him a splendid funeral. But Chuang Tzŭ said, "With Heaven and Earth for my coffin and shell; with the sun, moon, and stars as my burial regalia; and with all creation to escort me to the grave,—are not my funeral paraphernalia ready to hand?"*

"We fear," argued the disciples, "lest the carrion kite should eat the body of our Master;" to which Chuang Tzŭ replied, "Above ground, I shall be food for kites; below, I shall be food for mole-crickets and ants. Why rob one to feed the other?"

"If you adopt, as absolute, a standard of evenness which is so only relatively, your results will not be absolutely even. If you adopt, as absolute, a criterion

* Compare the following lines by Mrs. ALEXANDER, from *The Burial of Moses* :—

And had he not high honour?—
 The hillside for his pall;
 To lie in state while angels wait
 With stars for tapers tall;
 And the dark rock pines like nodding plumes
 Above his bier to wave,
 And God's own hand in that lonely land
 To lay him in the grave.

of right which is-so only relatively, your results will not be absolutely right. Those who trust to their senses become, as it were, slaves to objective existences. Those alone who are guided by their intuitions find the true standard. So far are the senses less reliable than the intuitions. Yet fools trust to their senses to know what is good for mankind, with alas! but external results.

HOW YAO WISHED TO ABDICATE.

The great Yao begged Hsü-yu to become Emperor in his stead, saying, "If, when the sun and moon are shining brightly, you persist in lighting a torch, is not that misapplication of fire? If, when the rainy season is at its height, you still continue to water the ground, is not that waste of labour? Now, sir, do you assume the reins of government, and the empire will be at peace. I am but a dead body, conscious of my own deficiency. I beg you will ascend the throne."

"Ever since you, sire, have directed the administration," replied Hsü-Yu, "the empire has enjoyed tranquillity. Supposing, therefore, that I were to take your place now, should I gain any reputation thereby? Besides, reputation is but the shadow of reality; and should I trouble myself about the shadow? The tit builds its nest in the mighty forest, and occupies but a single twig. The tapir slakes its thirst from the river, but drinks enough only to fill its belly. To you, sire, belongs the reputation: the empire has no need

for me. If a cook is unable to dress the sacrifices, the boy who impersonates the corpse may not step over the wines and meats and do it for him."

INFERENCE.

Chuang Tzŭ and Hui Tzŭ had strolled on to the bridge over the Hao, when the former observed, "See how the minnows are darting about! That is the pleasure of fishes."

"You not being yourself a fish," said Hui Tzŭ, "how can you possibly know in what the pleasure of fishes consists?"

"And you not being I," retorted Chuang Tzŭ, "how can you know that I do not know?"

"That I, not being you, do not know what you know," replied Hui Tzŭ, "is identical with my argument that you, not being a fish, cannot know in what the pleasure of fishes consists."

"Let us go back to your original question," said Chuang Tzŭ. "You ask me how I know in what consists the pleasure of fishes. Well, I know that I am [enjoying myself] over the Hao [and from that I infer that the fishes are enjoying themselves in it]."

INDEPENDENCE.

Chuang Tzŭ was one day fishing, when the Prince of Ch'u sent two high officials to interview him, saying that his Highness would be glad of Chuang Tzŭ's assistance

in the administration of his government. The latter quietly fished on, and without looking round, replied, "I have heard that in the State of Ch'u there is a sacred tortoise, which has been dead three thousand years, and which the prince keeps packed up in a box on the altar in his ancestral shrine. Now do you think that tortoise would rather be dead and have its remains thus honoured, or be alive and wagging its tail in the mud?" The two officials answered that no doubt it would rather be alive and wagging its tail in the mud; whereupon Chuang Tzŭ cried out "Begone! I too elect to remain wagging my tail in the mud."

THE PERFECT MAN.

The perfect man is like a spirit. Were the ocean to be scorched up, he would not be hot. Were the Milky Way to be fast frozen, he would not feel cold. Of thunder which rives mountains, of wind which lashes the sea, he is not afraid; and thus, charioted on the clouds of heaven, or riding on the sun and moon, he journeys beyond the limits of mortality. Exempt from the changes of life and death, how much more is he beyond the reach of physical injury. The perfect man can walk under water without difficulty; he can touch fire without being burnt.*

* Compare the foolish taunts of Reid and Beattie, who asked Bishop Berkeley why "he did not run his head against a post, walk over precipices, etc.; as, in accordance with his theory, no pain, no broken limbs could result."—LEWES' *Hist. of Philos.* II., p. 287.

DRUNKENNESS.

A drunken man who falls out of a cart, though he may suffer, yet will not die. His bones are jointed like those of other people, but he meets the accident under different conditions. His mental equilibrium is undisturbed. Unconscious of riding in the cart, he is equally unconscious of falling out of it. The ordinary ideas of life, death, and fear, find no place in his breast; consequently, when thrown into collision with matter, he is not afraid. And if a man can thus get perfect mental equilibrium out of wine, how much more should he do so out of the resources of his own nature? It is there that the wise man takes refuge; and there no one can injure him. To those who would wreak vengeance upon him, he opposes neither spear nor shield; nor does he heed the brick which some spiteful enemy may hurl at his head.

ARCHERY.

Lieh Yü-k'ou instructed Poh-hun Wu-jen in archery. Drawing the bow to its full, he [the teacher] placed a cup of water on his elbow and began to let fly. Hardly was one arrow out of sight ere another was on the string, the archer all the time standing like a statue. Poh-hun Wu-jên cried out, "This is shooting under ordinary conditions; it is not shooting under extraordinary conditions. Now I will ascend a high mountain with you,

and stand on the edge of a precipice a thousand feet in depth, and see if you can shoot like this then." Thereupon Wu-jen went with his teacher up a high mountain, and stood on the edge of a precipice a thousand feet high, approaching it backwards until one-fifth of his feet overhung the chasm, when he beckoned Lieh Yü-k'ou to come on. But Yü-k'ou had fallen prostrate on the ground, with the sweat pouring down to his heels.

CAUSALITY.

The Penumbra said to the Umbra, "At one moment you move: at another you are at rest. At one moment you sit down: at another you get up. Why this instability of purpose?"

"I depend," replied the Umbra, "upon something which causes me to do as I do; and that something depends upon something else which causes it to do as it does. My dependence is like that of a snake's scales or a cicada's wings (which do not move of their own accord). How can I tell why I do one thing or do not do another?"

DREAM AND REALITY.

Once upon a time I dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my fancies (as a butterfly), and was unconscious of my individuality

as a man. Suddenly, I awaked ; and there I lay, myself again. I do not know whether I was then dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming that it is a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a barrier ; and the transition is called *Metempsychosis*.

CH'Ü-P'ING.

4TH CENTURY B.C.

[A famous minister of one of the feudal princes. Being unjustly dismissed from favour, he committed suicide by drowning, and his death gave rise to an annual spring festival, known as the Dragon-boat Festival, at which an imaginary search for his body is made in every available stream of water throughout the Eighteen Provinces.]

CONSULTING THE ORACLE.

THREE years had elapsed since Ch'u-p'ing* was dismissed from office, and still he was unable to obtain an audience of his prince. His fervent loyalty had been intercepted by the tongue of slander. He was broken in spirit and knew not whither to direct his steps. In his doubt he repaired to the Chief Augur and asked for a response. The Chief Augur thereupon arranged the divining-grass and wiped the tortoise-shell, saying, "What, sir, are the points on which you desire to be enlightened?"

"Tell me," cried Ch'ü-p'ing, "whether I should steadily pursue the path of truth and loyalty, or follow in the wake of a corrupt generation. Should I work in the fields with spade and hoe, or seek advancement in the retinue of a grandee? Should I court danger by outspoken words, or fawn in false tones upon the rich

* This use of the third person is common in Chinese Literature.

and great? Should I rest content in the cultivation of virtue, or practise the art of wheedling women in order to secure success? Should I be pure and clean-handed in my rectitude, or an oily-mouthed, slippery, time-serving sycophant? Should I hold on my course like an impetuous charger, or oscillate, with the indecision of a duck in a pool, to and fro as self-interest commands? Should I yoke myself a fellow in the shafts with Bucephalus, or shamle along by the side of Rozinante? Should I vie with the wild goose in soaring to heaven, or scramble for food on a dunghill with hens? Of these alternatives I would know which to choose. The age is muddy and will not be made clean. The wing of the cicada outweighs a thousand pounds. The priceless goblet is set aside for the delf cup. Flatterers fill high places: men of worth are ignored. Alas! who is there that knows my worth?"

The Chief Augur gathered up his divining apparatus and saluted Ch'ü-p'ing, saying, "A foot is oft-times too short; an inch, too long. The implements of my art are not adequate to your requirements. Think for yourself, and translate your thoughts into action. The divining-grass and the tortoise-shell would avail you naught."

THE FISHERMAN'S REPLY.

When Ch'ü-p'ing was dismissed, he wandered away to the banks of a river, and there poured forth his soul in verse. His colour changed. His body wasted to a skeleton.

One day a fisherman accosted him, saying, "Are you not his Excellency the Prime Minister? What has brought you to this pass?"

"The world," replied Ch'ü-p'ing, "is foul; and I alone am clean. There they are all drunk, while I alone am sober. So I am dismissed."

"Ah!" said the fisherman, "the true sage does not quarrel with his environment, but adapts himself to it. If, as you say, the world is foul, why not leap into the tide and make it clean? If all men are drunk, why not drink with them, and teach them to avoid excess? Of what avail are these subtle thoughts, these lofty schemes, which end only in disgrace?"

"I have heard," rejoined Ch'ü-p'ing, "that the bather fresh from the bath will shake the dust from his hat and clothes. How should he allow his pure body to be soiled with the corruption of earth? I am willing to find a grave in the bellies of the fishes that swim in this stream: I will not let my purity be defiled by the filth and corruption of the world."

The fisherman laughed, and keeping time with his oar, sculled off, singing,—

My tassel I'll wash if the water is sweet ;
If the water is dirty 'twill do for my feet.

THE GENIUS OF THE MOUNTAIN.

Methinks there is a Genius of the hills, clad in wistaria, girdled with ivy, with smiling lips, of witching

mien, riding on the pard, wild cats galloping in the rear, reclining in a chariot, with banners of cassia, cloaked with the orchid, girt with azalea, culling the perfume of sweet flowers to leave behind a memory in the heart. But dark is the grove wherein I dwell. No light of day reaches it ever. The path thither is dangerous and difficult to climb. Alone I stand on the hill top, while the clouds float beneath my feet, and all around is wrapped in gloom.

Gently blows the east wind: softly falls the rain. In my joy I become oblivious of home; for who in my decline would honour me now?

I pluck the larkspur on the hillside, amid the chaos of rock and tangled vine. I hate him who has made me an outcast, who has now no leisure to think of me.

I drink from the rocky spring. I shade myself beneath the spreading pine. Even though he were to recall me to him, I could not fall to the level of the world.

Now booms the thunder through the drizzling rain. The gibbons howl around me all the long night. The gale rushes fitfully through the whispering trees. And I am thinking of my prince, but in vain; for I cannot lay my grief.

SUNG YÜ.

3RD AND 4TH CENTURIES B.C.

UNPOPULARITY.

THE Prince of Ch'ü said to his prime minister,*
 "What have you done that should cause the officers
 and people of this State to abuse you so clamorously?"

"Abuse me indeed they do," replied the minister;
 "but pardon my boldness, and I will explain. A
 stranger was singing in one of our villages the other
 day, and this was the subject of his lay:—There is the
 music of the masses; there is the music of a narrower
 circle; that of a narrower circle still; and lastly, the
 classical music of the cultured few. This classical
 music is too lofty, and too difficult of comprehension,
 for the masses.†

* *Sc.* to the writer.

† It is vulgarly believed that the Chinese have no music—worthy the name. That they had what they themselves were pleased to call music, a thousand years before Christ, is beyond all doubt; and an idea of its æsthetic value may be gathered from the following extracts from the *Tso Chuan* (see p. 5):—

They sang to him the Odes of Chou. "Admirable!" said he;

“ Among birds there is the phoenix : among fishes, the leviathan. The phoenix soars aloft, cleaving the red clouds, with the blue firmament above it, away into the uttermost realms of space. But what can the poor hedge-quail know of the grandeur of heaven and earth? The leviathan rises in the morning in one ocean to go to rest at night in another. But what can the minnow of a puddle know of the depth of the sea ?

“ And there are phoenixes and leviathans, not only among birds and fishes, but among men. There is the Sage, full of nervous thought and of unsullied fame, who dwells complacently alone.—What can the vulgar herd know of me ?”

“ this is the expression of earnest endeavour, without any resentment.”

They sang to him the Odes of P'ei. “ Admirable !” said he ; “ here are those who sorrow, and yet are not distressed.”

They sang to him the Odes of Pin. “ Admirable !” said he ; “ they are expressive of enjoyment without license.”

They sang to him the Odes of Wei. “ Admirable !” said he ; “ what harmony ! Here is grandeur with delicacy, like a defile, dangerous, yet easily traversed.”

T'AN KUNG.

3RD AND 4TH CENTURIES B.C.

DIVORCE.

WHEN Tzū-shang's mother died, he would not attend her funeral. A disciple asked his father, Tzū-ssü (grandson of Confucius), saying, "Did not your father attend his divorced mother's funeral?" "He did," replied Tzū-ssü. "Then why cannot you make Tzū-shang do likewise?" rejoined the disciple. "My grandfather," said Tzū-ssü, "was a man of complete virtue. With him, whatever was, was right. I cannot aspire to his level. As long as the deceased was my wife, she was my son's mother. When she ceased to be my wife, she ceased also to be his mother."

From that time forth, it became a rule among the descendants of Confucius not to attend the funeral of a divorced mother.

THE BURIAL OF CONFUCIUS.

A certain man travelled from afar to witness the funeral obsequies of Confucius. He stayed at the house of Tzū-hsia, who observed, "A sage conducting

a funeral is one thing: a sage's funeral is another thing. What did you expect to see? Do you not remember that our Master once said, 'Some persons pile up earth into square, others into long-shaped tumuli. Some build spacious mausolea, others content themselves with small axe-shaped heaps. I prefer the heaps.' He meant what we call *horse-neck* heaps. So we have given him only a few handfuls of earth, and he is buried. Is not this as he would have wished it himself?"

ON MOURNING.

One day Yu-tzŭ and Tzŭ-yu saw a child weeping for the loss of its parents. Thereupon, the former observed, "I never could understand why mourners should necessarily jump about to show their grief, and would long ago have got rid of the custom. Now here you have an honest expression of feeling, and that is all there should ever be."

"My friend," replied Tzŭ-yu, "the mourning ceremonial, with all its material accompaniments, is at once a check upon undue emotion and a guarantee against any lack of proper respect. Simply to give vent to the feelings is the way of barbarians. That is not our way.

"Consider. A man who is pleased will show it in his face. He will sing. He will get excited. He will dance. So, too, a man who is vexed will look sad. He will sigh. He will beat his breast. He will jump about. The due regulation of these emotions is the function of a set ceremonial.

“Further. A man dies and becomes an object of loathing. A dead body is shunned. Therefore, a shroud is prepared, and other paraphernalia of burial, in order that the survivors may cease to loathe. At death, there is a sacrifice of wine and meat; when the funeral cortège is about to start, there is another; and after burial there is yet another. Yet no one ever saw the spirit of the departed come to taste of the food.

“These have been our customs from remote antiquity. They have not been discarded, because, in consequence, men no more shun the dead. What you may censure in those who perform the ceremonial is no blemish in the ceremonial itself.”

BURYING ALIVE.

When Tzŭ-chŭ died, his wife and secretary took counsel together as to who should be interred with him.* All was settled before the arrival of his brother (?), Tzŭ-hêng; and then they informed him, saying, “The deceased requires some one to attend upon him in the nether world. We must ask you to go down with his body into the grave.” “Burial of the living with the dead,” replied Tzŭ-hêng, “is not in accordance with established rites. Still, as you say some one is wanted to attend upon the deceased, who better fitted than his wife and secretary? If this contingency can be avoided

* The custom of burying living persons with the dead was first practised in China B.C. 580. It was said to have been suggested by an earlier and more harmless custom of placing straw and wooden effigies in the mausolea of the great.

altogether, I am willing; if not, then the duty will devolve upon you two."

From that time forth the custom fell into desuetude.*

BAD GOVERNMENT.

When Confucius was crossing the T'ai mountain, he overheard a woman weeping and wailing beside a grave. He thereupon sent one of his disciples to ask what was the matter; and the latter addressed the woman, saying, "Some great sorrow must have come upon you that you give way to grief like this?" "Indeed it is so," replied she. "My father-in-law was killed here by a tiger; after that, my husband; and now my son has perished by the same death." "But why, then," enquired Confucius, "do you not go away?" "The government is not harsh," answered the woman. "There!" cried the Master, turning to his disciples; "remember that. Bad government is worse than a tiger."

A STRANGE CONGRATULATION.

When Chao Wu had completed his palace, all the great nobles went to offer their congratulations. One of them said, "How beautiful! how grand! how spacious! Here you will sing: there you will weep: and here the clans will gather together."

* In the 8th moon (B.C. 588) Duke Wên of Sung died. He was the first duke who had an elaborate funeral. Clam charcoal was used (?). There were additional horses and carriages; and human beings were now for the first time interred alive with the dead.—*Tso Chuan*.

"Ah!" replied Chao Wu; "may it indeed come to pass that I shall sing here, and weep there, and that here the clans will gather together; for thus I should go down to the grave of my forefathers with my head safely on my shoulders." So saying, he bowed twice towards the north, striking his brow upon the ground.

"Well-timed," exclaims the superior man, "was the panegyric; and well-timed also was the prayer."*

THE SONG OF THE COFFIN.

An old friend of Confucius having lost his mother, the Master went to assist in varnishing the coffin. "Ai-ya!" exclaimed the friend as he brought the coffin in, "'tis long since I have had any music." Thereupon he began to sing—

Striped like the wild cat's head, Smooth as a
maiden's hand Ai-yah! Ai-yah!

[alluding (1) to the grain of the wood and (2) to the varnish.]†

* The strange part of the congratulation was to allude, even indirectly, to the hateful contingency of death, as suggested by the word "weep." But the reply skilfully turned into a compliment what must otherwise have been taken as an affront.

† The music is not part of the text. These few bars are given merely as a sample of a Chinese popular air.

Confucius pretended not to hear, and moved away; but one of his disciples cried out, "Master, should you not have done with a fellow like this?" "Besides the duties we owe to our parents," replied Confucius, "there are those we owe to our friends."

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE
CONTENDING STATES.—*ANONYMOUS.*

THE ELIXIR OF DEATH.

A certain person having forwarded some elixir of immortality to the Prince of Ching, it was received as usual by the door-keeper. "Is this to be swallowed?" enquired the Chief Warden of the palace. "It is," replied the door-keeper. Thereupon, the Chief Warden purloined and swallowed it. At this, the prince was exceedingly wroth, and ordered his immediate execution; but the Chief Warden sent a friend to plead for him, saying, "Your Highness' servant asked the door-keeper if the drug was to be swallowed; and as he replied in the affirmative, your servant accordingly swallowed it. The blame rests entirely with the door-keeper. Besides, if the elixir of life is presented to your Highness, and because your servant swallows it, your Highness slays him, that elixir is clearly the elixir of death; and for your Highness thus to put to death an innocent official is simply for your Highness to be made the sport of men."

The prince spared his life.

MĒNG TZŪ.

(Latinised into MENCIOUS.)

B.C. 372—289.

[Mencius is China's "second sage." He was to Confucius much what St. Paul was to Christ. The great principles which were henceforth to guide the nation had been already enunciated, and to these Mencius added nothing new. He lacked the inspiration which has placed Confucius in the front rank of the world's Prophets. But he did good work in expounding and disseminating the message which the Master had left behind him. His writings have been justly included in the Canon of Confucianism, and for more than twenty centuries his name has been a household word over the length and breadth of China.]

HALF MEASURES.

KING HUI of Liang said to Mencius, "I exhaust my energies in the administration of government. If the harvest is bad on one side of the river, I transfer a number of the inhabitants to the other, and send supplies to those who remain. No ruler among the neighbouring States devotes himself as I do to the welfare of his people. Yet their populations do not decrease; neither does mine increase. How is this?"

Mencius replied, "Your Majesty loves war. Let us take an illustration from war:—

"The drums beat: blades cross: arms are flung

aside: the vanquished seek safety in flight. Some will run a hundred yards and then stop; others, fifty only. Can those who run fifty laugh at those who run a hundred?"

"No, indeed," replied the king; "it was flight in both cases."

"And so," rejoined Mencius, "your Majesty, perceiving the application of what I have said, will not (under present conditions) expect your population to exceed the populations of neighbouring States.

"Let the times for agriculture be not neglected, and there will be more grain than can be eaten. Let no close-meshed nets sweep your streams, and there will be more fishes and turtles than can be eaten. Let forestry be carried on in due season, and there will be more wood than can be used. Thus, the people will be able to feed their living and bury their dead without repining; and this is the first step towards establishing a perfect system of government.

"Let the mulberry-tree be cultivated in accordance with regulation; then persons of fifty years old will be able to wear silk. Let due attention be paid to the breeding of poultry, and swine, and dogs; then persons of seventy years old will be able to eat meat. Let there be no interference with the labour of the husbandman; and there will be no mouths crying out for food. Let education of the people be reverently attended to;—above all, let them be taught their duties towards their parents and brethren;—and there will be no gray-headed burden-carriers to be seen along the highway.

For, where septuagenarians wear silk and eat meat, where the black-haired people are neither hungry nor cold, it has never been that perfect government did not prevail.

“Your dogs and swine are battenning on the food of men, and you do not limit them. By the roadside there are people dying of hunger, and you do not succour them. If they die, you say, ‘It was not I; it was the bad season.’ What is this but to stab a man to death, and say, ‘It was not I; it was the weapon?’ O king, blame not the season for these things, and all men under the canopy of heaven will flock to you.”

King Hui replied, “I beg to receive your instructions.”

Mencius continued, “Is there any difference between killing a man with a bludgeon and killing him with a sword!”

“There is none,” answered the king.

“Or between killing him with a sword and killing him by misrule?” pursued Mencius.

“There is none,” replied the king again.

“Yet in your kitchen,” said Mencius, “there is fat meat, and in your stables there are sleek horses, while famine sits upon the faces of your people, and men die of hunger in the fields. This is to be a beast, and prey upon your fellow-man.

“Beasts prey upon one another, in a manner abhorrent to us. If, then, he who holds the place of father and mother to the people, preys upon them like a beast, wherein does his prerogative consist?”

“Confucius said, ‘Was he not without posterity who first buried images with the dead?’—meaning that these, being in the likeness of man, suggested the use of living men. What then of him who causes his people to die of hunger?”

BORN IN SIN.

Kao Tzŭ said, “Human nature may be compared with a block of wood ; duty towards one’s neighbour, with a wooden bowl. To develop charity and duty towards one’s neighbour out of human nature is like making a bowl out of a block of wood.”

To this Mencius replied, “Can you without interfering with the natural constitution of the wood, make out of it a bowl? Surely you must do violence to that constitution in the process of making your bowl. And by parity of reasoning you would do violence to human nature in the process of developing charity and duty towards one’s neighbour. From which it follows that all men would come to regard these rather as evils than otherwise.”

Kao Tzŭ said, “Human nature is like rushing water, which flows east or west according as an outlet is made for it. For human nature makes indifferently for good or for evil, precisely as water makes indifferently for the east or for the west.”

Mencius replied, “Water will indeed flow indifferently towards the east or west ; but will it flow

indifferently up or down? It will not; and the tendency of human nature towards good is like the tendency of water to flow down. Every man has this bias towards good, just as all water flows naturally downwards. By splashing water, you may indeed cause it to fly over your head; and by turning its course you may keep it for use on the hillside; but you would hardly speak of such results as the nature of water. They are the results, of course, of a *force majeure*. And so it is when the nature of man is diverted towards evil."

Kao Tzŭ said, "That which comes with life is nature."

Mencius replied, "Do you mean that there is such a thing as nature in the abstract, just as there is whiteness in the abstract?"

"I do," answered Kao Tzŭ.

"Just, for instance," continued Mencius, "as the whiteness of a feather is the same as the whiteness of snow, or the whiteness of snow as the whiteness of jade?"

"I do," answered Kao Tzŭ again.

"In that case," retorted Mencius, "the nature of a dog is the same as that of an ox, and the nature of an ox the same as that of a man."

Kao Tzŭ said, "Eating and reproduction of the species are natural instincts. Charity is subjective and innate; duty towards one's neighbour is objective and acquired. For instance, there is a man who is my senior, and I defer to him as such. Not because any abstract principle of seniority exists subjectively in me,

but in the same way that if I see a white man I recognise him as such, because he is so objectively to me. Consequently, I say that that duty towards one's neighbour is objective or acquired."

Mencius replied, "The cases are not analogous. The whiteness of a white horse is undoubtedly the same as the whiteness of a white man; but the seniority of a horse is not the same as the seniority of a man. Does our duty to our senior begin and end with the fact of his seniority? Or does it not rather consist in the necessity of deferring to him as such?"

Kao Tzŭ said, "I love my own brother; but I do not love another man's brother. The distinction arises from within myself; therefore I call it subjective or innate. But I defer to a stranger who is my senior just as I defer to a senior among my own people. The distinction comes to me from without; therefore I call it objective or acquired."

Mencius retorted, "We enjoy food cooked by strangers just as much as food cooked by our own people. Yet extension of your principle lands us in the conclusion that our appreciation of cooked food is also objective and acquired."

HSÜN TZŪ.

3RD CENTURY B.C.

[Famous chiefly for having sustained the heterodox theory that the nature of man is evil.]

BORN IN SIN.

By nature, man is evil. If a man is good, that is an artificial result. For, his condition being what it is, he is influenced first of all by a desire for gain. Hence, he strives to get all he can without consideration for his neighbour. Secondly, he is liable to envy and hate. Hence, he seeks the ruin of others, and loyalty and truth are set aside. Thirdly, he is a slave to his animal passions. Hence, he commits excesses, and wanders from the path of duty and right.

Thus, conformity with man's natural disposition leads to all kinds of violence, disorder, and ultimate barbarism. Only under the restraint of law and of lofty moral influences does man eventually become fit to be a member of regularly organised society.

From these premisses it seems quite clear that by nature man is evil; and that if a man is good, that is an artificial result.

LI SSŮ.

3RD CENTURY B.C.

[Was for a long period prime minister and trusted adviser of the prince who finally annihilated the feudal system which prevailed under the Chou dynasty, and seated himself upon the throne as the First Emperor of China. It was then that Li Ssŭ suggested the entire destruction of existing literature, with a few trifling exceptions, in order to break off absolutely all connection with the past; a design which was rapidly carried into practical effect, and from the operation of which the sacred books of Confucianism were saved only by the devotion of a few. Li Ssŭ was himself an accomplished scholar, and invented a form of writing which remained in vogue for several centuries, until superseded by the style now in use.]

ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGNERS.

THE high officers of State had combined to persuade the Prince of Ch'in to dismiss all foreign nobles and other strangers from the Court, urging that such persons were there only in the interests of their masters. This proscription would have included me. I therefore sent up the following Memorial:—

May it please your Majesty,

The present scheme for proscribing strangers is in every way a fatal step. Have we not innumerable examples in the past of the employment of foreigners, to the greater glory of the State and to the infinite advantage of the people?

From the mountains of Tibet your Majesty receives jade; from elsewhere, jewels. Bright pearls, good blades, fine horses, kingfisher banners, triton-skin drums,—of such rarities not one is produced at home, yet your Majesty delights in all. But if nothing is to be used in future save local produce, then will rich pearls shine no more at Court, then will the elephant and the rhinoceros contribute their ivory no more, nor the ladies of Chao throng the Imperial harem, nor sleek palfreys stand in the Imperial stables, nor gold, nor pewter-ware, nor brilliant hues glow within the Imperial walls.

And if all, too, which adorns the seraglio, and ministers to the pleasure of eye and ear, must for the future be of local growth; then adieu to pearl-set pins, to jewelled ear-drops, to silken skirts and embroidered hems;—welcome the humble and the plain, there where beauty no longer reigns supreme.

Take for instance our local music—shrill songs shrieked to earthen and wooden accompaniments—as compared with the magnificent harmonies of other States. Those we have rejected in favour of these, simply because the latter contributed most to the pleasures of sense.

In the choice of men, however, this principle is not to prevail. There is to be no question of capacity or of incapacity, of honesty or of dishonesty. If he be not a native, he must go: all foreigners are to be dismissed. Surely this is to measure men by a lower standard than music and gems! No method this for stretching the rod of empire over all within the boundary of the sea.

As broad acres yield large crops, so for a nation to be great there should be a great population ; and for soldiers to be daring their generals should be brave. Not a single clod was added to T'ai-shan in vain : hence the huge mountain we now behold. The merest streamlet is received into the bosom of Ocean : hence the Ocean's unfathomable expanse. And wise and virtuous is the ruler who scorns not the masses below. For him, no boundaries of realm, no distinctions of nationality exist. The four seasons enrich him ; the Gods bless him ; and, like our rulers of old, no man's hand is against him.

But now it is proposed to deliver over the black-haired people into the power of the foe. For if strangers are expelled, they will rally round the feudal princes. The leaders of the age will retire, and none will step forth to fill the vacant place. It is as though one should furnish arms to a rebel, or set a premium upon theft.

Many things that are not produced here are nevertheless highly prized. Countless men who were not born here are nevertheless loyal of heart. Therefore to dismiss all foreigners will be to make our enemies strong ; for those who suffer expulsion will go to swell the hostile ranks. There will be but hollowness within and bitterness without ; and danger will never cease to menace the State.

On reading the above, the Prince of Ch'in cancelled the edict respecting the proscription of foreigners, and I was restored to office.*

* "The iniquity of the writer," observes a commentator, "must not blind us to the beauty of his appeal."

SSŪ-MA CH'ÏEN.

1ST AND 2ND CENTURIES B.C.

[Author of the first general *History of China*. The work begins with the reign of Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor (B.C. 2697), and closes with the year B.C. 104, at about the period described in the subjoined extract. As a youth, Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien had travelled widely throughout the empire. He finally settled down as Grand Annalist and Imperial Astronomer; but his spirited defence of Li Ling (*q.v.*) when overthrown and captured by the Huns, brought down upon him the wrath of the Emperor. He was subjected to the punishment of mutilation, and ended his days in disgrace. He reformed the calendar, and determined the chronology which still obtains in China.]

A CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST.

(BY AN EYE-WITNESS.)

Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last.
And history, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page.

WHEN the House of Han arose, the evils of their predecessors had not passed away. Husbands still went off to the wars. The old and the young were employed in transporting food. Production was almost at a standstill, and money became scarce. So much so, that even the Son of Heaven had not carriage horses of the same colour; the highest civil and military authorities rode in bullock-carts; and the people at large knew not where to lay their heads.

At this epoch, the coinage in use was so heavy and cumbersome that the people themselves started a new issue at a fixed standard of value. But the laws were too lax, and it was impossible to prevent grasping persons from coining largely, buying largely, and then holding against a rise in the market. The consequence was that prices went up enormously. Rice sold at 10,000 *cash** per picul: a horse cost 100 ounces of silver. But by-and-by, when the empire was settling down to tranquillity, His Majesty, Kao Tsu, gave orders that no trader should wear silk nor ride in a carriage; besides which, the imposts levied upon this class were greatly increased, in order to keep them down. Some years later, these restrictions were withdrawn; still, however, the descendants of traders were disqualified from holding any office connected with the State.

Meanwhile, certain levies were made on a scale calculated to meet the exigencies of public expenditure; while the land-tax and customs' revenue were regarded by all officials, from the Emperor downwards, as their own personal emolument, no further charges being made upon the people in this sense. Grain was forwarded by water to the capital for the use of the officials there; but the quantity did not amount to more than a few hundred thousand piculs every year.

Gradually, the coinage began to deteriorate and light coins to circulate; whereupon another issue followed, each piece being marked "half an ounce." But

* About 25 *cash* go to a penny. 1 *picul* = 133½ *lbs.*

at length the system of private issues led to serious abuses, resulting first of all in vast sums of money accumulating in the hands of individuals; finally, in rebellion; until the country was flooded with the coinage of the rebels, and it became necessary to enact laws against any such issue in the future.

At this period, the Huns were harassing our northern frontier, and soldiers were massed there in large bodies, in consequence of which food became so scarce that the authorities offered certain rank and titles of honour to those who would supply a given quantity of grain. Later on, a drought ensued in the west, and in order to meet necessities of the moment, official rank was again made a marketable commodity, while those who broke the law were allowed to commute their penalties by money payments. And now horses began to reappear in official stables; and in palace and hall, signs of an ampler luxury were visible once more.

Thus it was in the early days of the dynasty, until some seventy years after the accession of the House of Han. The empire was then at peace. For a long time there had been neither flood nor drought, and a season of plenty had ensued. The public granaries were well stocked; the government treasuries were full. In the capital, strings of *cash* were piled in myriads, until the very strings rotted, and their tale could no longer be told. The grain in the Imperial storehouses grew mouldy year by year. It burst from the crammed granaries, and lay about until it became unfit for human food. The streets were thronged with horses belonging

to the people, and on the high roads whole droves were to be seen, so that it became necessary to prohibit the public use of mares. Village elders ate meat and drank wine. Petty government clerkships and the like lapsed from father to son; the higher offices of State were treated as family heirlooms. For there had gone abroad a spirit of self-respect and of reverence for the law, while a sense of charity and of duty towards one's neighbour kept men aloof from disgrace and shame.

At length, under lax laws, the wealthy began to use their riches for evil purposes of pride and self-aggrandisement and oppression of the weak. Members of the Imperial family received grants of land, while from the highest to the lowest, every one vied with his neighbour in lavishing money on houses, and appointments, and apparel, altogether beyond the limit of his means. Such is the everlasting law of the sequence of prosperity and decay.*

Then followed extensive military preparations in various parts of the empire; the establishment of a tradal route with the barbarians of the south-west, for which purpose mountains were hewn through for many miles. The object was to open up the resources of those remote districts; but the result was to swamp the inhabitants in hopeless ruin. Then, again, there was the subjugation of Korea; its transformation into an Imperial dependency; with other troubles nearer

* For further on this law, see *Fulness and Decay*, by Ou-yang Hsiu.

home. There was the ambush laid for the Huns, by which we forfeited their alliance, and brought them down upon our northern frontier. Nothing in fact but wars and rumours of wars from day to day. Money was constantly leaving the country. The financial stability of the empire was undermined, and its impoverished people were driven thereby into crime. Wealth had been frittered away, and its renewal was sought in corruption. Those who brought money in their hands received appointments under government. Those who could pay escaped the penalties of their guilt. Merit had to give way to money. Shame and scruples of conscience were laid aside. Laws and punishments were administered with severer hand.

From this period must be dated the rise and growth of official venality.

ON CHANG LIANG.

Educated people mostly deny the existence of a spiritual world. Yet they will concede supernatural attributes to things; as for instance in the story of Chang Liang's *rencontre* with the old man who gave him that wonderful book.*

* Chang Liang was the friend and adviser whose counsels contributed so much to the success of Kao Ti (*q.v.*), founder of the House of Han. Having had occasion, in his youth, to oblige an old man by picking up his sandal for him, the latter is said to have presented him with a book from which he drew the wisdom that distinguished him so much in after life.

Now, that the founder of the Han dynasty should find himself involved in difficulties was a mere matter of destiny. But that Chang Liang should so often come to his aid,—there we detect the hand of God.

His Majesty said, "In concocting stratagems in the tent for winning battles a thousand miles away, I cannot compare with Chang Liang." And I too had always entertained great respect for the genius of this remarkable man. But when I saw his portrait, lo and behold! his features were those of a woman. However, according to Confucius, "If we always chose men for their looks, we should have lost Tzŭ-yü."* And the same is true of Chang Liang.

CONFUCIUS.

The *Odes* have it thus:—"We may gaze up to the mountain's brow: we may travel along the great road;" signifying that although we cannot hope to reach the goal, still we may push on thitherwards in spirit.

While reading the works of Confucius, I have always fancied I could see the man as he was in life; and when I went to Shantung I actually beheld his carriage, his robes, and the material parts of his ceremonial usages. There were his descendants practising the old rites in their ancestral home;—and I lingered on, unable to tear myself away. Many are the

* A disciple, chiefly remarkable for great ugliness combined with lofty mental characteristics.

princes and prophets that the world has seen in its time; glorious in life, forgotten in death. But Confucius, though only a humble member of the cotton-clothed masses, remains among us after many generations. He is the model for such as would be wise. By all, from the Son of Heaven down to the meanest student, the supremacy of his principles is fully and freely admitted. He may indeed be pronounced the divinest of men.

COURAGE.

He who will face death at the call of duty must necessarily be brave. There is no difficulty in merely dying: the difficulty lies in dying at fitting junctures only.

When Hsiang-ju carried in the jewel,* and with haughty gesture cursed right and left of the Prince of Ch'in, death was the worst he had to fear; yet few would have been bold enough to act as he did. His courageous attitude commanded the admiration even of an enemy; and when on his return he forbore to risk death in a wrong cause, he gained for himself a name which shall endure for ever.

Verily, wisdom and courage were well combined in that man!

* A remarkable stone in the possession of the Prince of Chao, from whom it had been demanded by the Prince of Ch'in, in exchange for fifteen cities, which however were never intended to be handed over. Hsiang-ju managed to out-manceuvre the enemy, and bore back the stone in triumph to his master.

KAO TI.

REIGNED 202-195 B.C.

[This wonderful man, who founded the splendid House of Han, raised himself from the plough-tail to the throne. He was a simple peasant, named Liu Pang; but his genius soon placed him at the head of those malcontents who sought to shake the tyrannical yoke of the Ch'ins; and from that time until he was proclaimed Emperor, his career was one of uninterrupted success.]

PROCLAMATION.

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN !

You have long groaned under the despotic sway of the Ch'ins. To complain openly was to incur the penalty of extermination. Even casual words of objection were punished by decapitation of the individual.

Now, it was agreed between myself and the other nobles that whosoever first entered the territory of Ch'in should rule over it. Therefore I am come to rule over you. With you, I further agree upon three laws, viz. :—

1. For murder, death.
2. For injury to the person, proportionate punishment.
3. For theft, proportionate punishment.

The remainder of the Ch'in laws to be abrogated.

The officials and people will continue to attend to their respective duties as heretofore. My sole object in coming here is to eradicate wrong. I desire to do violence to no one. Fear not.

My camp is for the moment at Pa-shang. I await the arrival of my colleagues in order to ratify the terms of our agreement.

WÊN TI.

REIGNED 179-157 B.C.

[Bastard son of Kao Ti. The tone of this letter is especially remarkable, as addressed by the Son of Heaven to the captain of a barbarian horde. But the irresistible power of the Huns had already begun to make itself severely felt.]

TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE HUNS.*

WE respectfully trust that the great Captain is well. WE have respectfully received the two horses which the great Captain forwarded to Us.

The first Emperor of this dynasty adopted the following policy:—All to the north of the Long Wall, comprising the nations of the bow and arrow, to be subject to the great Captain: all within the Long Wall—namely, the families of the hat and girdle, to be subject to the House of Han. Thus, these peoples would each pursue their own avocations,—OURS, agriculture and manufacture of cloth; yours, archery and hunting,—in the acquisition of food and raiment. Father and son would not suffer separation; suzerain and vassal would

* I have used the traditional term "Huns" here and elsewhere simply for convenience' sake. Accurate ethnological identification is quite beyond my range of study.

rest in peace ; and neither side would do violence to the other.

But of late WE hear that certain worthless persons have been incited by the hope of gain to shake off their natural allegiance. Breaches of moral obligation and of treaty have occurred. There has been forgetfulness of family ties ; and the tranquillity of suzerain and vassal is at an end. This, however, belongs to the past. Your letter says, "The two States had become friendly ; their rulers friends. The tramp of armies had been stilled for more peaceful occupations, and great joy had come upon successive generations at the new order of things." WE truly rejoice over these words. Let us then tread together this path of wisdom in due compassion for the peoples committed to our charge. Let us make a fresh start. Let us secure quiet to the aged ; and to the young, opportunity to grow up, and, without risk of harm, to complete their allotted span.

The Hans and the Huns are border nations. Your northern climate is early locked in deadly cold. Therefore WE have annually sent large presents of food and clothing and other useful things ; and now the empire is at peace and the people prosperous. Of those people, WE and you are, as it were, the father and mother ; and for trivial causes, such as an Envoy's error, we should not lightly sever the bonds of brotherly love. Heaven, it is said, covers no one in particular ; and Earth is the common resting-place of all men. Let us then dismiss these trifling grievances, and tread the broader path. Let us forget bygone troubles in a sincere desire to

cement an enduring friendship, that our peoples may live like the children of a single family, while the blessings of peace and immunity from evil extend even to the fishes of the sea, to the fowls of the air, and to all creeping things. Unresting for ever is the course of Truth. Therefore let us obliterate the past. We will take no count of deserters or of injuries sustained. Do you take no count of those who have joined our banner.

The rulers of old never broke the faith of their treaties. O great Captain, remember this. And when peace shall prevail once more, rest assured that its first breach will not proceed from the House of Han.

CH'AO TS'O.

DIED B.C. 155.

[An Imperial counsellor, chiefly known by his strenuous opposition to the system of vassal princes, which had been in part re-established under the Han dynasty after the total abolition of feudatory government by their predecessors, the Ch'ins. Ultimately, when a coalition of seven vassal princes threatened the very existence of the dynasty, Ch'ao Ts'o was shamefully sacrificed by the Emperor, with a view to appease the rebels and avert the impending disaster.]

ON WAR.

MAY it please your Majesty,

Ever since the accession of the House of Han there have been constant irruptions of Tartar hordes, with more or less profit to the invaders. During one reign they twice fell upon Lung-hsi, besieging the city, slaughtering the people, and driving off cattle. On another occasion, they made a further raid, murdered the officials and garrison, and carried away everything upon which they could lay their hands.

Now, victory inspires men with additional courage: with defeat their *morale* disappears. And these three defeats at Lung-hsi have left the inhabitants utterly demoralised, with never a ray of hope for the future.

The officials, acting under the protection of the Gods and armed with authority from the Throne, may strive to renew the *morale* and discipline of their soldiers, and to raise the courage of a beaten people to face the onset of Huns flushed with victory. They may struggle to oppose many with few, or to compass the rout of a host by the slaughter of its leader. The question, however, is not one of the bravery or cowardice of our people, but rather of the strategy of our generals. Thus it is said in the *Art of War*, "A good general is more indispensable to success than a good army." Therefore we should begin by careful selection of competent generals. Further, there are three points upon which the fate of a battle depends. These are (1) Position, (2) Discipline, and (3) Arms.*

We read in the *Art of War*, "(1) A country intersected by ditches and watercourses, or marshy, or woody, or rocky, or overgrown with vegetation, is favourable to the operations of infantry. Two horsemen are there not equal to one foot-soldier.

"Gentle slopes of soft earth, and level plains, are adapted to the manœuvres of cavalry. Ten foot-soldiers are there not a match for one horseman.

"Where the route lies between high hills some distance apart, or through defiles with steep precipices on each

* These words were penned about two thousand years ago; and yet Mr. DEMETRIUS BOULGER (*horresco referens*), in the June number of the *Fortnightly* for 1883 treats us to the following:—

"China has yet to learn that arms alone will not make an efficient army."

side, the conditions are favourable to bowmen. A hundred soldiers with side-arms are there no match for a single archer.

“Where two armies meet at close quarters on a plain, covered with short grass and giving plenty of room to manoeuvre, the conditions are favourable to lancers. Three men with sword and buckler are not equal to one of these.

“But in jungle and amid thick undergrowth, there is nothing like the short spear. Two lancers are there not equal to one spearman.

“On the other hand, where the path is tortuous and difficult, and the enemy is concealed from view, then swordsmen carry everything before them, one man thus equipped being more than a match for three archers.

“(2) If soldiers are not carefully chosen and well drilled to obey, their movements will be irregular. They will not act in concert. They will miss success for want of unanimity. Their retreat will be disorderly, one half fighting while the other is running away. They will not respond to the call of the gong and drum. One hundred such as these will not hold their own against ten well-drilled men.

“(3) If their arms are not good, the soldiers might as well have none. If the cuirass is not stout and close set, the breast might as well be bare. Bows that will not carry, are no more use at long distances than swords and spears. Bad marksmen might as well have no arrows. Even good marksmen, unless able to make their arrows pierce, might as well shoot with headless shafts. These

are the oversights of incompetent generals. Five such soldiers are no match for one."

Therefore, the *Art of War* says, "Bad weapons betray soldiers. Raw soldiers betray their general. Incompetent generals betray their sovereign. Injudicious sovereigns betray their country." The above four points are of vital importance in military matters.

May it please your Majesty. There is a difference in outline between great things and small ones. There is a difference in power between the strong and the weak. There is a difference in preparation between dangerous enterprises and easy ones. To truckle and cringe to the powerful,—this is the behaviour of a petty State. To mass small forces against one great force,—this is the attitude of a hostile State. To use barbarians as a weapon against barbarians,—this is what we do in the Central State.

The configuration of the Hun territory, and the particular skill there available, are not what we are accustomed to at home. In scaling mountains and fording rivers our horses do not excel; nor our horsemen in galloping wildly along precipitous mountain paths, shooting as they go; nor our soldiers in endurance of cold, hunger, and thirst. In all these respects the Huns are our superiors: On level ground we beat them out of the field. Our bows, our spears, are incomparably better than theirs. Our armour, our blades, and the manœuvres of our troops, are unmatched by anything the Huns can show. Our horse-archers shoot with unequalled precision, against which their cuirasses and

wooden bucklers are of no avail. And when it comes to dismounting and hand-to-hand fighting with sword and spear in the supreme struggle, the victory is easily ours. In these respects we excel them. Thus, the Huns may be compared with us in strength as three to five. Besides which, to slaughter their myriads we can bring tens of myriads, and crush them by mere force of numbers. But arms are a curse, and war is a dread thing. For in the twinkling of an eye the mighty may be humbled, and the strong may be brought low. The stake is great, and men's lives of no account. For him who falls to rise no more, the hour of repentance is past.

Now the maxim of our ancient kings was this:—"The greatest safety of the greatest number." And as we have among us several thousand barbarians who, in point of food and skill, are closely allied to the Huns, let us clothe them in stout armour and warm raiment, arm them with trusty bows and sharp blades, mount them on good horses, and set them to guard the frontier. Let them be under the command of a competent general, familiar with their customs, and able to develop their *morale* according to the military traditions of this empire. Then, in the event of arduous military operations, let these men go to the front, while we keep back our light war-chariots and horse-archers for work upon level ground. We shall thus have, as it were, an outside and a lining; each division will be employed in the manner for which best adapted; our army will be increased, and the greatest safety of the greatest number will be achieved.

It is written, "The rash minister speaks, and the wise ruler decides." I am that rash minister, and with my life in my hand I dare to utter these words, humbly awaiting the decision of your Majesty.

ON THE VALUE OF AGRICULTURE.

"A bold peasantry, their country's pride."

When the people are prosperous under the sway of a wise ruler, familiar with the true principle of national wealth, it is not only the tiller of the soil who fills his belly, nor the weaver alone who has a suit of clothes to his back.

In the days of Yao* there was a nine years' flood : in the days of T'ang, a seven years' drought. Yet the State suffered not, because of the preparations which had been made to meet such emergencies. Now, all within the boundary of the sea is under one sceptre ; and our country is wider and its inhabitants more numerous. For many years Heaven has sent upon us no visitation of flood or drought. Why then is our provision against emergency less? The fertility of the soil is not exhausted ; and more labour is to be had. All cultivable land is not under tillage ; neither have the

* B.C. 2356. An attempt has been made to identify this with Noah's flood. It was ultimately drained away by the engineering skill of an individual known in history as the Great Yü. "Ah!" says a character in the *Tso Chuan*, "if it had not been for Yü, we should all have been fishes."

hills and marshes reached their limit of production; neither has every available idler put his hand to the plough.

Crime begins in poverty; poverty in insufficiency of food; insufficiency of food in neglect of agriculture. Without agriculture, man has no tie to bind him to the soil. Without such tie, he readily leaves his birth-place and his home. He is like unto the birds of the air or the beasts of the field. Neither battlemented cities, nor deep moats, nor harsh laws, nor cruel punishments, can subdue this roving spirit that is strong within him.

He who is cold examines not the quality of cloth: he who is hungry tarries not for choice meats. When cold and hunger come upon men, honesty and shame depart. As man is constituted, he must eat twice daily, or hunger; he must wear clothes, or be cold. And if the stomach cannot get food and the body clothes, the love of the fondest mother cannot keep her children at her side. How then should a sovereign keep his subjects gathered round him?

The wise ruler knows this. Therefore he concentrates the energies of his people upon agriculture. He levies light taxes. He extends the system of grain storage, to provide for his subjects at times when their resources fail.

Man makes for grain, just as water flows of necessity in the direction of a lower level. Gold, silver, and jewels, are powerless to allay the pangs of hunger or to ward off the bitterness of cold; yet the masses esteem these things because of the demand for them among

their betters. Light and of limited bulk, a handful of such valuables will carry one through the world without fear either of cold or hunger. It is for these things that a minister plays false to his prince. It is for these things that a man lightly leaves his home :—a stimulus to theft, the godsend of fugitives !

Grain and cotton cloths come to us from the earth. They are produced in due season by the labour of man, and time is needed for their growth. A few hundred-weight of such stuffs is more than an ordinary man can carry. They offer no inducement to crime ; yet to be without them for a single day is to suffer both hunger and cold. Therefore the wise ruler holds grain in high honour, but degrades gold and jewels.

Now in every family of five there is an average of at least two capable husbandmen, who have probably not more than a few roods of land, the yield of which would perhaps be not more than a hundred piculs. In spring they have to plough ; in summer, to weed ; in autumn, to reap ; in winter, to store ; besides cutting fuel, repairing official residences, and other public services. Exposed, in spring, to wind and dust ; in summer, to scorching heat ; in autumn, to fog and rain ; in winter, to cold and frost,—from year's end to year's end they know not what leisure means. They have besides their own social obligations, visits of sympathy and condolence, the nourishment of orphans, of the aged, and of the young. Then, when flood and drought come upon them, already compassed round with toil and hardship, the government pressing harshly, collecting taxes at unsettled times,

issuing orders in the morning to revoke them at night,—those who have grain sell at half value, while those who have not borrow at exorbitant usury. Then paternal acres change hands; sons and grandsons are sold to pay debts; merchants make vast profits, and even petty tradesmen realise unheard-of gains. These take advantage of the necessities of the hour. Their men do not till: their women do not spin. Yet they all wear fine clothes and live on the fat of the land. They share not the hardships of the husbandman. Their wealth pours in from the four quarters of the earth. Vying in riches with kings and princes, in power they outdo the authorities themselves. Their watchword is gain. When they go abroad they are followed by long retinues of carriages and servants. They ride in fine coaches and drive sleek horses. They are shod in silk and robed in satin. Thus do they strip the husbandman bare of his goods; and thus it is that the husbandman is an outcast on the face of the earth.

At present, the merchant is *de jure* an ignoble fellow; *de facto*, he is rich and great. The husbandman is, on the other hand, *de jure* an honourable man; *de facto*, a beggar. Theory and practice are at variance; and in the confusion which results, national prosperity is out of the question. Now there would be nothing more presently advantageous than to concentrate the energies of our people upon agriculture; and the way to do this is to enhance the value of grain by making it an instrument of reward and punishment. Let rank be bestowed

in return for so much grain. Let penalties be commuted for so much. By these means, rich men will enjoy honours, husbandmen will make money, and grain be distributed over the face of the empire. Those who purchase rank in this way will purchase out of their surplus; and by handing this over to the Imperial exchequer, the burden of taxes may be lightened, one man's superfluity making up for the deficiency of another, to the infinite advantage of the people. The benefits of this plan may in fact be enumerated under the following heads:—(1) Sufficiency for Imperial purposes; (2) Light taxation; (3) Impetus given to agriculture.

Then again, at present a horse and cart are taken in lieu of three men under conscription for military service, on the ground that these are part of the equipment of war. But it was said of old, "An you have a stone rampart a hundred feet high, a moat a hundred feet broad, and a million of soldiers to guard the city, without food it shall be of no avail."

From the above it is clear that grain is the basis of all government.] Rather than bid men gain rank and escape conscription by payments of grain: this would be better far than payment in horses and carts. Rank can be given at will by the mere fiat of the Emperor, and the supply is inexhaustible; grain can be produced from the earth by man in endless measure; and rank and exemption from penalty are what men above all things desire.

Therefore, I pray your Majesty, bestow rank and commute penalties for grain-payments; and within three years the empire will be amply supplied.

WU TI.

REIGNED 140-87 B.C.

[This Emperor is famous for his long and magnificent reign of fifty-four years ; for his energetic patronage of scholars engaged in the resuscitation of Confucian literature ; for the brilliant exploits of his generals in Central Asia against the Huns ; for the establishment of universities and literary degrees, etc., etc. For a reply to the Proclamation annexed, see Tung-fang So.]

HEROES WANTED!—A PROCLAMATION.

EXCEPTIONAL work demands exceptional men. A bolting or a kicking horse may eventually become a most valuable animal. A man who is the object of the world's detestation may live to accomplish great things. As with the untractable horse, so with the infatuated man ;—it is simply a question of training.

WE therefore command the various district officials to search for men of brilliant and exceptional talents, to be OUR generals, OUR ministers, and OUR envoys to distant States.

TUNG-FANG SO.

2ND CENTURY B.C.

[Popularly known as "The Wag." The following memorial was forwarded by him in response to the Proclamation of Wu Ti (*q. v.*), calling for heroes to assist in the government. Tung-fang So became at once an intimate friend and adviser of the young Emperor, continuing in favour until his death.]

SELF-RECOMMENDATION.

I LOST my parents while still a child, and grew up in my elder brother's home. At twelve I learnt to write, and within the year I was well advanced in history and composition. At fifteen, I learnt sword exercise; at sixteen, to repeat the *Odes* and the *Book of History*—220,000 words in all. At nineteen, I studied the tactics of Sun Wu,* the accoutrements of battle array, and the use of the gong and drum, also 220,000 words in all, making a grand total of 440,000 words. I also carefully laid to heart the sayings of the bold Tzŭ Lu.†

I am now twenty-two years of age. I am nine feet three inches in height.‡ My eyes are like swinging

* A skilful commander who flourished in the sixth century before Christ, and wrote a treatise on the art of war.

† One of Confucius's favourite disciples, specially remarkable for his courage. Whatever he said, he did.

‡ We must understand a shorter foot-rule than that now in use.

pearls, my teeth like a row of shells. I am as brave as Mêng Fên, as prompt as Ch'ing Chi, as pure as Pao Shu, and as devoted as Wei Shêng.* I consider myself fit to be a high officer of State ; and with my life in my hand, I await your Majesty's reply.

* Hereby hangs a pretty tale. Wei Shêng was a young man who had an assignation with a young lady beneath a bridge. At the time appointed she did not come, but the tide did ; and Wei Shêng, rather than quit his post, clung to a pillar and was drowned.

SSŪ-MA HSIANG-JU.

DIED 126 B.C.

[A distinguished statesman, scholar, and poet, who flourished during the reigns of Ching Ti and Wu Ti of the Han dynasty.]

AGAINST HUNTING.

I HAD accompanied the Imperial hunt to Ch'ang-yang. At that time His Majesty (Wu Ti, 2nd century B.C.) was an ardent follower of the chase, and loved to slaughter bears and wild boars with his own hands. Therefore I handed in the following Memorial :—

May it please your Majesty,

I have heard that although the human race is comprised under one class, the capabilities of each individual are widely different. Thus we praise the strength of this man, the swiftness of that, and the courage of a third. And I venture to believe that what is true of us in this respect is equally true of the brute creation.

Now your Majesty enjoys laying low the fierce quarry in some close mountain pass. But one day there will come a beast, more terrible than the rest, driven from its lair; and then disaster will overtake the Imperial equipage.

There will be no means of escape, no time to do anything, no scope for the utmost skill or strength, over the rotten branches and decaying trunks which help to complete the disorder. The Huns rising up under your Majesty's chariot-wheels, the barbarians of the west clinging on behind, would hardly be worse than this. And even if, in every case, actual injury is avoided, still this is not a fitting scene for the presence of the Son of Heaven. Besides, even on smooth ground and on a beaten track there is always a risk of accident,—a broken rein or a loose pin; how much more so in the jungle or on the rough mountain-side, where, with the pleasure of the chase ahead and no thought of danger within, misfortune easily comes?

To neglect the affairs of a mighty empire and to find no peaceful occupation therein, but to seek for pleasure in the chase, never wholly without peril,—this is what in my opinion your Majesty should not do. The clear of vision discern coming events before they actually loom in sight: the wise in counsel avoid dangers before they definitely assume a shape. Misfortunes often lie concealed in trifles, and burst forth when least expected. Hence the vulgar saying, *Don't fill your house so full of gold but what there is room to sit down*; which proverb, though trivial in itself, may be used in illustration of great matters. I trust that your Majesty will deign to reflect hereon.

THE PRINCE OF CHUNG-SHAN.

ABOUT 110 B.C.

MUSIC.

[An Emperor of the Han dynasty was feasting several of his vassal princes who had come to pay their respects at Court, when it was observed that one of them shed tears at the sound of the music.* His Majesty enquired the cause of his distress, and the following was the prince's reply. He had been a terrified witness of the unexpected fall of a number of his colleagues, apparently without other reason than the caprice of their Imperial master excited by the voice of secret slander, and was evidently afraid that his own turn might be at hand.]

MAY it please your Majesty !

There are moments when those who sorrow must weep, when those who are pensive cannot restrain their sighs. And so, when Kao Chien-li struck his lute, Ching K'ò bowed his head and forgot to eat; when Yung Mên-tzũ vented his sorrow in song, Mêng Ch'ang-chün uttered a responsive cry. Now, mine has been a grief pent up for many a day; and whenever music's plaintive strains reach my ear, I know not how it is, my tears begin to flow.

* See note to *Unpopularity*, p. 37.

Enough spittle will float a mountain; enough mosquitoes will cause a roar like thunder; a band of confederates will catch a tiger; ten men will break an iron bar. Combination has ever prevailed even against the greatest of the great.

And I,—I live afar off. I have but few friends, and none to intercede on my behalf. Against enough calumny, the purest purity and the ties of kindred cannot prevail. Light things may be piled on a cart until the axle snaps: it is by abundance of feathers that birds can raise their bodies in the air. And when I see so many of my colleagues tangled in the meshes of treason, my tears are beyond control.

When the sun is glowing brightly in the sky, the darkest corners are illumined by its light. Beneath the beams of the clear moon, the eye discerns the insect on the wing. But when dark clouds hide the sky behind their murky veil; when storms of dust thicken the surrounding air;—then even mighty mountains are lost to sight behind the screen of intervening things.

Thus I am beyond the pale, while the lying tongues of courtiers chatter behind my back. The way is long, and none will speak on my behalf. Therefore I weep.

Rats are not flooded out of shrines: mice are not smoked out of a house, lest the buildings suffer withal. Now, I am but distantly related to your Majesty: still we are as the calyx and the fruit of the persimmon. My rank may be low: still I address your Majesty as my elder brother. But the courtiers round the Throne: their claims to relationship are thin as the pellicle of the

rush, light as the down of the wild goose. Yet they combine, and each supports the other. They bring about separations in the Imperial family, until the ties of blood vanish like melting ice. It was this that drove Poh Ch'i into exile: it was this that hurried Pi Kan to his grave.

It is said in the *Odes*, "Sorrow stabs my heart, and I am overwhelmed with sad thoughts. Vainly trying to sleep, I do naught but sigh. My grief is aging me. My heart throbs with it, like a throbbing head." And such, may it please your Majesty, is my case now.

LI LING.

1ST AND 2ND CENTURIES B.C.

[Su Wu, the friend to whom this letter was addressed, had been sent B.C. 100 on a special mission to the court of the Huns, where, because he would not renounce his allegiance, he was thrown into prison and remained in captivity for nineteen years. He subsequently effected an escape, and returned to China, whence he wrote to Li Ling (who had meanwhile surrendered to the Huns) in a sense that will be gathered from a perusal of the latter's reply.]

A REPLY.

O Tzŭ-CH'ING,* O my friend, happy in the enjoyment of a glorious reputation, happy in the prospect of an imperishable name,—there is no misery like exile in a far-off foreign land, the heart brimful of longing thoughts of home! I have thy kindly letter, bidding me be of good cheer, kinder than a brother's words; for which my soul thanks thee.

Ever since the hour of my surrender until now, destitute of all resource, I have sat alone with the bitterness of my grief. All day long I see none but barbarians around me. Skins and felt protect me from wind and rain. With mutton and whey I satisfy my hunger and slake my thirst. Companions with whom to while time

* Su Wu's literary name or style.

away, I have none. The whole country is stiff with black ice. I hear naught but the moaning of the bitter autumn blast, beneath which all vegetation has disappeared. I cannot sleep at night. I turn and listen to the distant sound of Tartar pipes, to the whinnying of Tartar steeds. In the morning I sit up and listen still, while tears course down my cheeks. O Tzŭ-ch'ing, of what stuff am I, that I should do aught but grieve? The day of thy departure left me disconsolate indeed. I thought of my aged mother butchered upon the threshold of the grave. I thought of my innocent wife and child, condemned to the same cruel fate. Deserving as I might have been of Imperial censure, I am now an object of pity to all. Thy return was to honour and renown, while I remained behind with infamy and disgrace. Such is the divergence of man's destiny.

Born within the domain of refinement and justice, I passed into an environment of vulgar ignorance. I left behind me obligations to sovereign and family for life amid barbarian hordes; and now barbarian children will carry on the line of my forefathers.* And yet my merit was great, my guilt of small account. I had no fair hearing; and when I pause to think of these things, I ask to what end I have lived. With a thrust I could have cleared myself of all blame: my severed throat would have borne witness to my resolution; and between me and my country all would have been over for aye. But to kill myself would have been of

* He had taken a Tartar wife.

no avail: I should only have added to my shame. I therefore steeled myself to obloquy and to life. There were not wanting those who mistook my attitude for compliance, and urged me to a nobler course; ignorant that the joys of a foreign land are sources only of a keener grief.

O Tzū-ch'ing, O my friend, I will complete the half-told record of my former tale. His late Majesty commissioned me, with five thousand infantry under my command, to carry on operations in a distant country. Five brother generals missed their way: I alone reached the theatre of war. With rations for a long march, leading on my men, I passed beyond the limits of the Celestial Land, and entered the territory of the fierce Huns. With five thousand men I stood opposed to a hundred thousand: mine jaded foot soldiers, theirs horsemen fresh from the stable. Yet we slew their leaders, and captured their standards, and drove them back in confusion towards the north. We obliterated their very traces: we swept them away like dust: we beheaded their general. A martial spirit spread abroad among my men. With them, to die in battle was to return to their homes; while I—I venture to think that I had already accomplished something.

This victory was speedily followed by a general rising of the Huns. New levies were trained to the use of arms, and at length another hundred thousand barbarians were arrayed against me. The Hun chieftain himself appeared, and with his army surrounded my little band, so unequal in strength,—foot-soldiers

opposed to horse. Still my tired veterans fought, each man worth a thousand of the foe, as, covered with wounds, one and all struggled bravely to the fore. The plain was strewed with the dying and the dead: barely a hundred men were left, and these too weak to hold a spear and shield. Yet, when I waved my hand and shouted to them, the sick and wounded arose. Brandishing their blades, and pointing towards the foe, they dismissed the Tartar cavalry like a rabble rout. And even when their arms were gone, their arrows spent, without a foot of steel in their hands, they still rushed, yelling, onward, each eager to lead the way. The very heavens and the earth seemed to gather round me, while my warriors drank tears of blood. Then the Hunnish chieftain, thinking that we should not yield, would have drawn off his forces. But a false traitor told him all: the battle was renewed, and we were lost.

The Emperor Kao Ti, with 300,000 men at his back, was shut up in P'ing-ch'êng. Generals he had, like clouds; counsellors, like drops of rain. Yet he remained seven days without food, and then barely escaped with life. How much more than I, now blamed on all sides that I did not die? This was my crime. But, O Tzŭ-ch'ing, canst thou say that I would live from craven fear of death? Am I one to turn my back on my country and all those dear to me, allured by sordid thoughts of gain? It was not indeed without cause that I did not elect to die. I longed, as explained in my former letter, to prove my loyalty to my prince. Rather than die to no purpose, I chose to live

and to establish my good name. It was better to achieve something than to perish. Of old, Fan Li did not slay himself after the battle of Hui-chi; neither did Ts'ao Wei die after the ignominy of three defeats. Revenge came at last; and thus I too had hoped to prevail. Why then was I overtaken with punishment before the plan was matured? Why were my own flesh and blood condemned before the design could be carried out? It is for this that I raise my face to Heaven, and beating my breast, shed tears of blood.

O my friend, thou sayest that the house of Han never fails to reward a deserving servant. But thou art thyself a servant of the house, and it would ill beseem thee to say other words than these. Yet Hsiao and Fan were bound in chains; Han and P'êng were sliced to death. Chou Po was disgraced, and Tou Ying paid the penalty with his life. Others too, great in their generation, have also succumbed to the intrigues of base men, and have been overwhelmed beneath a weight of shame from which they were unable to emerge. And now, the misfortunes of Fan Li and Ts'ao Mei command the sympathies of all.

My grandfather filled heaven and earth with the fame of his exploits—the bravest of the brave. Yet, fearing the animosity of an Imperial favourite, he slew himself in a distant land, his death being followed by the secession, in disgust, of many a brother-hero. Can this be the reward of which thou speakest?

Thou too, O my friend, an envoy with a slender equipage, sent on that mission to the robber race, when

fortune failed thee even to the last resource of the dagger. Then years of miserable captivity, all but ended by death among the wilds of the far north. Thou left us full of young life, to return a gray-beard; thy old mother dead, thy wife gone from thee to another. Seldom has the like of this been known. Even the savage barbarian respected thy loyal spirit: how much more the lord of all under the canopy of the sky? A many-acred barony should have been thine, the ruler of a thousand-charioted fief! Nevertheless, they tell me 'twas but two paltry millions, and the chancellorship of the Tributary States. Not a foot of soil repaid thee for the past, while some cringing courtier gets the marquisate of ten thousand families, and each greedy parasite of the Imperial house is gratified by the choicest offices of the State. If then thou farest thus, what could I expect? I have been heavily repaid for that I did not die. Thou hast been meanly rewarded for thy unswerving devotion to thy prince. This is barely that which should attract the absent servant back to his fatherland.

And so it is that I do not now regret the past. Wanting though I may have been in my duty to the State, the State was wanting also in gratitude towards me. It was said of old, "A loyal subject, though not a hero, will rejoice to die for his country." I would die joyfully even now; but the stain of my prince's ingratitude can never be wiped away. Indeed, if the brave man is not to be allowed to achieve a name, but to die like a dog in a barbarian land, who will be found to crook the

back and bow the knee before an Imperial throne, where the bitter pens of courtiers tell their lying tales?

O my friend, look for me no more. O Tzū-ch'ing, what shall I say? A thousand leagues lie between us, and separate us for ever. I shall live out my life as it were in another sphere: my spirit will find its home among a strange people. Accept my last adieu. Speak for me to my old acquaintances, and bid them serve their sovereign well. O my friend, be happy in the bosom of thy family, and think of me no more. Strive to take all care of thyself; and when time and opportunity are thine, write me once again in reply.

LI LING salutes thee!

LU WÊN-SHU.

1ST CENTURY B.C.

ON PUNISHMENTS.

May it please your Majesty,

Of the ten great follies of our predecessors, one still survives in the maladministration of justice which prevails.*

Under the Ch'ins, learning was at a discount: brute force carried everything before it. Those who cultivated

* The "ten great follies" which helped to bring about the overthrow of the Ch'in dynasty were—

1. Abolition of the feudal system.
2. Melting down all weapons and casting twelve huge figures from the metal.
3. Building the Great Wall to keep out the Tartars.
4. Building a huge pleasure-house, the central hall of which was over sixty feet in height, and capable of accommodating ten thousand guests. It is described in a poem by Tu Mu, or the younger Tu.
5. The Burning of the Books. See p. 53.
6. The massacre of the Literati.
7. Building a vast mausoleum.
8. Searching for the elixir of life.
9. Appointing the Heir-Apparent to be Commander-in-Chief.
10. Maladministration of justice.

a spirit of charity and duty towards their neighbour were despised. Judicial appointments were the prizes coveted by all. He who spoke out the truth was stigmatised as a slanderer, and he who strove to expose abuses was set down as a pestilent fellow. Consequently, all who acted up to the precepts of our ancient code, found themselves out of place in their generation; and loyal words of good advice to the sovereign remained locked up within their bosoms, while hollow notes of obsequious flattery soothed the monarch's ear and lulled his heart with false images, to the exclusion of disagreeable realities. And so the rod of empire fell from their grasp for ever.

At the present moment, the State rests upon the immeasurable bounty and goodness of your Majesty. We are free from the horrors of war, from the calamities of hunger and cold. Father and son, husband and wife, are united in their happy homes. Nothing is wanting to make this a golden age, save only reform in the administration of justice.

Of all trusts, this is the greatest and most sacred. The dead man can never come back to life: that which is once cut off cannot be joined again. "Rather than slay an innocent man, it were better that the guilty escape." Such, however, is not the view of our judicial authorities of to-day. With them, oppression and severity are reckoned to be signs of magisterial acumen, and lead on to fortune; whereas leniency entails naught but trouble. Therefore, their chief aim is to compass the death of their victims; not that they entertain any grudge against humanity in general, but simply that this is the

shortest cut to their own personal advantage. Thus, our market-places run with blood, our criminals throng the gaols, and many thousands annually suffer death. These things are injurious to public morals, and hinder the advent of a truly golden age.

Man enjoys life only when his mind is at peace ; when he is in distress, his thoughts turn towards death. Beneath the scourge, what is there that cannot be wrung from the lips of the sufferer ? His agony is overwhelming, and he seeks to escape by speaking falsely. The officials profit by the opportunity, and cause him to say what will best confirm his guilt. And then, fearing lest the conviction be quashed by higher courts, they dress the victim's deposition so to suit the circumstances of the case, so that, when the record is complete, even were Kao Yao* himself to rise from the dead, he would declare that death still left a margin of unexpiated crime. This, because of the refining process adopted to ensure the establishment of guilt.

Our magistrates indeed think of nothing else. They are the bane of the people. They keep in view their own ends, and care not for the welfare of the State. Truly they are the worst criminals of the age. Hence the saying now runs, "Chalk out a prison on the ground, and no one would remain within. Set up a gaoler of wood, and he will be found standing there alone." † Imprisonment has become the greatest of all misfortunes ;

* A famous Minister of Crime in the mythical ages.

† Contrary to what is believed to have been the case during the Golden Age.

while among those who break the law, who violate family ties, who choke the truth,—there are none to be compared in iniquity with the officers of justice themselves.

Where you let the kite rear its young undisturbed, there will the phoenix come and build its nest. Do not punish for misguided advice, and by-and-by valuable suggestions will flow in. The men of old said, "Hills and jungles shelter many noxious things: rivers and marshes receive much filth: even the finest gems are not wholly without flaw. Surely then the ruler of an empire should put up with a little abuse." But I would have your Majesty exempt from vituperation, and open to the advice of all who have aught to say. I would have freedom of speech in the advisers of the Throne. I would sweep away the errors which brought about the downfall of our predecessors. I would have reverence for the virtues of our ancient kings, and reform in the administration of justice, to the utter confusion of those who now pervert its course. Then, indeed, would the golden age be renewed over the face of the glad earth, and the people would move ever onwards in peace and happiness boundless as the sky itself.

SHU KUANG.

1ST CENTURY B.C.

[The following is the reply of an aged statesmen to his friends and kinsmen, on being urged by them to invest a sum of money, granted to him by the Emperor on his retirement from office, in landed property for his descendants.]

THE DISADVANTAGES OF WEALTH.

How should I be so infatuated in my old age as to make no provision for my children? There is the family estate. Let them work hard upon it, and that toil will find them in clothes and food, like other people. To add anything, and so create a superfluity, would be to hold up a premium for sloth. The genius of men who possess is stunted by possession. Wealth only aggravates the natural imbecility of fools. Besides, a rich man is an eyesore to all. I may not be able to do much to improve my children; at least, I will not stimulate their vices and cause them to be objects of hate.

Then again, this money was graciously bestowed upon me by His Majesty, as pension for the old age of a servant. Therefore I rejoice to spend it freely among my clansmen and my fellow-villagers, as I pass to my appointed rest. Am I not right?

KU YUNG.

1ST CENTURY B.C.

[The following memorial refers to the reception of a Hun refugee, named Issimoyen, who was seeking to become a naturalised subject of China.]

AGAINST THE NATURALISATION OF HUNS.

At the rise of the Han dynasty, the Huns were a frontier curse. Accordingly, presents and honours were heaped upon them, in the hope that they would be led to join the Empire. And now that the Hun Captain has tendered his allegiance and become an officer of this government, his territory being enrolled among the Tributary States of the north,—he can entertain but one feeling towards us, and it behoves us to treat him in a manner different from that of past years. But if with one hand we receive his tribute, while with the other we welcome his fugitive servant,—is not this to clutch with greedy grasp at a single individual and sacrifice the trust and confidence of a nation; to clasp to our bosom a defaulting officer and cast from us the honourable friendship of a prince?

Possibly the Hun Captain has sent his man here to test our good faith, and the request to be naturalised

is but a specious plea. In this case, to receive him would be a breach of duty, and would cause the Hun Captain to separate from us altogether.

Or it may be the Hun Captain's wish to bring about a separation in this way; and then we should but play into his hands, and enable him to quote his own loyalty against our disloyalty.

These are the beginnings of frontier troubles, of recourse to arms, and of military expeditions. Let us rather refuse to receive this man. Let us lay bare the integrity of our own hearts, and prevent the operation of any possible ruse by adhering closely to the principles of honest friendship.

MA YÜAN.

DIED A. D. 49.

[Popularly known as the "Wave-quelling General." A famous commander, who crushed a dangerous rebellion in Tonquin, organised by a native Joan of Arc with a view to shake off the suzerainty of China. Was also successfully employed against the Huns and other border tribes.]

AMBITION.

My younger brother used often to find fault with my indomitable ambition. He would say, "The man of letters requires food and clothing only. A modest carriage and a humble hack; some small official post in a quiet place, where he may win golden opinions from the surrounding villagers—that should suffice. Why toil and strive for more?"

Later on, when away in the far barbarian south, before the rebellion was stamped out—a bog beneath my feet, a fog above my head, so that I have even seen kites drop dead in the water, killed by the poisonous vapours of the place—then I used to lie and muse upon the other view of life which my brother had set before my eyes.

And now—now that, thanks to you my brave comrades, my efforts have been crowned with success, and I have preceded you on the path to glory and honour—I have cause both for joy and for shame.*

* Implying that his success had been due to good luck.

PAN CHIEH-YÜ.

1ST CENTURY B.C.

[Written by an Imperial favourite who felt that her influence over the Emperor was beginning to wane.]

THE AUTUMN FAN.

O FAIR white silk, fresh from the weaver's loom,
Clear as the frost, bright as the winter snow—
See! friendship fashions out of thee a fan,
Round as the round moon shines in heaven above;
At home, abroad, a close companion thou,
Stirring at every move the grateful gale;
And yet I fear, ah me! that autumn chills,
Cooling the dying summer's torrid rage,
Will see thee laid neglected on the shelf,
All thought of by-gone days, like them, by-gone.

MING TI OF THE HOUSE OF WEI.

REIGNED 227—239 A.D.

ON AN ECLIPSE.—A RESCRIPT.

WE have heard that if a sovereign is remiss in government, Heaven terrifies him by calamities and strange portents. These are divine reprimands sent to recall him to a sense of duty. Thus, partial eclipses of the sun and moon are manifest warnings that the rod of empire is not wielded aright.

Ever since WE ascended the throne, OUR inability to continue the glorious traditions of OUR departed ancestors and carry on the great work of civilisation, has now culminated in a warning message from on high. It therefore behoves US to issue commands for personal reformation, in order to avert the impending calamity.

But the relations of Heaven with Man are those of a father and son; and a father about to chastise his son, would not be deterred were the latter to present him with a dish of meat. WE do not therefore consider it part of OUR duty to act in accordance with certain memorials advising that the prime minister and chief astronomer be instructed to offer up sacrifices on this occasion. Do ye governors of districts and other high officers of State, seek rather to rectify your own hearts; and if any one can devise means to make up for OUR shortcomings, let him submit his proposals to the Throne.

LIU LING.

3RD CENTURY A.D.

[One of seven hard-drinking poets of the day who formed themselves into a club, known as the Bamboo Grove. He was always accompanied by a servant carrying a wine-flask; and he gave orders that if he fell dead in his cups he should be buried where he lay. In this respect, he was perhaps out-Heroded by another famous tippler, who left instructions that he should be buried in a potter's field, so that, "when time into clay might resolve him again," he would have a chance of re-appearing among men under the form of a wine-jug.]

THE GENIUS OF WINE.

AN old gentleman, a friend of mine (*sc.* himself), regards eternity as but a single day, and whole centuries as but an instant of time. The sun and moon are the windows of his house; the cardinal points are the boundaries of his domain. He wanders unrestrained and free; he dwells within no walls. The canopy of Heaven is his roof; his resting-place is the lap of Earth. He follows his fancy in all things. He is never for a moment without a wine-flask in one hand, a goblet in the other. His only thought is wine: he knows of naught beyond.

Two respectable philanthropists, hearing of my friend's weakness, proceeded to tax him on the subject; and with many gestures of disapprobation, fierce scowls, and

gnashing of teeth, preached him quite a sermon on the rules of propriety, and sent his faults buzzing round his head like a swarm of bees.

When they began, the old gentleman filled himself another bumper; and sitting down, quietly stroked his beard and sipped his wine by turns, until at length he lapsed into a semi-inebriate state of placid enjoyment, varied by intervals of absolute unconsciousness or of partial return to mental lucidity. His ears were beyond the reach of thunder; he could not have seen a mountain. Heat and cold existed for him no more. He knew not even the workings of his own mind. To him, the affairs of this world appeared but as so much duckweed on a river; while the two philanthropists at his side looked like two wasps trying to convert a caterpillar (into a wasp, as the Chinese believe is done).

T'AO YÜAN-MING.

365—427 A.D.

[Chiefly remarkable for having thrown up a good official appointment, because as he said his salary did not repay him for being obliged to "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee." In private life, he amused himself with authorship and rearing chrysanthemums. See *The Language of Flowers*.]

HOME AGAIN!

HOMEWARDS I bend my steps. My fields, my gardens, are choked with weeds: should I not go? My soul has led a bondsman's life: why should I remain to pine? But I will waste no grief upon the past: I will devote my energies to the future. I have not wandered far astray. I feel that I am on the right track once again.

Lightly, lightly, speeds my boat along, my garments fluttering to the gentle breeze. I enquire my route as I go. I grudge the slowness of the dawning day. From afar I descry my old home, and joyfully press onwards in my haste. The servants rush forth to meet me: my children cluster at the gate. The place is a wilderness; but there is the old pine-tree and my chrysanthemums. I take the little ones by the hand, and pass in. Wine is brought in full bottles, and I pour out in brimming cups. I gaze out at my favourite branches.

I loll against the window in my new-found freedom.
I look at the sweet children on my knee.

And now I take my pleasure in my garden. There is a gate, but it is rarely opened. I lean on my staff as I wander about or sit down to rest. I raise my head and contemplate the lovely scene. Clouds rise, unwilling, from the bottom of the hills: the weary bird seeks its nest again. Shadows vanish, but still I linger round my lonely pine. Home once more! I'll have no friendships to distract me hence. The times are out of joint for me; and what have I to seek from men? In the pure enjoyment of the family circle I will pass my days, cheering my idle hours with lute and book. My husbandmen will tell me when spring-time is nigh, and when there will be work in the furrowed fields. Thither I shall repair by cart or by boat, through the deep gorge, over the dizzy cliff, trees bursting merrily into leaf, the streamlet swelling from its tiny source. Glad is this renewal of life in due season: but for me, I rejoice that my journey is over. Ah, how short a time it is that we are here! Why then not set our hearts at rest, ceasing to trouble whether we remain or go? What boots it to wear out the soul with anxious thoughts? I want not wealth: I want not power: heaven is beyond my hopes. Then let me stroll through the bright hours as they pass, in my garden among my flowers; or I will mount the hill and sing my song, or weave my verse beside the limpid brook. Thus will I work out my allotted span, content with appointments of Fate, my spirit free from care.

THE PEACH-BLOSSOM FOUNTAIN.

Towards the close of the fourth century A.D., a certain fisherman of Wu-ling, who had followed up one of the river branches without taking note whither he was going, came suddenly upon a grove of peach-trees in full bloom, extending some distance on each bank, with not a tree of any other kind in sight. The beauty of the scene and the exquisite perfume of the flowers filled the heart of the fisherman with surprise, as he proceeded onwards, anxious to reach the limit of this lovely grove. He found that the peach trees ended where the water began, at the foot of a hill; and there he espied what seemed to be a cave with light issuing from it. So he made fast his boat, and crept in through a narrow entrance, which shortly ushered him into a new world of level country, of fine houses, of rich fields, of fine pools, and of luxuriance of mulberry and bamboo. Highways of traffic ran north and south; sounds of crowing cocks and barking dogs were heard around; the dress of the people who passed along or were at work in the fields was of a strange cut; while young and old alike appeared to be contented and happy.

One of the inhabitants, catching sight of the fisherman, was greatly astonished; but, after learning whence he came, insisted on carrying him home, and killed a chicken and placed some wine before him. Before long, all the people of the place had turned out to see the visitor, and they informed him that their ancestors

had sought refuge here, with their wives and families, from the troublous times of the House of Ch'in, adding that they had thus become finally cut off from the rest of the human race. They then enquired about the politics of the day, ignorant of the establishment of the Han dynasty, and of course of the later dynasties which had succeeded it. And when the fishermen told them the story, they grieved over the vicissitudes of human affairs.

Each in turn invited the fisherman to his home and entertained him hospitably, until at length the latter prepared to take his leave. "It will not be worth while to talk about what you have seen to the outside world," said the people of the place to the fisherman, as he bade them farewell and returned to his boat, making mental notes of his route as he proceeded on his homeward voyage.

When he reached home, he at once went and reported what he had seen to the Governor of the district, and the Governor sent off men with him to seek, by the aid of the fisherman's notes, to discover this unknown region. But he was never able to find it again. Subsequently, another desperate attempt was made by a famous adventurer to pierce the mystery; but he also failed, and died soon afterwards of chagrin, from which time forth no further attempts were made.*

* The whole story is allegorical, and signifies that the fisherman had been strangely permitted to go back once again into the peach-blossom days of his youth.

CHANG YÜEH.

667-730 A.D.

FIGHTING GOATS.

MAY it please your Majesty,

It is on record that the cock's comb and the pheasant's plume were emblems of the bravery of old. This honour might well be extended to goats. Born on the beetling cliff; hardened by a rigorous life; they face all foes without fear, and fight on courageously to the death. Although but brute beasts, their will may not be lightly crossed.

And now that your Majesty is seeking good soldiers in every corner of the empire, even the birds of the air and the beasts of the field should be laid under contribution. Suppose, then, that your Majesty should deign to place the accompanying animals in the Imperial park where they could exhibit to all comers their untiring strength and their unflinching courage, when with impetuous rush they fall blindly upon one another, horns crashing, bones breaking, blood spurting, in the fierce struggle for victory;—then I think that even the bravest of our brave would be thrilled, and yield

their unqualified applause. Thus, I too might hope to lend some trifling aid, like him who counselled the purchase of horses' bones, like him who bowed to the intrepid frog.*

At the same time, could these goats speak they would doubtless say, "If we are to fight on without interference, there will soon be an end of us. We rely on your Majesty's humanity not to exterminate us thus, but to make use of us in the sense required only as far as our strength permits."

I am suffering from gout, and cannot put my foot to the ground. I therefore humbly forward these goats by your Majesty's son-in-law, to be duly laid before the Throne, trembling meanwhile lest I may have incurred the Imperial displeasure.

* (1) When Chao Wang stood in need of horses for military purposes, he was advised to offer a high price for horses' bones, so that the people, in view of still larger profits, might be induced to bring real horses to the camp for sale.

(2) When the Prince of Ch'u was attacking the Wu State, he one day made obeisance to a frog—a traditionally brave creature—in order that his soldiery might infer how much more he would be likely to honour them for bravery upon the field.

CHANG CHI.

7TH CENTURY A.D.

[An obscure poet, of whose productions only the following specimen has been included in the *Poetry of the T'ang Dynasty*. And even this one is by no means perfect, involving as it does certain violations of the stiff laws of Chinese versification. However, as a discerning critic justly remarks, "the beauty of the piece lies outside its verbal structure."]

THE CHASTE WIFE'S REPLY.

KNOWING, fair sir, my matrimonial thrall,
Two pearls thou sentest me, costly withal.
And I, seeing that Love thy heart possessed,
I wrapped them coldly in my silken vest.

For mine is a household of high degree:
My husband captain in the king's army;
And one with wit like thine should say,
"The troth of wives is for ever and aye."

With thy two pearls I send thee back two tears:
Tears—that we did not meet in earlier years!

LI T'AI-PÖ.

699-762 A.D.

[The best known of all China's countless host of lyric poets, famous for his exquisite imagery, his wealth of words, his telling allusions to the past, and for the musical cadence of his verse. For a long period admitted to intimacy with the Emperor, too much familiarity ended at length in contempt. The poet was ultimately prosecuted for sedition, and sent into exile, from which he returned in his old age only to die.]

LET US EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY.

THE universe is but the lodging-house of all things visible; light and darkness are the passing guests of Time. Life is but a dream, with little joy therein; and the ancients did well in seeking to lengthen their days by stealing some hours from the night.

And now the blooming spring beckons me with verdant hand, while nature's wealth of eloquence lures me forth,—forth to the fragrant bower of peach and plum, to the joy of reunion with friends. There they meet, my gentle, matchless brothers; and I, the poor poet, unworthy to be their mate. Then, ere the first thrill passes away, comes flow of subtle wit, and the feast spread, while couched upon flowers, amid flashing cups, we drink deep draughts to the moon. And as, without

the solace of composition, there is no outlet for the pent-up soul, it was ruled that he who did not contribute his verse should suffer the penalty of the "Golden Valley" (*i.e.*, drink three cups of wine, the "Golden Valley" being the name of a garden, the owner of which enforced this penalty among his boon companions).

ON GETTING DRUNK IN SPRING.

What is life after all but a dream?

And why should such pother be made?

Better far to be tipsy, I deem,

And doze all day long in the shade.

When I wake and look out on the lawn,

I hear midst the flowers a bird sing:

I ask, "Is it evening or dawn?"

The mango-bird whistles, "'Tis spring."

Overpower'd with the beautiful sight,

Another full goblet I pour,

And would sing till the moon rises bright—

But soon I'm as drunk as before.

THE GRASS-WIDOW'S SONG.

Beneath the light of the crescent moon,

While the washerman's *bâton* resounds in every house,

How gently blows the autumn breeze!—

But my heart is away in Kansuh,

Longing for the defeat of the Tartars

And the return of my husband from the wars.

TU FU.

712-770 A.D.

[The following extract is given because it seems absurd to entirely omit mention of a poet whom the Chinese rank as second only to Li T'ai-pō. Unfortunately, all the poetry of his with which I am acquainted belongs to the most untranslatable class.]

THE DESERTED WIFE.

ONCE fairer than the fairest dame,
I live concealed in mountain dell.
I call myself scion of a virtuous house,
Though shrubs and trees are now my sole support.

 Trouble came upon us lately within the walls;
My brothers were put to death.
What matter that their rank was high?
We could not recover their dead bodies.

 The age has no charms for me:
All things are like the puffing-out of a candle;
My husband a frivolous libertine,
His new wife as fair as jade.

 The acacia knows the hour to close,
The turtle-dove will not live alone;
He only sees the new wife smile,
He hears not the old wife weep.

Water on the hill is clear,
Water from the hill is thick;
My maids go to sell my pearls,
And with a wisp they mend the patched roof.
I pluck flowers I do not wear;
Fir-cones I gather in handfuls;
My brodered sleeve is thin for cold winds
As day and eve I lean against the tall bamboo.

HAN WÊN-KUNG.

768—824 A.D.

[From Mr. Watters' invaluable *Guide to the Tablets in a Confucian Temple*, I learn that we should wash our hands in rose-water before taking up the works of Han Wên-Kung. Known as the "Prince of Literature," and generally regarded as the most striking figure in the Chinese world of letters, he certainly ranks high as poet, essayist, and philosopher. In official life, he got himself into trouble by his outspoken attacks upon Buddhism, at that time very fashionable at Court, and was banished to the then barbarous south, where he gained great kudos by his wise and incorrupt administration. It was there that he issued his famous manifesto to the crocodile, at which we might well smile if it were not quite clear that to the author superstition was simply, as elsewhere, an instrument of political power. Han Wên-Kung was ultimately recalled from his quasi-exile, and died loaded with honours. His tablet has been placed in the Confucian temple, which is otherwise strictly reserved for exponents of the doctrines of Confucius, "because," as Mr. Watters states, "he stood out almost alone against the heresy of Buddhism which had nearly quenched the torch of Confucian truth." I have already published in the *Celestial Empire* a translation of his attack upon Buddha, and there is another by Mr. Chalmers in the *China Review*; consequently, I do not reproduce it here.]

ON THE TRUE FAITH OF A
CONFUCIANIST.

UNIVERSAL love is called *charity*: right conduct is called *duty*. The product of these two factors is called the

method; and their exemplification, without external stimulus, is called *instinct*.*

Charity and Duty are constant terms. Method and Instinct are variable. Thus, there is the Method of the perfect man, and the Method of the mean man; while Instincts may be either good or evil.

Lao Tzŭ † merely narrowed the scope of charity and duty; he did not attempt to do without them altogether. His view of them was the narrow view of a man sitting at the bottom of a well and inferring the size of the heavens from the small portion visible to himself. He understood Charity and Duty in a limited, individual sense; and narrowness followed as a matter of course. What he called the Method was a Method he had determined was the Method. It was not what I call the Method. What he called Instincts were different from what I call Instincts. What I call Method and Instinct are based upon a combination of Charity and Duty; and this is the opinion of the world at large. What Lao Tzŭ called Method and Instinct were based upon a negation of Charity and Duty; but that was the opinion of one man.

Under the Chows, the true Method began to decay; the influence of Confucius to wane. Under the Ch'ins,

* This last term cannot be satisfactorily rendered. It is usually translated by "virtue"; but that, to go on farther, would make nonsense of the next clause. The meaning, however, may be sufficiently gathered from the context. I need hardly add that "method" must be here understood in its philosophical sense.

† An ancient philosopher who immediately preceded Confucius. See Lieh Tzŭ and Chuang Tzŭ, pp. 10, 19.

came the burning of the books.* Under the Hans, the doctrines of Lao Tzŭ prevailed, followed by the Buddhism of succeeding dynasties. Those who then occupied themselves with morals, sided either with Yang Hsiung or with Meh Tzŭ,† or embraced the tenets either of Lao Tzŭ or of Buddha. Such a one was necessarily led to denounce the teachings of Confucius. His adopted faith became all in all to him; his former faith, an outcast. He glorified the new; he vilified the old. And now those who would cultivate morality, hesitate between a choice of guides!

The followers of Lao Tzŭ say, "Confucius was a disciple of our Master." The followers of Buddha say, "Confucius was a disciple of our Master."‡ And the followers of Confucius, by dint of repetition, have at length fallen so low as themselves to indulge in such random talk, saying, "Our Master also respected Lao Tzŭ and Buddha." Not only have they uttered this with their tongues, but they have written it down in books; and now, if a man would cultivate morality, from whom should he seek instruction?

Great is the straining of mankind after the supernatural!

* See p. 53.

† Yang Hsiung maintained that human nature was a compound of good and evil, and that either would predominate in man according to his early training and associations. Meh Tzŭ taught a doctrine of universal love, which obliterated all distinctions of blood and other relationships.

‡ Confucius is reported to have said "There is a prophet in the West," and the Buddhists have explained this to mean Buddha. A few centuries later and the Jesuits would inevitably have appropriated it as a palpable allusion to Christ.

Great is their neglect of fundamentals in this yearning for the supernatural alone!

Of old, the people were divided into four classes. They are now divided into six.* Of old, there was but one faith. Now, there are three. The husbandman tills his field, and six classes eat of its fruits. The artisan plies his craft, and six classes profit by his skill. The trader barter his goods, and six classes are enriched by the exchange. Is it then surprising that beggary and crime are rampant?

In ancient times, man stood face to face with many dangers. Sages arose and taught him the secret of society. They gave him rulers for the people and teachers for the young. They drove away the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, and established him at the centre of the earth.† He was cold, and they gave him clothes. He was hungry, and they gave him food. He entrusted his life to the hazard of a branch, or slept himself into sickness on the bare ground; and they built him palaces and houses to live in. They taught him handicrafts that he might furnish himself with useful things; they taught him trade that the deficiency of one region might be supplied from the abundance of another. They taught him medicine that he might battle against premature death; they taught him burial and sacrifice that the memory of the dead might be perpetuated for ever. They taught him ceremonial in order to secure a rule of precedence;

* Alluding to the priests of Lao Tzū and Buddha.

† Which the Chinese then believed to be square and flat.

they taught him music as a means of dissipating the melancholy of his heart. They taught him government in order to restrain the lax; they taught him punishment in order to weed out the vicious. As a safeguard against fraud, they made for him seals and measures and scales. As a safeguard against robbery, they built walls and organised militia. Thus did they take precautions against whatsoever evils might come upon him.

But now forsooth we are told that "unless our sages are put to death, deeds of violence will not cease;" and that "if we destroy our measures and break our scales, the people will have no further cause for dissension." What thoughtless talk is this!*

Had there been no sages of old, the race of man would have long since become extinct. Men have not fur and feathers and scales to adjust the temperature of their bodies; neither have they claws and fangs to aid them in the struggle for food. Hence their organisation, as follows:—The sovereign issues commands. The minister carries out these commands and makes them known to the people. The people produce grain and flax and silk, fashion articles of every-day use, and interchange commodities, in order to fulfil their obligations to their rulers. The sovereign who fails to issue his commands loses his *raison d'être*: the minister who fails to carry out his sovereign's commands and to make them known to the people, loses his *raison d'être*:

* The doctrine elaborated by Chuang Tzŭ, namely, that if good was not defined, evil could not exist.

the people who fail to produce grain and flax and silk, fashion articles of every-day use, and interchange commodities, in order to fulfil their obligations to their rulers,—should lose their heads.

But now the rule runs thus:—"Discard the relationships of sovereign and subject, of father and son." These social obligations are put out of sight in order to secure, as they say, "perfect purity in abstraction from a world of sense." Happily, indeed, these doctrines were not promulgated until after the Three Dynasties, when they were unable to interfere with the already-established landmarks of our great Sages. Unhappily, it might be said, because they have thus escaped demolition at the hands of those mighty teachers of men.

Now the title of emperor is different from that of king; yet the wisdom of each is the same. To slake thirst by drinking and to appease hunger with food; to wear grass-cloth in summer and fur in winter,—these acts cannot be regarded as identical; yet the rationale of each is the same. Those who urge us to revert to the inaction of extreme antiquity, might as well advise us to wear grass-cloth in winter, or to drink when we are hungry. It is written, "He who would manifest his good instincts to all mankind, must first duly order the State. But previous to this he must duly order his Family. And previous to that his own Self. And previous to that his Heart. And previous to that his Thoughts." It will be seen therefore that there was an ulterior motive in thus ordering the heart and the thoughts. What, on the other hand, is the object of

the followers of Lao Tzŭ and Buddha? To withdraw themselves from the world, from the State, and from the family! To deny the eternal obligations of society so that sons need no longer submit themselves to their fathers, so that subjects need no longer own allegiance to their sovereigns, so that the people need no longer occupy themselves with their natural duties!

When Confucius wrote his *Spring and Autumn*,* he treated as barbarians those of the feudal princes who used a barbarian ceremonial; while those who adopted the ceremonial of the Central State, were treated by him as men of the Central State. It is written in the *Book of Changes*, "A barbarian prince is not the equal of a Chinese peasant."† It is written in the *Book of Odes*, "Oppose the hordes of the west and north: punish the tribes of Ching and Shu." But now when they would take the rule of life of barbarians and graft it upon the wisdom of our ancient kings,—is not this the first step on

* The name given to the *Annals* from his pen. See p. 1.

† As I was leaving China a few months ago, I was presented by a literary friend with a complimentary poem, in which the following lines occurred :—

We may easily meet once more : still it is hard to part.
The chrysanthemums will have faded ere I shall see you again.
Deep have been your researches in our Sacred Books ;
Shallow, alas ! my wit to expound those books to you.
From of old, literature has illumined the nation of nations ;
And now its influence has gone forth to regenerate a barbarian
official.

The word used for "barbarian" was the character tabooed by Treaty; and yet the writer was undoubtedly conscious only of an effort to please.

the road to barbarism itself? For what was the wisdom of our ancient kings? It was this:—"Universal love is called charity: right conduct is called duty. The resultant of these two factors is called the Method; and their exemplification, without external stimulus, is called instinct." Their canon comprised the *Book of Odes*, the *Book of History*, the *Book of Changes*, and the *Spring and Autumn*. Their code embraced Ceremonial, Music, Punishment, and Administration in general. They divided the people into four classes;—Literati, Husbandmen, Artisans, and Traders. Their relationships were those between sovereign and subject, between father and son, with teacher and with friend, between host and guest, between elder and younger brother, and between husband and wife. Their clothes were of cloth or of silk. They dwelt in palaces or in ordinary houses. They ate grain and vegetables and fruit and fish and flesh. Their Method was easy of comprehension: their doctrines were easily carried into practice. Hence their lives passed pleasantly away, a source of satisfaction to themselves, a source of benefit to mankind. At peace within their own hearts, they readily adapted themselves to the necessities of the family and of the State. Happy in life, they were remembered after death. Their sacrifices were grateful to the God of Heaven, and the spirits of the departed rejoiced in the honours of ancestral worship.

And if I am asked what Method is this, I reply that it is what I call *the* Method, and not merely a method like those of Lao Tzŭ and Buddha. The Emperor Yao

handed it down to the Emperor Shun ; the Emperor Shun handed it down to the Great Yü ; and so on until it reached Confucius, and lastly Mencius, who died without transmitting it to any one else. Then followed the heterodox schools of Hsün and Yang, wherein much that was essential was passed over, while the criterion was vaguely formulated. In the days before Chou Kung, the Sages were themselves rulers ; hence they were able to secure the reception of their Method. In the days after Chou Kung, the sages were all high officers of State ; hence its duration through a long period of time.

And now, it will be asked, what is the remedy? I answer that unless these false doctrines are rooted out, the true faith will not prevail. Let us insist that the followers of Lao Tzŭ and Buddha behave themselves like ordinary mortals. Let us burn their books. Let us turn their temples into dwelling-houses. Let us make manifest the Method of our ancient kings in order that men may be led to embrace its teachings. Thus, and thus only, will there be wherewithal to feed the widow and the orphan, to nourish the cripple and the sick ;—and the scheme is feasible enough.

ON SLANDER.

The perfect men of old were unsparing in censure of their own faults, but gentle in dealing with the shortcomings of others. Thus they kept up the standard of their own conduct, and stimulated others to the practice of virtue.

Among them were Shun and Chou Kung, both models of charity and duty towards one's neighbour. He who would imitate the lives of these heroes should say to himself, "They were but men after all. Why cannot I do what they did?" And then day and night he should ponder over their story; and while holding fast to all in which he might resemble these models, he should put away all in which he might find himself to differ therefrom. For these were famous sages, whose likes have not appeared in after ages. And if a man were to accuse himself in whatsoever he might be their equal,—would he not be eminently unsparing in censure of his own faults?

And then if, in regard to others, he would say, "Such a one is but a man; we must not expect too much of him: what he has done is very creditable," and so on, taking care to consider only the present, and not rake up past misdeeds,—would not he be eminently gentle in dealing with the shortcomings of others?

The perfect men of the present day, however, are not constituted thus. They love to be sharp upon the faults of others and lenient towards their own, the result being that no advantage accrues thereby to either. In their own conduct, they are satisfied with a minimum of virtue and ability, cajoling others as well as themselves into believing this more than it is. But when it comes to estimating anybody else's virtue and ability, nothing seems to be good enough for them. The past is raked up and the present ignored, in fear lest those should come to the front instead of themselves. But such

men are merely lowering themselves and exalting others thereby, and must necessarily lose their self-respect.

Remissness and envy are at the bottom of all this. Men are often too lazy to push forward, and at the same time horribly jealous of the advance of others. Thus, whenever I have purposely taken occasion to praise or censure any one, I have invariably found that all who agreed or disagreed, respectively, were those whose interests were closely bound up with the individual praised or blained; or those whose interests at any rate did not clash with his; or those who spoke under the influence of fear. For the rest, the bolder ones would angrily differ from my praise, or agree with my censure, in words; the weaker, by their looks. Hence it is that virtue and merit are sure to be abused.

Alas! the times are evil for him who would seek an honest fame, and aim at the practice of virtue. Let those about to enter into official life digest these words, and benefit to the State may be the result.

THE UNICORN.*

That the unicorn is a spiritual being is beyond all doubt. Hymned in the *Odes*, immortalised in *Spring and Autumn*,† it has found a place in the writings of all

* This short piece has reference to the sudden appearance of a unicorn not very long before the death of Confucius, and was written in extenuation of the heterodox opinion of Shu-sun, who had ventured to regard the creature as an omen, not of good, but of evil.

† These *Annals* (see p. 1) end with the entry of the unicorn's appearance.

ages. Women and children alike know that it is a portent of good.

Yet it is reared in no farmyard: it is rarely ever seen throughout the empire's breadth. It is classed under no species. It is not of normal growth like a horse, ox, dog, pig, panther, wolf, or deer. Even were one to appear now, it would not be recognised for what it is.

We see horns, and say, "That is an ox." We see a mane, and say, "That is a horse." And by a similar process we know dogs, pigs, panthers, and deer to be what they are. But the unicorn cannot be known. For Shu-sun to regard it as inauspicious, was therefore reasonable enough. On the other hand, for the unicorn to appear, there should be an All-wise* in power: it is in token thereof that the unicorn does appear. Then the All-wise recognises the unicorn, and its manifestation comes in due season.

Again, it is said that the unicorn is a unicorn by virtue not of shape, but of the Truth, of which it is the material embodiment. But if the unicorn appears before the All-wise is in power, then, for Shu-sun to regard its manifestation as inauspicious, was once more reasonable enough. †

A TAOIST PRIEST.

Of the five famous mountains of China, Hêng-shan is farthest off; and of all the myriad great and lofty

* *Sc.*, Confucius, who was then out of power.

† Those who can read between the lines will detect the spirit of sceptical irony which pervades this curious essay.

eminences of the south, Hêng-shan is chief. That its influences are divine, follows therefore as a matter of course.

Three or four hundred miles to the south, the ground rises still higher, the mountains become more precipitous, the streams clearer and of swifter flow. The highest point is on a range running east and west, and about two-thirds of the way up is situated the town of Pin-chou. The pure pellucid atmosphere of China ends here. And ending here, in already transcendent purity, it sweeps round, and doubling back upon itself with tortuous course, enwraps the mountain in a two-fold coil.

Thus, if Hêng-shan is divine, how much more so must be Pin-chou, where perfection itself becomes more perfect still!

And as it cannot be that this wealth of nature, these heavenly influences, are lavished upon material products,—upon silver, mercury, cinnabar, crystal, stalactites, the glory of the orange and the pumelo, the beauty of the straight bamboo, the lofty growth of fine trees,—one would naturally conclude that such a spot must be the birthplace of genius, the home of loyal and honourable and virtuous men. But I never saw any; for the people there are sunk, alas! in superstition, in the worship of Lao Tzŭ and Fo.

However, there is my friend Liao, a priest of the religion of Tao.* He is a native of these parts, and

* The superstition which later ages had developed out of the pure philosophy of Lao Tzŭ.

a man of infinite learning and goodness of heart. How can I class him among those who grovel in superstitious depths? He is one who has an eye for talent in others; and thus, though not available himself, men of action may be looked for in the ranks of his friends.

I asked him concerning this strange paradox, but he would not discuss the question, and I must await a more favourable opportunity.*

THE CROCODILE OF CH'AO-CHOU.†

On a certain date, I, Han Yü, Governor of Ch'ao-chou, gave orders that a goat and a pig should be thrown into the river as prey for the crocodile, together with the following notification:—

“In days of yore, when our ancient rulers first undertook the administration of the empire, they cleared away the jungle by fire, and drove forth with net and spear such denizens of the marsh as were obnoxious to the prosperity of the human race, away beyond the boundaries of the Four Seas. But as years went on, the light of Imperial virtue began to pale; the circle of the empire was narrowed; and lands once subject to the divine sway passed under barbarian rule. Hence,

* The “church” in China, as elsewhere, is frequently adopted more for commercial than for spiritual reasons.

† This diatribe has reference to the alleged expulsion of a crocodile which had been devastating the water-courses round Ch'ao-chou, whither Han Wên-kung had been sent in disgrace. The writer's general character and high literary attainments forbid us, indeed, to believe that he believed himself.

the region of Ch'ao-chou, distant many hundred miles from the capital, was then a fitting spot for thee, O crocodile, in which to bask, and breed, and rear thy young. But now again the times are changed. We live under the auspices of an enlightened prince, who seeks to bring within the Imperial fold all, even to the uttermost limits of sea and sky. Moreover, this is soil once trodden by the feet of the Great Yü* himself; soil for which I, an officer of the State, am bound to make due return, in order to support the established worship of Heaven and Earth, in order to the maintenance of the Imperial shrines and temples of the Gods of our land.

“O crocodile! thou and I cannot rest together here. The Son of Heaven has confided this district and this people to my charge; and thou, O goggle-eyed, by disturbing the peace of this river and devouring the people and their domestic animals, the bears, the boars, and deer of the neighbourhood, in order to batten thyself and reproduce thy kind,—thou art challenging me to a struggle of life and death. And I, though of weakly frame, am I to bow the knee and yield before a crocodile? No! I am the lawful guardian of this place, and I would scorn to decline thy challenge, even were it to cost me my life.

“Still, in virtue of my commission from the Son of Heaven, I am bound to give fair warning; and thou, O crocodile, if thou art wise, will pay due heed to my words. There before thee lies the broad ocean, the

* See p. 73.

domain alike of the whale and the shrimp. Go thither, and live in peace. It is but the journey of a day.

“And now I bid thee begone, thou and thy foul brood, within the space of three days, from the presence of the servant of the Son of Heaven. If not within three days, then within five; if not within five, then within seven. But if not within seven, then it is that thou wilt not go, but art ready for the fight. Or, may be, that thou hast not wit to seize the purport of my words; though whether it be wilful disobedience or stupid misapprehension, the punishment in each case is death. I will arm some cunning archer with trusty bow and poisoned arrow, and try the issue with thee, until thou and all thy likes have perished. Repent not then, for it will be too late.”*

IN MEMORIAM. †

Seven days had elapsed after the news of thy death ere I could control my grief and collect my thoughts. I then bade one go and prepare, dear boy, some choice votive offering to thy departed spirit.

Ah, me! betimes an orphan; growing up without a father's care; dependent solely upon an elder brother, thy father, and his wife. And when, in mid career, that brother died far away in the south, thou and I, mere boys, followed the widow home with the funeral *cortège*.

* The crocodile went.

† This exquisite *morceau* tells its own tale, coupled with several interesting details of the writer's own life.

Then our life together, orphans each, never separated for a day.

My three brothers all early died, leaving only us, a grandson and a son, to carry on the ancestral line. We were two generations, with but one body, one form, one shadow. And often when thy mother bore thee in her arms, she would point at me and say, "Of two generations of the house of Han, these are all that remain." Thou wert too young to remember that now; and I, though I remember the words now, did not understand the sorrow that they expressed.

At sixteen, I went to the capital, returning home after the lapse of four years. Then four years more, after which I repaired to the family burying-ground, and met thee there, standing by thy mother's grave. Another two years of official life: a short reunion during thy visit of a year: leave of absence to bring my family to my home. The next year my chief died, and I quitted my post; but thou didst not come. In the same year another appointment elsewhere, whence the messenger sent to fetch thee had barely started ere I again had left. Once more thou camest not. Yet I knew that had we gone eastwards together it would have been but for a short time, and that I should do better to make for the west, where we might all gather round the old home.

Alas! why leave me thus and die? To me it seemed that both were young in years, and that although separated for a time, we might still hope to pass our lives together. Therefore we parted, and I went to the capital in search of place; but could I have foreseen

what was to happen, the many-charioted territory of a duke should not have tempted me one moment from thy side.

Last year I wrote thee, saying, "Not forty yet: sight dim, hair gray, strength sapped. Father and brothers, lusty men all, died in their prime;—can then this decaying frame last long? I may not go: thou wilt not come. Alas! I fear lest at any moment I may be cut off and leave thee to unutterable grief." Yet who would have thought that the young man was to perish and the old man to live? the strong youth to sink into a premature grave, the sick man to be made whole? Is it reality or a dream? Was it truth they told me? Reality—that the line of my noble-hearted brother should be thus ended in premature death? Reality—that thy pure intelligence shall not survive to continue the traditions of his house? Reality—that the young and strong thus early fade and die, while the old and decaying live on and thrive? Reality indeed it is; and no dream, and no lie. Else why this letter, this notice of death, now lying before me? It is so. The line of my noble-hearted brother has indeed been prematurely cut off. Thy pure intelligence, hope of the family, survives not to continue the traditions of his house. Unfathomable are the appointments of what men call Heaven: inscrutable are the workings of the unseen: unknowable are the mysteries of eternal truth: unrecognisable those who are destined to attain to old age!

Henceforth, my gray hairs will grow white, my strength fail. Physically and mentally hurrying on to decay,

how long before I shall follow thee? If there is knowledge after death, this separation will be but for a little while. If there is no knowledge after death, so will this sorrow be but for a little while, and then no more sorrow for ever.

Thy boy is just ten; mine five. But if the young and the strong are to be thus cut off, who shall dare hope that these babes in arms may not share the same unhappy fate?

Thy last year's letters told me of the tender foot and its increasing pains; but I said to myself, "The disease is common in Kiangnan, and need cause no alarm." Was it then this that extinguished thy life, or some other disease that brought thee to the grave?

Thy last letter is dated 17th of the 6th moon. Yet I hear from one that death came on the 2nd, while another sends a letter without date. The messenger never thought to ask; and the family, relying on the letter's date, never thought to tell. I enquired of the messenger, but he replied at random, so that I am still in doubt. I have now sent to sacrifice to thy departed spirit, and to condole with thy orphan and foster-mother, bidding them wait, if possible, until the final rites are paid, but if not, then to come to me, leaving the servants to watch over thy corpse. And when perchance I am able, I will some day see that thy bones are duly laid in our ancestral burying-place.

Alas! of thy sickness I knew not the time; of thy death I knew not the hour. Unable to tend thee in life, I was debarred from weeping over thee in death. I

could not touch thy bier : I could not stand by thy grave. I have sinned against Heaven : I have caused thee to be cut off in thy prime. Wretch that I am, separated from thee alike in life and death—thou at one end of the earth, I at the other—thy shadow did not accompany my form, neither shall thy spirit now blend with my dreams. The fault, the blame are mine alone.

O ye blue heavens, when shall my sorrow have end? Henceforth, the world has no charms. I will get me a few acres on the banks of the Ying, and there await the end, teaching my son and thy son, if haply they may grow up,—my daughter and thy daughter, until their day of marriage comes. Alas! though words fail, love endureth. Dost thou hear, or dost thou not hear? Woe is me : Heaven bless thee!

IN MEMORIAM.*

Alas! Tzŭ-hou, and hast thou come to this pass?—fool that I am! is it not the pass to which mortals have ever come? Man is born into the world like a dream: what need has he to take note of gain or loss? While the dream lasts, he may sorrow or may joy; but when the awakening is at hand, why cling regretfully to the past?

'Twere well for all things an they had no worth. The excellence of its wood is the bane of the tree. And thou, whose early genius knew no curb, weaver

* In memory of his dear friend Liu Tsung-yüan (see p. 137), whose literary name was Tzŭ-hou.

of the jewelled words, thou wilt be remembered when the imbeciles of fortune and place are forgot.

The unskilful bungler hacks his hands and streams with sweat, while the expert craftsman looks on with folded arms. O my friend, thy work was not for this age; though I, a bungler, have found employment in the service of the State. Thou didst know thyself above the common herd; but when in shame thou didst depart, never to return, the philistines usurped thy place.

Alas! Tzŭ-hou, now thou art no more. But thy last wish, that I should care for thy little son, is still ringing sadly in my ears. The friendships of the day are those of self-interest alone. How can I feel sure that I shall live to carry out thy behest? I did not arrogate to myself this duty. Thou thyself hast bidden me to the task; and, by the Gods above, I will not betray thy trust.

Thou hast gone to thy eternal home, and wilt not return. With these sacrifices by thy coffin's side, I utter an affectionate farewell.

LIU TSUNG-YÜAN.

773—819 A.D.

[A most versatile writer, and one of the intimate friends of Han Wên-kung (*q.v.*), like whom he was banished on political grounds to a distant official post, where he died. His breadth of intelligence allowed him to tolerate Buddhism, in direct opposition to the utterances of Han Wên-Kung, who perceived in its growing influence a menacing danger to Confucianism and to the State. He excelled in political satire, and suffered for the sting of his pen. His death called forth the short but beautiful lament given on p. 135.]

REVENGE.

It is on record that during the reign of the Empress Wu, a man named Hsü, whose father had been executed for some misdeed, slew the presiding magistrate and then gave himself up to the authorities. A suggestion was made by one of the Censors of the day that, on the one hand, the son should suffer death for his crime; on the other, that a memorial to him should be erected in his native village. Further, that the case should be entered as a judicial precedent.

I consider this suggestion to be wholly wrong. Honours and rewards originated in a desire to prevent aggression. If therefore a son avenges the death of a guilty father, the former should be slain without

mercy. Administration of punishment was also organised with the same object. If, therefore, officers of government put the laws in operation without due cause, they too should be slain without mercy. Though springing from the same source, and with the same object in view, honours and punishments are applicable to different cases and cannot be awarded together. To punish one deserving of reward is to cast a slur upon all punishment: to honour one deserving of punishment is to detract from the value of all honours. And if such a case were to be admitted as a precedent for future generations, then those eager to do their duty, and those anxious to avoid evil, would equally find themselves in a strange dilemma. Is this the stuff that law is made of?

Now, in adjusting reward and punishment, praise and blame, the wise men of old adhered closely to fixed principles, while allowing for such modifications as special circumstances might demand. Their end and aim was a consistent uniformity. And it has ever been the chief object of judicial investigations to distinguish between right and wrong, and to administer justice with impartial hand. Hence the impossibility of applying honour and punishment to the same case.

Let me explain. Suppose that Hsü's father had committed no crime, but had been wrongfully done to death by the magistrate, out of spite or in a rage; and suppose the magistrate and other officials to have treated the matter as of small account, to have rejected all claims, to have turned a deaf ear to all entreaties;—then, if the son, scorning to live under the same heaven, his head

pillowed by night upon his sword, his heart brimful of wrong, had struck the murderer to earth, careless of the death to come upon himself,—then I would say that he was a noble fellow who did his duty and deserved the thanks of shame-faced officials for relieving them of their responsibilities of office. Why talk of condemning him?

But if Hsü's father was really guilty, and the magistrate rightly put him to death, in that case it was not the magistrate but the law which took his life; and can a man feel a grudge against the law? Besides, to slay an official in order to be avenged upon the law he administers, is simply open rebellion against properly-constituted authority. Such an offender should indeed suffer death for his crime in accordance with the statutes of the empire; but he should hardly be honoured at the same time with a memorial.

The above-mentioned Censor further went on to say, "Every man has a son, and every son is under the same obligations to his parents. If then it is admissible for sons to slay the murderers of their fathers, the result will of course be an endless chain of slaughter." But here the Censor totally misunderstands the purport of social obligations. The man whom society deems qualified for revenge is one who struggles beneath a terrible load of wrong, with no means of redress. It is not one who, when a guilty father has rightly perished under the knife of the executioner, cries out, "He killed my parent. I will kill him!" oblivious of all questions of right or wrong, and presuming on one's own strength as

against another's weakness. This would amount to complete overthrow of all those great principles upon which our system is based.

In the days of the Chou dynasty, the peace officers arranged the *vendette* of the people. If a man was deservedly put to death, they would not allow any revenge to be taken; and disobedience to this order was punished capitally, the State interfering as the aggrieved party, in order to prevent endless reprisals by sons of murdered fathers. Again, in Kung-yang's Commentary to the *Spring and Autumn* the principle is stated thus:—"If a man is wrongfully put to death, his son may avenge him. But if rightly, and yet the son avenges his death, this is to push to extremes the arbitrament of the sword, while the source of all the evil still remains untouched." And in my opinion this principle would be lawfully applied to the present case. Not to neglect vengeance is the duty of a son: to brave death is heroic; and if Hsü, without breaking the social code, proved himself a man of filial piety and heroism, he must necessarily have been a man of lofty virtue; and no man of lofty virtue would ever oppose the operation of his country's laws. His case should not therefore be admitted as a precedent, and I pray that the decree may be rescinded accordingly.

CATCHING SNAKES.

In the wilds of Hu-kuang there is an extraordinary kind of snake, having a black body with white rings. Deadly fatal, even to the grass and trees it may chance

to touch ; in man, its bite is absolutely incurable. Yet if caught and prepared, when dry, in the form of cakes, the flesh of this snake will soothe excitement, heal leprous sores, remove sloughing flesh, and expel evil spirits. And so it came about that the Court physician, acting under Imperial orders, exacted from each family a return of two of these snakes every year ; but as few persons were able to comply with the demand, it was subsequently made known that the return of snakes was to be considered in lieu of the usual taxes. Thereupon there ensued a general stampede among the people of those parts.

However, there was one man whose family had lived there for three generations ; and from him I obtained the following information :—"My grandfather lost his life in snake-catching. So did my father. And during the twelve years that I have been engaged in the same way, death has several times come very near to me." He was deeply moved during this recital ; but when I asked if I should state his sad case to the authorities and apply for him to be allowed to pay taxes in the regular manner, he burst into tears and said, "Alas ! sir, you would take away my means of livelihood altogether. The misery of this state is as nothing when compared with the misery of that. Formerly, under the ordinary conditions of life, we suffered greatly ; but for the past three generations we have been settled in this district, now some sixty years since. During that period, my fellow-villagers have become more and more impoverished. Their substance has been devoured, and in beggary they

have gone weeping and wailing away. Exposed to the inclemency of wind and rain, enduring heat and cold, they have fled from the cruel scourge, in most cases, to die. Of those families which were here in my grandfather's time, there remains not more than one in ten; of those here in my father's time, not more than two or three; and of those still here in my own time, not more than four or five. They are all either dead or gone elsewhere; while we, the snake-catchers, alone survive. Harsh tyrants sweep down upon us, and throw everybody and everything, even to the brute beasts, into paroxysms of terror and disorder. But I,—I get up in the morning and look into the jar where my snakes are kept; and if they are still there, I lie down at night in peace. At the appointed time, I take care that they are fit to be handed in; and when that is done, I retire to enjoy the produce of my farm and complete the allotted span of my existence. Only twice a year have I to risk my life: the rest is peaceful enough and not to be compared with the daily round of annoyance which falls to the share of my fellow-villagers. And even though I were to die now in this employ, I should still have outlived almost all my contemporaries. Can I then complain?"

This story gave me food for much sad reflection. I had always doubted the saying of Confucius that "bad government is worse than a tiger,"* but now I felt its truth. Alas! who would think that the tax-collector

* See p. 42.

could be more venomous than a snake? I therefore record this for the information of those whom it may concern.

CONGRATULATIONS ON A FIRE.

I have received the letter informing me that your house has been attacked by fire, and that you have lost everything. At first, I felt shocked: then doubtful: but now I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart. My sorrow is turned into joy. Still, we are far apart, and you give no particulars. If you mean that you are utterly and irretrievably beggared, then I have further reason to offer you my congratulations.

In the first place, it was only because I knew your happiness to be bound up with the happiness of your parents, and feared that this calamity would disturb the even tenor of their lives, that I felt shocked.

Secondly, the world is never weary of citing the fickleness of fortune and the uncertainty of her favours. And it is an old tradition that the man who is to rise to great things must first be chastened by misfortune and sorrow; and that the evils of flood and fire, and the slanders of scoundrels, are sent upon him solely that he may shine thereafter with a brighter light. But this doctrine is absurdly far-fetched, and could never command the confidence even of diviner intellects than ours. Therefore I doubted.

My friend, you are widely read in ancient lore. You are an accomplished scholar: a man, in fact, of many

gifts. Yet you have failed to rise above the common rank and file. And why? Because you were known to be rich; and men jealous of their reputation refrained from speaking your praises. They kept their knowledge of your virtues to themselves, fearing the calumnious imputations of the world. To speak on your behalf would be to raise a titter, coupled with queries as to the amount transferred.

As for me, it is now some years since I became aware of your literary power; but all that time I selfishly said nothing, disloyal not only to you but to the cause of truth. And even when I became a Censor and a high functionary of State, and rejoiced in my proximity to the Throne and in the liberty of speech which enabled me to bring forth your merits into the blaze of day,—I was only laughed at as one recommending his friends. I have long hated myself for this want of straightforwardness and fear of the world's censure, and with our friend Mêng Chi have often bewailed the impracticability of the position. But now that Heaven has sent this ruin upon you, the suspicions of men vanish with the smoke of the fire, and are refuted by the blackened walls which proclaim your poverty to all. Your talents have now free play, without fear of reproach. Verily the God of Fire is on your side. In one night he has done more to set your praises before men than your own bosom friends have accomplished during the space of ten years. Have patience awhile, and those who have always believed in your genius will be able to open their mouths; and those with whom your advancement

lies, will advance you without fear. You must remain in obscurity no longer. I can help you now, and therefore I congratulate you from my heart.

In the olden days, when the capitals of four States were burnt to the ground,* the other States, with one exception, sent to condole with the sufferers. The omission on the part of that one State incurred the disapprobation of the superior man. But I have gone even farther. I congratulate where the world condoles; and as for the care of your parents, with the examples of antiquity before you, there need be no cause for fear.

THE BEAUTIES OF BUDDHISM.

My learned and estimable friend Han Yü † has often reproached my *penchant* for Buddhism and the intercourse that I hold with its priests. And now a letter from him has just reached me, in which he blames me severely for not having denounced the religion in a recent address forwarded to another friend.

In point of fact, there is much in Buddhism which could not well be denounced; *scilicet*, all those tenets which are based on principles common to our own sacred books. And it is precisely to these essentials, at once in perfect harmony with human nature and the teachings of Confucius, that I give in my adhesion.

* Owing, as it was said, to the appearance of a great comet.

† Now generally known as Han Wên-Kung (see p. 116).

Han Yü himself could not be a warmer advocate of moral culture (as excluding the supernatural) than was Yang Hsiung; and the works of the latter, as well as those of other heterodox writers, contain a great deal that is valuable. Why then should this be impossible in the case of Buddhism? Han Yü replies, "Buddha was a barbarian." But if this argument is good for anything, we might find ourselves embracing a criminal who happened to be a fellow-countryman, while neglecting a saint whose misfortune it was to be a foreigner! Surely this would be a hollow mockery indeed.

The lines I admire in Buddhism are those which are coincident with the principles enunciated in our own sacred books. And I do not think that, even were the holy sages of old to revisit the earth, they would fairly be able to denounce these. Now, Han Yü objects to the Buddhist commandments. He objects to the bald pates of the priests, their dark robes, their renunciation of domestic ties, their idleness, and life generally at the expense of others. So do I. But Han Yü misses the kernel while railing at the husk. He sees the lode, but not the ore. I see both; hence my partiality for the faith.

Again, intercourse with men of this religion does not necessarily imply conversion. Even if it did, Buddhism admits no envious rivalry for place or power. The majority of its adherents love only to lead a simple life of contemplation amid the charms of hill and stream. And when I turn my gaze towards the hurry-scurry of the age, in its daily race for the seals and tassels of

office, I ask myself if I am to reject those in order to take my place among the ranks of these.

The Buddhist priest, Hao-ch'u, is a man of placid temperament and of passions subdued. He is a fine scholar. His only joy is to muse o'er flood and fell, with occasional indulgence in the delights of composition. His family (for he has one*) follow in the same path. He is independent of all men; and no more to be compared with those heterodox sages of whom we make so much, than with the vulgar herd of the greedy, grasping world around us.

IS THERE A GOD?

Over the western hills the road trends away towards the north; and on the further side of the pass, separates into two. The westerly branch leads to nowhere in particular; but if you follow the other, which takes a north-easterly turn, for about a quarter of a mile, you will find that the path ends abruptly, while the stream forks to enclose a steep pile of boulders. On the summit of this pile there is what appears to be an elegantly-built look-out tower; below, as it were a battlemented wall, pierced by a city gate, through which one gazes into darkness. A stone thrown in here, falls with a splash suggestive of water; and the reverberations of this sound are audible for some time. There is a way round from behind up to the top,

* Celibacy is now strictly enforced, with only qualified results.

whence nothing is seen far and wide except groves of fine straight trees, which, strange to say, are grouped symmetrically, as if by an artist's hand.

Now, I have always had my doubts about the existence of a God ; but this scene made me think he really must exist. At the same time, however, I began to wonder why he did not place it in some worthy centre of civilisation, rather than in this out-of-the-way barbarous region, where for centuries there has been no one to enjoy its beauty. And so, on the other hand, such waste of labour and incongruity of position disposed me to think that there cannot be a God after all.

A friend suggested that it was designedly placed there to gratify those virtuous men who might be banished in disgrace to that spot (as, for instance, the writer). Another argued that it was simply the nature of the locality, which was unfavourable to the growth of heroes, and fit only for the production of inanimate objects of the kind: as witness the great dearth of men and abundance of boulders in these parts.* But I do not accept either explanation.

PAS TROP GOUVERNER.

I do not know what Camel-back's real name was. Disease had hunched him up behind, and he walked with

* A sneer at the inhabitants of Kuang-si, which is rather lost upon the European reader.

his head down, like a camel. Hence, people came to give him the nickname of Camel. "Capital!" cried he, when he first heard of his sobriquet; "the very name for me." And thereafter he entirely left off using his proper name, calling himself "Camel-back."

He lived in the village of Peace-and-Plenty, near the capital, and followed the occupation of a nursery-gardener. All the grand people of the city used to go and see his show; while market-gardeners vied with each other in securing his services, since every tree he either planted or transplanted was sure to thrive and bear fruit, not only early in the season but in abundance. Others in the same line of business, although they closely watched his method, were quite unable to achieve the same success.

One day a customer asked him how this was so; to which he replied, "Old Camel-back cannot make trees live or thrive. He can only let them follow their natural tendencies. Now in planting trees, be careful to set the root straight, to smooth the earth around them, to use good mould, and to ram it down well. Then, don't touch them; don't think about them; don't go and look at them; but leave them alone to take care of themselves, and nature will do the rest. I only avoid trying to make my trees grow. I have no special method of cultivation, no special means for securing luxuriance of growth. I only don't spoil the fruit. I have no way of getting it either early or in abundance. Other gardeners set with bent root, and neglect the mould. They heap up either too much earth or too little. Or if not this, then they

become too fond of and too anxious about their trees, and are for ever running backwards and forwards to see how they are growing; sometimes scratching them to make sure they are still alive, or shaking them about to see if they are sufficiently firm in the ground; thus constantly interfering with the natural bias of the tree, and turning their affection and care into an absolute bane and a curse. I only don't do these things. That's all."

"Can these principles you have just now set forth be applied to government?" asked his listener. "Ah!" replied Camel-back, "I only understand nursery-gardening: government is not my trade. Still, in the village where I live, the officials are for ever issuing all kinds of orders, as if greatly compassionating the people, though really to their utter injury. Morning and night the underlings come round and say, 'His Honour bids us urge on your ploughing, hasten your planting, and superintend your harvest. Do not delay with your spinning and weaving. Take care of your children. Rear poultry and pigs. Come together when the drum beats. Be ready at the sound of the rattle.' Thus are we poor people badgered from morn till eve. We have not a moment to ourselves. How could any one flourish and develop naturally under such conditions? It was this that brought about my illness. And so it is with those who carry on the gardening business."

"Thank you," said the listener. "I simply asked about the management of trees, and I have learnt about the management of men. I will make this known, as a warning to government officials."

WANG CH'ANG-LING.

9TH CENTURY A.D.

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

THE young wife, upon whom grief has not yet come,
At the advent of spring, decks herself out and ascends
the Kingfisher's Tower.

Suddenly, she sees over the country the bloom of the
willow-trees,

And sorrows that she sent her husband in search of a
peerage (*sc.* to the wars).*

* The record of struggles with the hated Tartars is indelibly impressed upon the literatures of the Han and T'ang dynasties. Hence the insertion of this, and of a similar trifle on p. 113. I presume it would be impossible to persuade any except Chinese scholars that the original is full of pathetic beauty. Let sceptics attempt to reproduce, in English, the pathos of that famous Homeric line telling of the death of the yellow-haired Meleager; or the force of

Quel giorno più non vi legemmo avanti,

and I think they will "sweat much but labour in vain."

LI HUA.

9TH CENTURY A.D.

ON AN OLD BATTLE-FIELD.

VAST, vast,—a limitless extent of flat sand, without a human being in sight; girdled by a stream and dotted with hills; where in the dismal twilight the wind moans at the setting sun. Shrubs gone: grass withered: all chill as the hoar-frost of early morn. The birds of the air fly past: the beasts of the field shun the spot; for it is, as I was informed by the keeper, the site of an old battle-field. “Many a time and oft,” said he, “has an army been overthrown on this spot; and the voices of the dead may frequently be heard weeping and wailing in the darkness of the night.”

Oh, sorrow! oh, ye Ch'ins, ye Hans, ye dynasties now passed away! I have heard that when the Ch'is and the Weis gathered at the frontier, and when the Chings and the Hans collected their levies, many were the weary leagues they trod, many were the years of privation and exposure they endured. Grazing their horses by day, fording the river by night, the endless earth beneath, the boundless sky above, they knew not the day of their

return ; their bodies all the time exposed to the pitiless steel, with many other unspeakable woes.

Again, since the Ch'in and the Han dynasties, countless troubles have occurred within the boundaries of the empire, desolating the Middle Kingdom. No age has been free from these. In the olden days, barbarians and Chinese alike meekly followed their Imperial guide. But the place of right was usurped by might ; the rude soldier cast aside the obligations of morality, and the rule of reason lost its sway.

Alas ! methinks I see them now, the bitter wind enveloping them in dust, the Tartar warriors in ambush. Our general makes light of the foe. He would give battle upon the very threshold of his camp. Banners wave over the plain ; the river closes-in the battle array. All is order, though hearts may beat. Discipline is everything : life is of no account.

And now the cruel spear does its work, the startled sand blinds the combatants locked fast in the death-struggle ; while hill and vale and stream groan beneath the flash and crash of arms. By-and-by, the chill cold shades of night fall upon them, knee-deep in snow, beards stiff with ice. The hardy vulture seeks its nest : the strength of the war-horse is broken. Clothes are of no avail ; hands frost-bitten, flesh cracked. Even nature lends her aid to the Tartars, contributing a deadly blast, the better to complete the work of slaughter begun. Ambulance waggons block the way : our men succumb to flank attacks. Their officers have surrendered : their general is dead. The river is choked with corpses to its

topmost banks: the fosses of the Great Wall are swimming over with blood. All distinctions are obliterated in that heap of rotting bones

Faintly and more faintly beats the drum. Strength exhausted, arrows spent, bow-strings snapped, swords shattered, the two armies fall upon one another in the supreme struggle for life or death. To yield is to become the barbarian's slave: to fight is to mingle our bones with the desert sand

No sound of bird now breaks from the hushed hill-side. All is still, save the wind whistling through the long night. Ghosts of the dead wander hither and thither in the gloom: spirits from the nether world collect under the dark clouds. The sun rises and shines coldly over the trampled grass, while the fading moon still twinkles upon the frost-flakes scattered around. What sight more horrible than this!

I have heard that Li Mu led the soldiers of Chao to victory over their Tartar foes, clearing the country for miles, and utterly routing the Huns. The Hans, on the other hand, exhausted in vain the resources of the empire. They had not the man, and their numbers availed them naught.

The Chows, too, drove back the barbarous hordes of the north; and having garrisoned the country, returned safely home. Then they offered thanks to the Gods, and gave themselves up to the universal enjoyment which peace alone can bring.

The Ch'ins built the Great Wall, stretching far away to the sea. Yet the poison-breath of war decimated

the people, and mile upon mile ran with their red blood.

The Hans beat down the Huns, and seized Yin-shan. But their corpses lay pillowed over the plain, and the gain was not equal to the loss.

O high Heaven! which of these but has father and mother, who bore them about in childhood, fearing only lest maturity should never come? Which of these but has brothers, dear to them as themselves? Which of these but has a wife, bound by the closest ties? They owe no thanks for life, for what have they done to deserve death? They may be alive or dead—the family knows it not. And if one brings the news, they listen, half doubting, half believing, while the heart overflows with grief. Sleeping and waking, they seem to see the lost one's form. Sacrifices are made ready and libations poured, with tearful eyes strained towards the far horizon; heaven and earth, nay, the very trees and plants, all seeming to sympathise with their sorrow. And when, in response to prayers and libations, these wanderers return not, where shall their spirits find repose? Verily there shall be a famine over the land,* and the people be scattered abroad. Alas! such is life, and such it has ever been. What resource then is left but to keep within our frontier lines? †

* In allusion to some words attributed to Lao Tzū.

† I doubt if the Peace Society, to whom this essay might well be dedicated, has ever published a more graphic description of the horrors of war.

LIU YÜ-HSI.

772-842 A.D.

[One of the well-known poets of the T'ang dynasty. As an official, he shared the fate of Liu Tsung-yüan, being banished to a distant post in consequence of political intrigue.]

MY HUMBLE HOME.

HILLS are not famous for height alone: 'tis the Genius Loci that invests them with their charm. Lakes are not famous for mere depth: 'tis the residing Dragon that imparts to them a spell not their own. And so, too, my hut may be mean; but the fragrance of Virtue is diffused around.

The green lichen creeps up the steps: emerald leaflets peep beneath the bamboo blind. Within, the laugh of cultured wit, where no gross soul intrudes; the notes of the light lute, the words of the *Diamond Book*,* marred by no scraping fiddle, no scannel pipe, no hateful archives of official life.

K'ung-ming had his cottage in the south; Yang Hsiung his cabin in the west. And the Master said, "What foulness can there be where virtue is?"

* A famous Buddhist *sutra*, of which no accurate English translation has yet appeared.

PŎ CHŪ-YI.

9TH CENTURY A.D.

THE LUTE-GIRL'S LAMENT.

By night, at the riverside, adieus were spoken: beneath the maple's flower-like leaves, blooming amid autumnal decay. Host had dismounted to speed the parting guest, already on board his boat. Then a stirrup-cup went round, but no flute, no guitar, was heard. And so, ere the heart was warmed with wine, came words of cold farewell, beneath the bright moon glittering over the bosom of the broad stream when suddenly, across the water, a lute broke forth into sound. Host forgot to go, guest lingered on, wondering whence the music, and asking who the performer might be. At this, all was hushed, but no answer given. A boat approached, and the musician was invited to join the party. Cups were refilled, lamps trimmed again, and preparations for festivity renewed. At length, after much pressing, she came forth, hiding her face behind her lute; and twice or thrice sweeping the strings, betrayed emotion ere her song was sung. Then every note she struck swelled with pathos deep and strong, as though telling the tale of a wrecked and hopeless

life, while with bent head and rapid finger she poured forth her soul in melody. Now softly, now slowly, her plectrum sped to and fro; now this air, now that; loudly, with the crash of falling rain; softly, as the murmur of whispered words; now loud and soft together, like the patter of pearls and pearlets dropping upon a marble dish. Or liquid, like the warbling of the mango-bird in the bush; trickling, like the streamlet on its downward course. And then like the torrent, stilled by the grip of frost, so for a moment was the music lulled, in a passion too deep for sound.* Then, as bursts the water from the broken vase, as clash the arms upon the mailed horseman, so fell the plectrum once more upon the strings with a slash like the rent of silk.

Silence on all sides: not a sound stirred the air. The autumn moon shone silver athwart the tide, as with a sigh the musician thrust her plectrum beneath the strings and quietly prepared to take leave. "My childhood," said she, "was spent at the capital, in my home near the hills. At thirteen, I learnt the guitar, and my name was enrolled among the *primas* of the day. The *maestro* himself acknowledged my skill: the most beautiful of women envied my lovely face. The youths of the neighbourhood vied with each other to do me honour: a single song brought me I know not how many costly bales. Golden ornaments and silver pins were smashed, blood-red skirts of silk were stained with

* "The sure perception of the exact moment when the rest should be silence."

wine, in oft-times echoing applause. And so I laughed on from year to year, while the spring breeze and autumn moon swept over my careless head.

“Then my brother went away to the wars: my mother died. Nights passed and mornings came; and with them my beauty began to fade. My doors were no longer thronged: but few cavaliers remained. So I took a husband, and became a trader’s wife. He was all for gain, and little recked of separation from me. Last month he went off to buy tea, and I remained behind, to wander in my lonely boat on moon-lit nights over the cold wave, thinking of the happy days gone by, my reddened eyes telling of tearful dreams.”

The sweet melody of the lute had already moved my soul to pity, and now these words pierced me to the heart again. “O lady,” I cried, “we are companions in misfortune, and need no ceremony to be friends. Last year I quitted the Imperial city, banished to this fever-stricken spot, where in its desolation, from year’s end to year’s end, no flute nor guitar is heard. I live by the marshy river-bank, surrounded by yellow reeds and stunted bamboos. Day and night no sounds reach my ears save the blood-stained note of the cuckoo, the gibbon’s mournful wail. Hill songs I have, and village pipes with their harsh discordant twang. But now that I listen to thy lute’s discourse, methinks ’tis the music of the Gods. Prithee sit down awhile and sing to us yet again, while I commit thy story to writing.”

Grateful to me (for she had been standing long), the lute-girl sat down and quickly broke forth into another song, sad and soft, unlike the song of just now. Then all her hearers melted into tears unrestrained; and none flowed more freely than mine, until my bosom was wet with weeping.

P'EI LIN.

9TH CENTURY A.D.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

MAY it please your Majesty,

I have heard that he who eradicates evil, himself reaps advantage in proportion to his work; and that he who adds to the pleasures of others, himself enjoys happiness. Such was ever the guiding principle of our ancient kings.

Of late years, however, the Court has been overrun by a host of "professors" who profess to have the secret of immortality.

Now supposing that such beings as immortals really did exist—Would they not be likely to hide themselves in deep mountain recesses, far from the ken of man? On the other hand, persons who hang about the vestibules of the rich and great, and brag of their wonderful powers in big words,—what are they more than common adventurers in search of pelf? How should their nonsense be credited and their drugs devoured? Besides, even medicines to cure bodily ailments are not to be swallowed casually, morning, noon, and night. How

much less then this poisonous, fiery gold-stone, which the viscera of man must be utterly unable to digest?

Of old, when the prince took physic, his prime minister tasted it. I humbly pray that all those who present to your Majesty their concoctions, may be compelled first of all to swallow the same periodically for the space of one year. Thus will truth be effectually separated from falsehood.

WU TSUNG.

REIGNED 841-846 A.D.

AGAINST BUDDHISM.—A PROCLAMATION.

WE have heard that previous to the Three Dynasties the name of Buddha was unknown. It was from the time of the Hans that his images and his doctrines became familiar institutions in the land. The strength of man was lavished over his shrines; the wealth of man diverted to their costly adornment with gold and jewels. Unsurpassed was the injury to public morals: unsurpassed the injury to the welfare of the people!

A man who does not work, suffers bitter consequences in cold and hunger. But these priests and priestesses of Buddha, they consume food and raiment without contributing to the production of either. Their handsome temples reach up to the clouds and vie with the palaces of kings. The vice, the corruption, of those dynasties which followed upon the Three Kingdoms, can be attributed to no other source.

The founders of the House of T'ang put down disorder by *might*; and then proceeded to govern by *right*. With these two engines of power, they succeeded in establishing their rule;—shall, then, some paltry creed

from the West be allowed to dispute with Us the sovereign power?

At the beginning of the present dynasty, efforts were made to get rid of this pest; but its extermination was not complete, and the faith became rampant once more. Now WE, having extensively studied the wisdom of the ancients, and guided moreover by public opinion, have no hesitation in saying that this evil can be rooted out. Do you, loyal officers of the State, only aid me in carrying out my great project by enforcing the laws,—and the thing is done. Already, more than 4,600 monasteries have been destroyed; and their inmates, to the number of 265,000 persons of both sexes, have been compelled to return to the world. Of temples and shrines, more than 40,000 have likewise been demolished; while many thousand acres of fat soil have been added to the wealth of the people. The work which my predecessors left undone, I have been able to accomplish. Let us then seize this favourable hour, and from the four quarters of the earth lead back the black-haired people once again into the Imperial fold!

And should there be any to whom OUR action in this matter may not be clear, do you officers of government enlighten them on the subject.

SSŪ-MA KUANG.

1009-1086 A.D.

[A famous historian, second only to Ssü-ma Ch'ien (*q.v.*). He compiled a general history of China from the Chou dynasty down to the end of the T'ang dynasty. In political life he was successfully opposed to the great reformer Wang An-Shih (*q.v.*.)]

CENSORS.

IN ancient times there was no such office as that of Censor. From the highest chamberlain of the Court down to the humblest workman of the people, all were free alike to offer their advice to the Throne.

With the Han dynasty, the functions of Censor became vested in a single individual officer, whose duty it was to advise on all matters involving the welfare of the empire generally. His was a sacred trust; and for this post it was necessary to choose men of resolution and of liberal minds, who could gauge the relative importance of events and entirely subordinate their own interests to those of the commonwealth. Seekers after notoriety or wealth found no place in their ranks.

During the Sung dynasty the number of Censors was increased to six; and later on their names were duly engraved upon wooden boards. But I, fearing lest these

should be obliterated by time, caused them to be carved upon stone; so that future generations might point to the record and say, "Such a one was loyal. Such a one was a traitor. Such a one was upright. Such a one was corrupt." Verily this should give good cause for fear!*

* The Board of Censors still plays a very important part in the administration of government in China.

OU-YANG HSIU.

1017-1072 A.D.

[A leading statesman, historian, poet, and essayist of the Sung dynasty. His tablet is to be found in the Confucian temple; an honour reserved for those alone who have contributed towards the elucidation or dissemination of Confucian truth.]

IMPERIAL EXTRAVAGANCE.

May it please your Majesty,

I am informed that in consequence of the recent birth of a princess, a demand has been made on the Treasury for no less than 8,000 pieces of silk.

Now the rigour of winter is just at its height, and the wretched workmen of the Dyeing Department, forced to break ice before they can get water, will suffer unspeakable hardships in supplying the amount required. And judging by your Majesty's known sentiments of humanity and thrift, I cannot believe that this wasteful *corvée* is to be imposed, though rumour indeed has it that the dyers are already at work.

I have also noticed that the relatives of the Lady Chang have of late participated too frequently in the Imperial bounty. I am, it is true, but a poor Censor; yet whenever I see anything calculated to impair the *prestige* of the Son of Heaven, it becomes my duty to speak, that the divine wrath may be averted in time.

It is a noticeable fact in our annals that those favoured

ladies who modestly and thriftily availed themselves of their connexion with the Throne, always prospered; while those, on the other hand, who gave themselves up to extravagance and nepotism, invariably ended in ruin. I will not cite instances from remote antiquity: I will confine myself to the more recent condition of affairs within the palace. Where, I would ask, are those proud spendthrift ladies who basked but just now in the Imperial smiles? In their stead we have the Lady Chang, but yesterday blushing unseen in her quiet home,—to-day, the cynosure of every eye. Report declares her to be of quite another mould, and well qualified to keep the position to which she has been raised. Nevertheless, there seems to be growing up that old tendency to exceed, which sets men's tongues agog; and if your Majesty would save this lady from the fate of her predecessors, it would be well to admonish that a more modest economy prevail. For example: these 8,000 pieces of silk cannot all be for that one lady's use. Doubtless they are for distribution; but in that case their preparation involves waste of money, and gives a handle for public censure, from which even the Throne itself is not exempt.

Only lately the Lady Chang's mother received a District, and four days afterwards a Department; and now it is rumoured that further emoluments are to be bestowed upon distant relatives. That parents should share in the prosperity of their children is perhaps admissible; but propriety has its limits, and these are overstepped in the case of distant relatives. Who were

they, forsooth, before the Lady Chang entered the Imperial hareem, that their present rank and riches should yield a subject for conversation injurious to the *prestige* of the Throne?

And were this a question only of the Lady Chang, the principle would still be applicable: how much more so as things are? The fact is that the Imperial bounty is too lavishly bestowed, and that extravagance is rife in the palace. Your Majesty suffers thereby: the State suffers thereby; and it is my duty to speak, trusting that your Majesty will take immediate steps to rectify these abuses.

CLUBS.

Your Majesty's servant has heard that associations of friends are of time-honoured antiquity. It only remains for a ruler to distinguish between those of good and those of evil men. In the former case, the bond results from identity of purpose in the cause of truth; in the latter, from identity of personal interest alone. Evil men are, in fact, unable to form friendships; this privilege being reserved for the pure and good. And why? Simply because evil men love wealth and worldly advantage. Hence, as long as their interests are identical, they are friends. But when these begin to clash, first comes rivalry, and then a dissolution of their friendship. Sometimes they turn round and become bitter enemies, even of their own brothers and near relatives. There is therefore no reality about their friendships.

With the virtuous man, it is another thing altogether. His landmarks are duty towards his neighbour and loyalty to his prince: his most precious possession is his good name.

In the golden age, there was one clique of evil men, and two associations of virtuous men. Shun joined the latter, and the empire had peace. And when he came to be emperor himself, he profited by an association of officers who had united for the cultivation of generous principles,—and the empire had peace.

It is written, “The courtiers gathered around Chow Hsin in myriads, but their hearts were distributed in a myriad directions. The officers of Wu Wang were three thousand in number, and the hearts of these three thousand were as *one*.” The absence of any real bond, in the first instance, brought about the disruption of the empire; while, in the second, its presence was a safeguard of the national welfare.

Later on, Hsien Ti, the last emperor of the House of Han, seized and threw into prison all the notable men of the day, because of an association they had formed. Then followed the revolt of the Yellow Caps, and his Majesty repented and released the prisoners;—but it was too late.

The question of forming such societies reappeared in the declining years of the T'ang dynasty, when in the reign of Chao Tsung all the best spirits of the day were either beheaded or thrown into the Yellow River, his Majesty exclaiming, “Let these pure ones go and associate with that muddy one!” But the end was at hand.

Of the rulers of old who failed to concentrate the hearts of the people, Chou Hsin is pre-eminent. Of those who put down associations of virtuous men, Hsien Ti stands first. Among those who exterminated honourable friendships, Chao Tsung bears away the palm. The result in each case was the same. The dynasty perished.

Shun, on the other hand, confidently availed himself of the incomparable societies of his day; and no one has ever said that his confidence was misplaced. In point of fact, he is always extolled as an enlightened and discriminating ruler. In Wu Wang's time, three thousand officers of State formed themselves into a society famed ever since for its numbers and power. And Wu Wang availed himself of this association,—and the empire prospered. The society was indeed large; but its members were not one too many.*

Your Majesty will doubtless not fail to be instructed by these examples of national prosperity and decay.

RELEASING PRISONERS.

Sincerity and a sense of duty,—these are the attributes of the virtuous. Punishment and death,—these are the portion of the depraved. To deserve death in the iniquity of guilt,—this is the climax of crime. To

* “For the same reason he (Lord Ripon) has begun to consult the popular Associations, hundreds of which have sprung up in recent years, which are springing up day by day, and which reflect educated opinion on such great questions as education, local self-rule, usury laws, agrarian questions and the like.”—*Daily News*, 6th Sept., 1883.

die without regret at the call of duty,—this is the acme of heroism.

When the second Emperor of the late T'ang dynasty had just been six years upon the throne, he released more than 300 condemned criminals, and sent them to their homes on condition that within a certain period they should inflict upon themselves the penalty of death. This was simply to bid those unprincipled wretches play the difficult *rôle* of heroes.

At the expiry of the time, they all returned to the Emperor without one exception. No true hero could have acted thus: those men found it easy enough. It was, to say the least of it, unnatural.

A friend has suggested that in spite of their deep-dyed guilt and unqualified want of principle, the Emperor's act of grace might possibly have converted them from their evil ways; such a marvellous and speedy conversion not being without precedent. But I say that his Majesty did this thing solely with a view to gain for himself a good report. We may rest assured that when he released these men he knew full well they would come back in the hope of a pardon; and that therefore he released them. We may rest assured that the return of the prisoners was based upon the certainty of receiving a pardon, and that therefore they came back. And if his Majesty only released them because he felt they would return, he was simply discounting the impulses of his subjects; while if the prisoners only returned because they felt they would be pardoned, they were likewise discounting the mercy of their ruler. As

far as I can see, the credit of the whole affair was a product of mutual spoliation. Where indeed was the magnanimity of the one or the heroism of the other?

Let us consider. The Emperor had then been graciously reigning over the land for the space of six years. If during that time he had been unable to prevent evil men from doing evil deeds, it is absurd to suppose that he was suddenly, by a single act of grace, to convert them into heroic and dutiful subjects. What, it may be asked, was the proper course to pursue? I reply that those prisoners who returned should have been put to death; and then, on any future occasion of the kind, it would be fairly established that returning prisoners were influenced by a sincere sense of duty. But under those circumstances, there would of course be no prisoners forthcoming.

To release in that way and to pardon on return, might be all very well in an individual case. But to apply the principle to numbers, would be equivalent to pardoning murderers in general, directly contrary to all laws human and divine. Thus it was that the wise rulers of old based their administration upon the normal workings of the human heart. They sought no extraordinary standard of conduct with a view of exalting themselves; neither did they act in opposition to the natural instincts of man in order to secure the approbation of the public.*

* A commentator suggests that the act of grace in question was performed merely for the sake of notoriety; just as the same Emperor, during a severe plague of locusts, sought to check the evil by swallowing a locust alive, "which," adds the commentator, "was probably only a paper imitation after all."

FULNESS AND DECAY.*

Alas for the fulness and decay of human greatness! Though these are called the appointments of Heaven, truly they are the handiwork of man. The rise and fall of Chuan Tsung may be cited as an instance in point.

When the Prince of Chin lay on his death-bed, he took three arrows and handed them to his son, saying, "The Liangs are my foes. The Prince of Yen treats me with ingratitude. The K'i-tan Tartar swore to me as a brother, and then passed over to the Liangs. These three grievances I leave as a legacy of hate to thee. Take these three arrows, and fail not to bear in mind thy father's wishes.

Chuang Tsung accordingly took the arrows and deposited them in a shrine; and by-and-by, when war was declared, he despatched an attendant to sacrifice a goat at the temple and bring out the arrows. He then placed them in an embroidered quiver, and bearing them on his back proceeded to the field of battle.

He returned triumphant, and ascended the Imperial throne. He had captured the Prince of Yen and his son. He had got with him in a box the heads of the ruler and prime minister of the House of Liang. He went to the shrine to replace the arrows and

* "By the law of Nature, too, all manners of Ideals have their fatal limits and lot; their appointed periods of youth, of maturity or perfection, of decline, degradation, and final death and disappearance."—CARLYLE'S *Past and Present*.

communicate to the spirit of his dead father that the work which had been entrusted to him was accomplished. Was not this, then, the supreme fulness of glorious achievement?

Vengeance had thus been wreaked, and the empire was his, when suddenly there was a cry in the night,—a rush to arms,—hasty flight,—defection of soldiery,—sovereign and minister blankly gazing in each other's faces,—monastic vows and shaven crowns,—robes drenched with tears,—oh, what a fall was there! So hard to win: so easy to lose. Surely these were issues that lay in the hand of man.

It is written, "The proud shall suffer; the modest succeed." And so toil and anxiety may establish a kingdom; dissipation and ease will wreck a life. At the zenith of his fortune, among all the heroes of the age there could not be found his match. Yet when the tide turned, a few mummers dragged him to earth; the sceptre fell from his hand, and he perished,—the laughing-stock of all.

Truly misfortunes oftentimes spring from trivial and unexpected causes; and wisdom and courage are often marred by foibles other than a passion for theatrical display.

THE OLD DRUNKARD'S ARBOUR.*

The district of Ch'u is entirely surrounded by hills, and the peaks to the south-west are clothed with a

* This translation has already appeared in print (*Historic China*, p. 89). It is here reproduced because of its great beauty—in the

dense and beautiful growth of trees, over which the eye wanders in rapture away to the confines of Shantung. A walk of two or three miles on those hills brings one within earshot of the sound of falling water which gushes forth from a ravine, known as the Wine-Fountain; while hard by in a nook at a bend of the road stands a kiosk, commonly spoken of as the *Old Drunkard's Arbour*. It was built by a Buddhist priest, called Deathless Wisdom, who lived among these hills, and who received the above name from the Governor. The latter used to bring his friends hither to take wine; and as he personally was incapacitated by a very few cups, and was moreover well stricken in years, he gave himself the sobriquet of the Old Drunkard. But it was not wine that attracted him to this spot. It was the charming scenery which wine enabled him to enjoy.

The sun's rays peeping at dawn through the trees, by-and-by to be obscured behind gathering clouds, leaving naught but gloom around, give to this spot the alternations of morning and night. The wild flowers exhaling their perfume from the darkness of some shady dell; the luxuriant foliage of the dense forest of beautiful trees; the clear frosty wind; and the naked boulders of the lessening torrent;—these are the indications

original—with a correction for which I am indebted to the accuracy of Mr. KAW HONG-BENG, the gentleman who started with Mr. A. R. Colquhoun on his recent journey of exploration in China, and whose version of their differences and separation varies considerably from that published by the leader of the expedition.

of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Morning is the time to go thither, returning with the shades of night; and although the place presents a different aspect with the changes of the season, its charms are subject to no interruption, but continue alway. Burden-carriers sing their way along the road, travellers rest awhile under the trees; shouts from one, responses from another; old people hobbling along; children in arms, children dragged along by hand;* backwards and forwards all day long without a break;—these are the people of Ch'u. A cast in the stream, and a fine fish taken from some spot where the eddying pools begin to deepen; a draught of cool wine from the fountain; and a few such dishes of meats and fruits as the hills are able to provide;—these, nicely spread out beforehand, constitute the Governor's feast. And in the revelry of the banquet hour there is no thought of toil or trouble. Every archer hits his mark, and every player wins his *partie*; goblets flash from hand to hand, and a buzz of conversation is heard as the guests move unconstrainedly about. Among them is an old man with white hair, bald at the top of his head. This is the drunken Governor, who when the evening sun kisses the tips of the hills, and the falling shadows are drawn out and blurred, bends his steps homewards in company with his friends. Then in the growing darkness are heard sounds above and sounds

* I had wrongly rendered these last words "with baskets or packages in their hands." The critical student will doubtless see the rationale of my mistake.

below: the beasts of the field and the birds of the air are rejoicing at the departure of man. They, too, can rejoice in hills and in trees, but they cannot rejoice as man rejoices. So also the Governor's friends. They rejoice with him, though they know not at what it is that he rejoices. Drunk, he can rejoice with them; sober, he can discourse with them;—such is the Governor. And should you ask who is the Governor, I reply, "Ou-yang Hsiu of Lu-ling."*

AN AUTUMN DIRGE.

One night, I had just sat down to my books, when suddenly I heard a sound far away towards the south-west. Listening intently, I wondered what it could be. On it came, at first like the sighing of a gentle zephyr, gradually deepening into the splash of waves upon a surf-beat shore, the roaring of huge breakers in the startled night, amid howling storm-gusts of wind and rain. It burst upon the hanging bell, and set every one of its pendants tinkling into tune. It seemed like the muffled march of soldiers, hurriedly advancing bit in mouth to the attack,† when no shouted orders rend the air, but only the tramp of men and horses meet the ear.

* Meaning, of course, himself.

† The Chinese have a device by which they can gag their soldiers, and so prevent them from talking in the ranks on the occasion of a night attack.

“Boy,” said I; “what noise is that? Go forth and see.” “Sir,” replied the boy, on his return, “the moon and stars are brightly shining: the Silver River spans the sky. No sound of man is heard without: ’tis but the whispering of the trees.”

“Alas!” I cried; “autumn is upon us.* And is it thus, O boy, that autumn comes?—autumn the cruel and the cold; autumn the season of rack and mist; autumn the season of cloudless skies; autumn the season of piercing blasts; autumn the season of desolation and blight! Chill is the sound that heralds its approach; and then it leaps upon us with a shout. All the rich luxuriance of green is changed; all the proud foliage of the forest swept down to earth,—withered beneath the icy breath of the destroyer. For autumn is Nature’s chief executioner; and its symbol is darkness. It has the temper of steel; and its symbol is a sharp sword. It is the avenging angel, riding upon an atmosphere of death. As spring is the epoch of growth, so autumn is the epoch of maturity:—

Its strains decay,
And melt away,
In a dying, dying fall.†

And sad is the hour when maturity is passed; for that which passes its prime must die.

* Any old resident in China will recognise the truth of this description in regard to the change of season here indicated. In September, 1874, at Hankow, the thermometer fell something like forty degrees in less than forty-eight hours.

† A fair rendering of the text.

“Still what is this to plants and trees, which fade away in their due season? But stay: there is man, man the divinest of all things. A hundred cares wreck his heart: countless anxieties trace their wrinkles on his brow: until his inmost self is bowed beneath the burden of life. And swifter still he hurries to decay when vainly striving to attain the unattainable, or grieving over his ignorance of that which can never be known. Then comes the whitening hair;—and why not? Has man an adamantine frame, that he should outlast the trees of the field? Yet after all who is it, save himself, that steals his strength away? Tell me, O boy, what right has man to accuse his autumn blast?”

My boy made no answer. He was fast asleep. No sound reached me save that of the cricket chirping its response to my dirge.

AT A GRAVE.

O Man-ch'ing, thy birth gave a hero, thy death a God! Like the vulgar herd thou wast born and didst die, returning to the domain of nothingness. But thy earthly form could not perish like theirs. There was that within which could not decay: thy bright memory will endure through all generations. For such is the lot of the wise and good: their names are inscribed imperishably, to shine like the stars for ever.

O Man-ch'ing, 'tis long since we met. Yet methinks I see thee now, as then, lofty of mien, courage upon thy

brow. Ah! when the grave closed over thee, it was not into foul earth, but into the pure essence of gold and gems that thy dear form was changed. Or haply thou art some towering pine—some rare, some wondrous plant. What boots it now? Here in thy loneliness the spreading brambles weave around thy head, while the chill wind blows across thy bed moist with the dew of heaven. The will-o'-the-wisp and the fire-fly flit by: naught heard but the shepherd and the woodman singing songs on the hill-side; naught seen but the startled bird rising, the affrighted beast scampering from their presence, as they pass to and fro and pour forth their plaintive lays. Such is thy solitude now. A thousand, ten thousand years hence, the fox and the badger will burrow into thy tomb, and the weasel make its nest within. For this also has ever been the lot of the wise and good. Do not their graves, scattered on every side, bear ample witness of this?

Alas! Man-ch'ing, I know full well that all things are overtaken, sooner or later, by decay. But musing over days by-gone, my heart grows sad; and standing thus near to thy departed spirit, my tears flow afresh, and I blush for the heartlessness of God. O Man-ch'ing, rest in peace!*

* At the great spring festival, when every one tries to get away to visit his ancestral burying-ground and there perform those harmless rites which time and custom have hallowed, it is not unusual for literary men to indite some such address as the above, and burn it at the grave of the deceased as a means of communication with the spiritual world. Of this most sacred anniversary,

Carlyle has well said, "He (the Emperor) and his three hundred millions visit yearly the Tombs of their Fathers; each man the Tomb of his Father and his Mother; alone there, in silence, with what of *worship* or of other thought there may be, pauses solemnly each man; the divine Skies all silent over him; the divine Graves, and this divinest Grave, all silent under him; the pulsings of his own soul, if he have any soul, alone audible. Truly it may be a kind of worship! Truly if a man cannot get some glimpse into the Eternities, looking through this portal,—through what other need he try it?"

SU TUNG P'Ō.

1036-1101 A.D.

[An almost universal genius, like Ou-yang Hsiu, this writer is even a greater favourite with the Chinese literary public. Under his hands, the language of which China is so proud may be said to have reached perfection of finish, of art concealed. In subtlety of reasoning, in the lucid expression of abstractions, such as in English too often elude the faculty of the tongue, Su Tung-P'ŏ is an unrivalled master. On behalf of his honoured manes I desire to note my protest against the words of Mr. Baber, recently spoken at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, and stating that "the Chinese language is incompetent to express the subtleties of theological reasoning, just as it is inadequate to represent the nomenclature of European science." I am not aware that the nomenclature of European science can be adequately represented even in the English language; at any rate, there can be no comparison between the expression of terms and of ideas, and I take it the doctrine of the Trinity itself is not more difficult of comprehension than the theory of "self-abstraction beyond the limits of an external world," so closely reasoned out by Chuang Tzŭ. If Mr. Baber merely means that the gentlemen entrusted with the task have proved themselves so far quite incompetent to express in Chinese the subtleties of theological reasoning, then I am with him to the death.

There is one more point in regard to which I should be glad to cleanse the stuffed bosoms of some from a certain perilous stuff—the belief that Chinese sentences are frequently open to two and even more interpretations. No theory could well be more mischievous than this. It tends to make a student readily satisfied with anything he can get out of an obscure paragraph rather than push on laboriously through the dark passages of thought until the real sense begins to glimmer ahead, and finally to shine brightly upon

him. I wish to place it on record, as my opinion, after the arduous task of translation now lying completed before me, that the written language of China is hardly more ambiguous than English; and that an ordinary Chinese sentence, written without malice aforethought, can have but one meaning, though it may often appear at the first blush to have several. There are exceptions, of course; but the rule remains unchanged. I have frequently been trapped myself, and may be again; trapped into satisfaction with a given rendering which I subsequently discovered to be wrong, and which I could then feel to be grammatically wrong though I had previously accepted it as right. The fault in such cases, I venture to suggest, should be sought for outside the text. (See p. 177.)

To revert to the subject of this note, Su Tung-p'o shared the fate of most Chinese statesmen of the T'ang and Sung dynasties. He was banished to a distant post. In 1235 he was honoured with a niche in the Confucian temple, but his tablet was removed in 1845. After six hundred years he might well have been left there in peace.]

THE ARBOUR TO JOYFUL RAIN.

My arbour was named after rain, to commemorate joy.

Whenever our forefathers rejoiced greatly, they used the name of whatever caused their joy in order to commemorate the event. Thus, Chou Kung named a book from the auspicious appearance of a double ear of corn. An emperor named a period of his reign from the discovery of an ancient bronze; and a case is on record of one who named his children after prisoners taken captive in war. The joy in each instance was hardly the same; but the principle of commemoration was uniformly applied.

Now the year after I was appointed to rule over Fu-fêng, I began to put my official residence in repair, and arranged for the construction of an arbour at a

certain spot, where I let in a stream of water and planted trees, intending to use it as a refuge from the business of life.

In that very year it rained wheat ; and the soothsayers predicted in consequence that the ensuing season would be most prosperous. However, for a whole month no rain fell, and the people became alarmed at the prospect. Then rain fell at intervals, but not in sufficient quantities. At length, it poured incessantly for three days. Thereupon, great congratulations were exchanged between officials ; tradesmen and traders sang songs of glee in the market-place ; while farmers wished each other joy across the furrowed fields. The sorrowful were gladdened : the sick were made whole. And precisely at that moment my arbour was completed.

So I spread a feast there, and invited a number of guests, of whom I enquired, "What would have happened if the rain had held off five days longer?" "There would have been no wheat," was the answer. "And what if it had been ten days?" I continued ; to which they replied that then there would have been no crops at all. "And had there been harvest neither of wheat nor of other grain," said I, "a famine must inevitably have ensued. The law courts would have overflowed with litigation. Brigandage and robbery would have been rife. And you and I would have missed the pleasant meeting of to-day beneath this arbour. But God did not leave the people to perish. Drought has been followed by rain ; and to rain it is due that we are enjoying ourselves here to-day. Shall we then let

its remembrance fade away? I think not; and therefore I have given to this arbour its name, and have added to the record the following verses:—

“Should Heaven rain pearls, the cold cannot wear them as clothes ;
Should Heaven rain jade, the hungry cannot use it as food.

It has rained without cease for three days—

Whose was the influence at work ?

Should you say it was that of your Governor,
The Governor himself refers it to the Son of Heaven.

But the Son of Heaven says ‘No ! it was God.’

And God says ‘No ! it was Nature.’

And as Nature lies beyond the ken of man,
I christen this arbour instead.”

THE BASELESS TOWER.

He who lives near hills, in his uprising and in his down-sitting, in his eating and in his drinking, should be in daily communion with the hills.

Of all ranges none is so lofty as Chung-nan. Of all towns situated near hills, none is so close to them as Fu-fêng. Hence it would follow that mountain-peaks were included in the surrounding scenery. Nevertheless, from the Governor's residence there was not a hill to be seen. Although this entailed no consequences either of evil or of good, still it was not in accordance with the eternal fitness of things. And so the Baseless Tower was built.

Before the erection of this Tower, the Governor would frequently stroll about, staff in hand, at the foot of the hills, whence he every now and again caught glimpses

of their outlines through the dense groves of trees, much as one sees the top-knots of people who are passing on the other side of a wall. The result was that he ordered workmen to dig a square pond in front of his house, and with the clay taken therefrom to build a tower somewhat higher than the eaves. When this was done, those who mounted to the top lost all sense of the tower's elevation, while the surrounding hills seemed to have started up into view. The Governor therefore named it the Baseless Tower, and bade me commit its record to writing.

To this I replied, "The sequence of fulness and decay lies beyond the limits of our ken. Years ago, when this site was exposed to the hoar-frost and dew of heaven, the home of the adder and of the fox, who could then have forecast the Tower of to-day? And when, obedient to the eternal law, it shall once again by lapse of time become a wilderness and a desert as before,—this is what no man can declare.

"Where now," said I to the Governor, as we mounted the Tower together and gazed over the landscape around us, "where now are the palaces of old, beautiful, spacious buildings, a hundred times more solid than this? They are gone; and not a broken tile, not a crumbling wall remains, to mark the spot. They have passed into the growing grain, into the thorny brake. They have melted into the loamy glebe. Shall not then this Tower in like manner pass away? And if towers cannot last for ever, how much less shall we rely for immortality upon the ever fickle breath of praise? Alas

for those who trust by these means to live in the record of their age! For whether the record of their age will endure or perish depends upon something beyond the preservation and decay of towers."*

I then retired and committed the above to writing.

THE TOWER OF CONTENTMENT.

All things are in some sense worth seeing, and are consequently sources of pleasure: it is not necessary that they should possess either rarity or beauty. Eating grains and swilling lees will make a man drunk: berries and herbs will fill his belly; and it is by parity of reasoning that I am able to enjoy myself wherever I go.

Now those who seek happiness and avoid misery, rejoice or grieve according as they are successful or otherwise. But man's desires are endless, while his means of gratifying them are limited: good and evil strive together for the upper hand, and choice between them is oftentimes a difficult task. It follows therefore that occasions of joy are few, and occasions of grief many. Rather might we say that men pursue misery and eschew happiness. This, however, is contrary to human nature. *Men do so only because they are the slaves of objective existences.* Thus, if existences are considered subjectively (as regards themselves), all idea of their

* A sneer at the Governor for trying to commemorate his prosperous term of office by the erection of a perishable tower.

dimension is lost; whereas, if they are considered subjectively (as regards ourselves), then there are none to which the idea of dimension does not apply. But when another would refer to me his perceptions of such dimensions then I become troubled in mind, as though I saw a battle through a chink and was asked to decide with which party the victory lay. And thus it is, alas! that good and evil grow up promiscuously, and sorrow and joy are intertwined together.

On my transfer from Chekiang to Shantung, I exchanged the comfort of boats for the fatigue of horses and carts. I relinquished the elegance of carved panels for a home among the citron groves of the north. I turned my back upon hill and lake to wander over acres of mulberry and hemp. When I reached my post, the year's crops had failed, the country round was alive with banditti, and litigation the order of the day. I accordingly adopted a diet of lenten fare, living on berries and herbs; from which it was generally inferred that I was unhappy. But ere a year had passed away, my face filled out, and hair which had grown white became black again. I learned to love the honest manliness of the people, and my own easy disposition won popularity for my administration. I set to work upon my garden and my house, hewing down trees to effect the necessary repairs. On the north, abutting on the city wall, there was an old tower, which had stood there for years. This I to some extent restored; and thither I would often go and give vent to my feelings over the scene below. Southwards, hills receding, hills

looming darkly into view, the home perhaps of some virtuous recluse. Eastwards, hills: the hill to which Lü Ao retired to hide. Westwards, the Mu-ling pass in the far distance, like the battlements of a city, hallowed by the memory of many a glorious name. Northwards, the river Wei below; and looking down I would sigh as I remembered him of Huai-yin and his unaccomplished work.

My tower was lofty but solid; and even from its summit a clear view was obtainable. Cool in summer, it was warm in winter; and on mornings of rain or snow, on windy or moonlit nights, I would be there, always accompanied by friends. Vegetables from the garden, fish from the pool, the small wine of the country, and a dish of millet porridge,—such was our simple fare, over which I would exclaim, “Ho, there! what happiness is this!”

A brother, who lived in Chi-nan, hearing how I passed my time, wrote me some verses on the subject, and named my tower the *Tower of Contentment*, in reference to my knack of enjoying myself under all conditions. This, because I could roam beyond the limits of an external world.

THE CHÂLET OF CRANES.

During the autumn of 1078, there was a great flood over a certain district, which nearly submerged the rude dwelling of a recluse named Chang. However, by the

following spring the water had fallen, and he was able to occupy a site near his former residence, on a range of hills, in the midst of charming scenery, where he built himself a mountain hut. It was a perfect *cordon* of peaks, except on the west where the line broke; and there, right in the gap, the hermit's cottage stood. Thence, in spring and summer, the eye wandered over a broad expanse of verdure and vegetation: in autumn and winter, over moonlit miles of gleaming snow; while every change of wind and rain, every alternation of darkness and light, brought ever-varying beauties into view.

Chang kept a couple of cranes, which he had carefully trained; and every morning he would release them westwards through the gap, to fly away and alight in the marsh below or soar aloft among the clouds as the birds' own fancy might direct. At nightfall, they would return with the utmost regularity. And so he named his abode the *Châlet of Cranes*.

When I was Governor in those parts, I went with some friends to call upon Chang, and spent a merry time with him over a stoup of wine. And as I pledged my host, I said, "Are you aware, sir, how perfect is the happiness you enjoy?—happiness that I would not exchange even for the diadem of a prince. Does not the *Book of Changes* speak of the crane's voice sounding in solitude, and the harmony which prevails among its young? Does not the *Book of Poetry* tell us that the crane's note rings through the marsh, and is heard far away in the sky? For the crane is a bird of purity and

retirement, taking its pleasure beyond the limits of this dusty world of ours. Therefore it has been made an emblem of the virtuous man and of the lettered recluse; and to cherish such pets in one's home should entail rather profit than harm. Yet the love of cranes once lost a kingdom.*

"Then we have had Edicts prohibiting the use of wine,—the greatest curse, as 'twas said, of the curses which afflict mankind. Yet there have been those who attained immortality thereby, and made themselves heroes for ever.

"Ah! 'tis but the prince, who, though pure as the crane itself, dares not indulge a passion for wine. An he do so, it may cost him his throne. But for the lettered recluse of the hill-side, what odds if he perish in his cups? And what harm can his cranes bring to him? Thus, sir, it is that the joys of the prince and the hermit may not be mentioned together."

"True enough!" cried Chang, smiling, as he proceeded to sing the Song of the Cranes:—

"Away! away! my birds, fly westwards now,
To wheel on high and gaze on all below;
To swoop together, pinions closed, to earth;
To soar aloft once more among the clouds;
To wander all day long in sedgy vale;
To gather duckweed in the stony marsh.

Come back! come back! beneath the lengthening shades,
Your serge-clad master stands, guitar in hand.
'Tis he that feeds you from his slender store:
Come back! come back! nor linger in the west."

* Alluding to a certain feudal prince who lavished his revenues upon cranes.

INACCURACY.

It is stated in the ancient work on *Water-courses* that at a certain place there was a "stone-bell hill." The commentator, Li Yüan, considers the name to have arisen from the fact that the foot of the hill is washed by a deep pool, and that on the slightest agitation of its surface by the wind, waves would splash against the rock and produce a sound like that of a great bell.

This explanation, long regarded with suspicion, was at length exploded by a real bell being placed in the pool, which, no matter how violent the waves, never gave forth a sound. How much less then, it was argued, would stone.

By-and-by, an official, named Li P'ŏ, set to work to investigate, and discovered at the pool two stones which when struck emitted ringing sounds of different pitches, the vibration continuing some time after the stroke, and at length dying gradually away. Thus he believed that he had finally settled the point.

Of this settlement, however, I always entertained grave doubts. For many stones will yield a ringing sound when struck; why then should these be more particularly *bell* stones than any others?

Subsequently, I had an opportunity of seeing for myself these so-called stone bells, when accompanying my eldest son on the way to his post as magistrate. The priests of a neighbouring temple bade one of their novices carry an adze, and with this he chipped off

several pieces and showed me how they rang when struck. I smiled, but was not convinced; and that same night, the moon shining brightly, I stepped into a boat with my son and we proceeded to the base of the hill where the rock rose almost sheer to a height of near a thousand feet, looking like a fierce beast or huge hobgoblin about to spring upon us. Flocks of birds, startled at our approach, flew out and whirled away into the sky. There were also sounds as of old men coughing and laughing within a chasm of the rock, which one would have said was the noise of herons or cranes.

Much affected by the scene, I was about to leave, when suddenly over the face of the water came clanging and rolling sounds, like the notes of bells and drums. The boatman was horribly alarmed; but on examination we found that the base of the rock was pitted all over with holes, of I know not what depth, and that the sounds were due to the water which had been forced up them rushing noisily out as each wave retired. And steering our boat into a chasm between two rocks, we there found a large boulder of a size to seat a hundred persons, right in mid-channel. This too was full of holes, and when these had been filled with water driven in by the wind, the water would flow out with a noise similar to that we had just heard.

Laughing, I turned to my son and said, "Don't you see? These sounds are identical in timbre with the notes of the two famous bells of old. Ah! the ancients deceive us not. But how should people undertake to decide

about what they have neither seen with their eyes nor heard with their ears? Li Yüan was a man of experience equal to my own. Yet his explanation was inaccurate. He doubtless would not be bothered to get into a boat and anchor here at night beneath the cliff. Therefore he could not ascertain the real cause of the phenomenon, while the boatmen and others, who may have known, had no means of publishing the truth. Li Pö put his trust in an adze, and thought he had solved the problem thereby."

I accordingly made a note of this adventure, with a sigh for the remissness of Li Yüan, and a smile at the credulity of Li Pö.

OLD SQUARE-CAP THE HERMIT.

Old Square-Cap was a hermit. In his youth he had been a knight-errant, and the leader of knight-errantry in his hamlet. He was also an enthusiastic student of all kinds of books, hoping by these means to make his mark upon the age. But he never succeeded, and retired late in life to the hills. He lived in a hut. He was a vegetarian. He held no intercourse with the outer world. He would have neither horse nor carriage. He destroyed his official uniform. He walked by himself on the hills. No one knew who he was; but his tall square hat, apparently a survival of the ancient head-piece of the Han dynasty, earned for him the sobriquet of Old Square-Cap.

When I was banished I lived in the neighbourhood, and one day came suddenly upon him. "Good gracious!" I cried, "my old friend Ch'en! What are you doing here?" Old Square-Cap replied by asking me what I did there; and when I told him, he bent his head in silence and then quickly looked up and smiled. He took me to sleep at his home, a quiet little place with a mud wall round it, where, nevertheless, his wife and servants all seemed very contented and happy. I was astonished at what I saw. For I remembered how, in his wine-bibbing, swash-buckling youth, he had flung away money like dirt. Nineteen years before, I had seen him out shooting on the hills with a couple of attendants. A jay rose in front of them, and he bade one of the attendants shoot, but the man missed; at which he urged his horse forward, drew an arrow, and shot the bird dead. Then, as he sat there on horseback, he held forth on military matters, and discussed the victories and defeats of ancient and modern times, calling himself the warrior of his age.

And now, after all these years, the old determined look is still to be seen in his face. How then is he what we mean by a hermit of the hills? Yet he was of an illustrious house. He would have had grand opportunities. He would have made himself famous ere this. His home was at the capital,—a home of luxury and splendour, like the palace of a prince. He held an estate which gave him yearly a thousand pieces of silk; so that the pleasures of wealth were in his

grasp. All these things he put aside, and retired to penury and solitude on the hills. He did not turn his back upon the world because he had failed to secure the material blessings of life.

I have heard that there are many weird beings on those hills, though I never caught a glimpse of one. Doubtless Old Square-Cap, himself of that clique, has made their acquaintance long ago.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE RED
WALL:* SUMMER.

In the year 1081, the seventh moon just on the wane, I went with a friend on a boat excursion to the Red Wall. A clear breeze was gently blowing, scarce enough to ruffle the river, as I filled my friend's cup and bade him troll a lay to the bright moon, singing the song of the *Modest Maid*.

By-and-by, up rose the moon over the eastern hills, wandering between the Wain and the Goat, shedding forth her silver beams, and linking the water with the sky. On a skiff we took our seats, and shot over the liquid plain, lightly as though travelling through space, riding on the wind without knowing whither we were bound. We seemed to be moving in another sphere,

* Not the spot mentioned in the *San-kuo-chih*, where Chou-Yü burnt Ts'ao Ts'ao's fleet, and where a wall is said to have been reddened by the flames. Su Tung-p'ŏ seems himself to have mistaken the identity of the place.

sailing through air like the Gods. So I poured out a bumper for joy, and, beating time on the skiff's side, sang the following verse :—

With laughing oars, our joyous prow
 Shoots swiftly through the glittering wave—
 My heart within grows sadly grave—
 Great heroes dead, where are ye now ?

My friend accompanied these words upon his flageolet, delicately adjusting its notes to express the varied emotions of pity and regret, without the slightest break in the thread of sound which seemed to wind around us like a silken skein. The very monsters of the deep yielded to the influence of his strains, while the boat-woman, who had lost her husband, burst into a flood of tears. Overpowered by my own feelings, I settled myself into a serious mood, and asked my friend for some explanation of his art. To this he replied, "Did not Ts'ao Ts'ao say :—

The stars are few, the moon is bright,
 The raven southward wings his flight.

"Westwards to Hsia-k'ou, eastwards to Wu-ch'ang, where hill and stream in wild luxuriance blend,—was it not there that Ts'ao Ts'ao was routed by Chou Yü? Ching-chou was at his feet: he was pushing down stream towards the east. His war-vessels stretched stem to stern for a thousand *li*: his banners darkened the sky. He poured out a libation as he neared Chiang-ling; and sitting in the saddle, armed *cap-à-pie*, he

uttered those words did that hero of his age. Yet where is he to-day?

“Now you and I have fished and gathered fuel together on the river eyots. We have fraternized with the crayfish: we have made friends with the deer. We have embarked together in our frail canoe; we have drawn inspiration together from the wine-flask—a couple of ephemerides, launched on the ocean in a rice-husk! Alas, life is but an instant of Time. I long to be like the Great River which rolls on its way without end. Ah, that I might cling to some angel’s wing and roam with him for ever! Ah, tha. I might clasp the bright moon in my arms and dwell with her for aye! Alas, it only remains to me to enwrap these regrets in the tender melody of sound.”

“But do you forsooth comprehend,” I enquired, “the mystery of this river and of this moon? The water passes by but is never gone: the moon wanes only to wax once more. Relatively speaking, Time itself is but an instant of time; absolutely speaking, you and I, in common with all matter, shall exist to all eternity. Wherefore then the longing of which you speak?”

“The objects we see around us are one and all the property of individuals. If a thing does not belong to me, not a particle of it may be enjoyed by me. But the clear breeze blowing across this stream, the bright moon streaming over yon hills,—these are sounds and sights to be enjoyed without let or hindrance by all.

They are the eternal gifts of God to all mankind, and their enjoyment is inexhaustible. Hence it is that you and I are enjoying them now."

My friend smiled as he threw away the dregs from his wine-cup and filled it once more to the brim. And then, when our feast was over, amid the litter of cups and plates, we lay down to rest in the boat: for streaks of light from the east had stolen upon us unawares.

THE RED WALL: AUTUMN.

In the same year, when the tenth moon was full, I went again to the Red Wall. Two friends accompanied me; and as we crossed the hill, the landscape glittered white with frost, while the leafless trees cast our shadows upon the ground. The bright moon above inspired our hearts, and many a catch we sang as we strolled along. Then I sighed and said, "Here are the guests gathered together, but where are the cakes and ale? Here in the silver moonlight, here in the clear breeze,—what waste of a night like this!"

Then up spoke a friend and said, "This very eve I netted one of those *gobemouche* small-scaled fishes, for all the world like the famous perch of the Sung. But how about liquor?" However, we went back with our friend to consult his wife, and she at once cried out, "I have a stoup of wine, stored now some time in case of an accident like this." And so with wine and fish we retraced our steps towards the Red Wall.

The river was rushing noisily by, but with narrowed stream; and over the heightened hill-tops the moon was still scarcely visible, while through the shallowing tide naked boulders stood prominently forth. It was but three months since, yet I hardly knew the place again.

I picked up my skirts and began to ascend the steep cliff. I struggled through bramble-brake. I sat me down upon the Tiger rock. I climbed a gnarled tree, up to the dizzy hawk's nest, whence I looked down upon the River God's temple below, and whither my two friends were unable to follow.

Suddenly there arose a rushing mighty sound. Trees and shrubs began to wave, hills to resound, valleys to re-echo, while wind lashed water into waves. Fear and regret entered into my soul; for it was not possible to remain. I hurried back and got 'on board. We poled the boat into mid-channel, and letting it take its own course, our excursion came to an end.

The hour was midnight, and all around was still; when from the east, across the river, flew a solitary crane, flapping its huge wings of dusky silk, as, with a long shrill scream, it whizzed past our boat towards the west. By-and-by, my friends left me, and I slept and dreamed that a lame Taoist priest in a feathery robe passed by on the bank, and, bowing to me, said, "Have you had a pleasant trip, sir, to the Red Wall?" I enquired his name, but he merely bowed again and made no reply. "Ah!" exclaimed I, "I know who you are. Are you not that bird which flew past me

last night and screamed?" Just then I awakened with a start. I opened the door of my boat and looked out, but no one was to be seen.*

A RAT'S CUNNING.

I was sitting up one night when suddenly a rat began to gnaw. A rap on the couch stopped the noise, which however soon began again. Calling a servant to look round with a light, we noticed an empty sack, from the inside of which came a grating sound, and I at once cried out, "Ha! the rat has got shut in here, and can't get out." So we opened the sack, but there was apparently nothing in it, though when we came to throw in the light, there at the bottom lay a dead rat. "Oh!" exclaimed the servant in a fright, "can the animal that was just now gnawing have died so suddenly as this? Or can it have been the rat's ghost that was making the noise?" Meanwhile, he turned the rat out on the ground, when——away it went full speed, escaping before we had time to do anything. "'Tis passing strange," said I, with a sigh, "the cunning of that rat. Shut up in a sack too hard for it to gnaw its way out, it nevertheless gnawed in order to attract attention by the noise; and then it pretended to be

* "Alas!" says a commentator, "yesterday was the to-day of yesterday, and to-morrow will be the to-day of to-morrow." Compare CARLYLE (*Past and Present*), "To-day becomes yesterday so fast; all to-morrows become to-days."

dead in order to save its life under the guise of death. Now I have always understood that in intelligence man stands first. Man can tame the dragon, subdue the mastodon, train the tortoise, and carry captive the unicorn. He makes all things subservient to his will; and yet here he is, trapped by the guile of a rat, which combined the speed of the flying hare with the repose of a blushing girl. Wherein then lies his superior intelligence?"

Thinking over this, with my eyes closed, a voice seemed to say to me, "Your knowledge is the knowledge of books; you gaze towards the truth but see it not. You do not concentrate your mind within yourself, but allow it to be distracted by external influences. Hence it is that you are deceived by the gnawing of a rat. *A man may voluntarily destroy a priceless gem, and yet be unable to restrain his feelings over a broken cooking-pot. Another will bind a fierce tiger, and yet change colour at the sting of a bee.* These words are your own; have you forgotten them?" At this I bent my head and laughed; and then, opening my eyes, I bade a servant bring pen and ink and commit the episode to writing.

THE PRINCE OF LITERATURE

(See p. 116).

How has the simple and lowly one become a Teacher for all generations? Why has a single word of his become law for the whole world? Because he could place

himself in harmony with Nature, and adapt himself to the eternal sequence of fulness and decay.

Life does not come to us without reason: it is not without reason that we lay it down. Hence, some have descended from the hills to live among us; others have joined the galaxy of the stars above.* The traditions of old lie not.

Mencius said, "I am able to nourish my divine spirit."† That spirit may lodge in a specified area; but its volume fills all space. For him who possesses it, the honours of princes and kings, the wealth of millionaires, the sagacity of counsellors, the courage of heroes, the subtlety of diplomatists,—these are but empty names. But who plants this spirit within us? It stands, independent of form; it moves, independent of force; it waits not for life, to exist; it perishes not in the swoon of death. Above, it assumes the shape of heavenly bodies; on earth, that of hills and streams: in the dark, that of spiritual beings; in the broad light of day, it returns again to man. But let this pass.

From the age of the Hans, the Truth began to be obscured, and literature to fade. Supernatural religions sprang up on all sides; and many eminent scholars failed to oppose their advance, until Han Wên-kung,

* Two mythological allusions.

† Dr. LEGGE, in his translation of Mencius, renders this term by "vast, flowing, passion-nature." It is, in fact, untranslatable; but what is meant may be easily understood from Wên T'ien-hsiang's splendid poem, headed *Divinæ Particulam Auræ*. See p. 220.

the cotton-clothed, arose, and blasted them with his derisive sneer.* Thenceforth, not one but adopted him as their guide, returning into the true path,—now three hundred years ago. From the dead ashes of the immediate past his genius soared up: his message brought help to many in the hour of their affliction. His loyalty (to the commonwealth) brought down the wrath of his Imperial master; his bravery eclipsed that of the bravest warrior. Was not this to place himself in harmony with Nature, and adapt himself to the eternal sequence of fulness and decay?

The human, they say, is all-powerful, except as against the divine. What is this distinction between the human and the divine? Cunning may deceive kings and princes, but cannot impose upon pigs and fishes.† Brute force may conquer an empire, but cannot win over the hearts of the people. So Han Wên-kung's purity of heart dispersed the clouds at the summit of Mount Hêng,‡ but could not free him from Imperial suspicions. He tamed the fierce monster of the river, but could not shake off the calumnies of his foes. He endeared himself to the inhabitants of the southern shores, where his memory is held sacred after many generations; but he could not secure to himself a day's repose as a courtier about the Throne. His failures were human, his successes divine.

* Cf. "Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer."

† Alluding to a passage in the *Book of Changes*.

‡ One of the numerous legendary tales of his supernatural power.

The people of Ch'ao-chou were sunk in ignorance. Han Wên-kung appointed a superintendent of education; and ever since, their city has been a centre of learning, a rival to the classic seats of old. To this day its inhabitants are known for their peace-loving ways; for their faith in the maxim that the "true doctrine inspires lofty natures with love for their fellow-men, inferior natures with respect for the authority of government." And so, when they eat or drink, a portion is always devoted to the memory of their Master. Or if flood, or drought, or pestilence come upon them, it is to him they betake themselves for aid. But his shrine was behind the chief magistrate's *yamên*, and inconvenient of access; and an application to the Throne to build a new shrine had been refused, when a Governor came to rule over the district whose administration was modelled upon that of his great predecessor. This popular official issued a notice that if the people themselves wished to erect a new shrine, they were at liberty to select a suitable site at a given spot; and within the year the building was completed.

Then some one said, "Han Wên-kung was banished to this spot, a thousand miles from his home, with no hope of return. If knowledge is given to him after death, it will hardly be with feelings of affection that he will look back upon his sojourn at Ch'ao-chou."

"Not so," I replied. "Our Master's spirit pervades space as water pervades the earth: there is no place where it is not. The Ch'ao-chou people trusted and loved him more than others, and still venerate his spirit

which hovers over their soil. Fancy, if a man boring for water should strike a spring and say, 'Water is *here!*'"

Han Wên-kung's full designation is given in the inscription; and as the inhabitants of Ch'ao-chou desired me to prepare a record to be engraven on stone, I indited the following lines to the memory of this great man:—

He rode on the dragon to the white cloud domain;
 He grasped with his hand the glory of the sky;
 Robed with the effulgence of the stars,
 The wind bore him delicately to the throne of God.
 He swept away the chaff and husks of his generation.
 He roamed over the limits of the earth.
 He clothed all nature with his bright rays,
 The third in the triumvirate of genius.*
 His rivals panted after him in vain,
 Dazed by the brilliancy of his light.
 He cursed Buddha: he offended his prince.
 He journeyed far away to the distant south.
 He passed the grave of Shun, and wept over the daughters of Yao.
 The water-god went before him and stilled the waves.
 He drove out the fierce monster as it were a lamb.
 But above, in heaven, there was no music, and God was sad,
 And summoned him to his place beside the Throne.
 And now, with these poor offerings, I salute him;
 With red lichees and yellow plantain fruit.
 Alas, that he did not linger awhile on earth,
 But passed so soon, with streaming hair, into the great unknown.

* The other two were Tu Fu and Li T'ai-pō (*q.v.*).

WANG AN-SHIH.

1021-1086 A.D.

[A scholar, poet, and statesman, popularly known as "the Reformer," in consequence of certain momentous political reforms he was enabled temporarily to introduce; the most remarkable being a system of compulsory military training for all classes of the people. In 1104, his tablet was placed in the Confucian temple, only, however, to remain there about a hundred and forty years, when it was removed.]

ON THE STUDY OF FALSE DOCTRINES.

I HAVE been debarred by illness from writing to you now for some time, though my thoughts have been with you all the while.

In reply to my last letter wherein I expressed a fear that you were not progressing with your study of the Canon, I have received several from you, in all of which you seem to think I meant the Canon of Buddha, and you are astonished at my recommendation of such pernicious works. But how could I possibly have intended any other than the Canon of the sages of China? And for you to have thus missed the point of my letter is a good illustration of what I meant when I said I feared you were not progressing with your study of the Canon.

Now a thorough knowledge of our Canon has not been attained by any one for a very long period. Study of the Canon alone does not suffice for a thorough knowledge of the Canon. Consequently, I have been myself an omnivorous reader of books of all kinds, even, for example, of ancient medical and botanical works. I have moreover dipped into treatises on agriculture and on needlework, all of which I have found very profitable in aiding me to seize the great scheme of the Canon itself. For learning in these days is a totally different pursuit from what it was in the olden times; and it is now impossible otherwise to get at the real meaning of our ancient sages.

There was Yang Hsiung. He hated all books that were not orthodox. Yet he made a wide study of heterodox writers. By force of education he was enabled to take what of good and to reject what of bad he found in each. Their pernicious influence was altogether lost on him; while on the other hand he was prepared the more effectively to elucidate what we know to be the Truth. Now do you consider that I have been corrupted by these pernicious influences? If so, you know me not.

No! the pernicious influences of the age are not to be sought for in the Canon of Buddha. They are to be found in the corruption and vice of those in high places; in the false and shameless conduct which is now rife among us. Do you not agree with me?

A FALSE ESTIMATE.

[The prince of Ch'in held Mêng Ch'ang-chün a prisoner, and intended to slay him. Meanwhile, Mêng Ch'ang-chün sent word to the prince's favourite lady, asking her to intercede for him; to which the latter replied that if he would give her a certain robe of white fox-skin, she would speak on his behalf. Now, it chanced that this very robe had already been presented to the prince; but among Mêng Ch'ang-chün's followers was one who could steal like a dog, and this man introduced himself by night into the palace and transferred the robe from the prince to the lady. The consequence was that Mêng Ch'ang-chün was released and fled at once to the frontier; while the prince soon repented of his clemency, and sent off to recapture his prisoner. When Mêng Ch'ang-chün reached the pass, the great gate was closed, not to be opened until cock-crow; at which he was much alarmed, fearing pursuit, until another of his followers, who possessed the art, began to crow like a cock, and set off all the cocks of the place crowing too. Thereupon, the gate was opened, and they escaped.]

All ages have extolled Mêng Ch'ang-chün as one who possessed the power of attracting men of genius to his side, in consequence of which he was surrounded by such, and availed himself of their skill to escape from the tiger-clutch of the prince of Ch'in.

Dear me! he was but the leader of cock-crowing, cur-stealing swashbucklers—men of genius in no sense were they.

Indeed, had his own powerful State included but one single man of genius, it would have wrested supremacy from the House of Ch'in, and the opportunity for this cock-crowing, cur-stealing skill would never have occurred.

Besides, no true man of genius would condescend to associate with imitators of cocks and dogs.*

* This brief note is considered to be a veritable gem. One commentator says, "Within the space of a hundred words all the conditions of a perfect essay are fulfilled."

CHOU TUN-I.

1017-1073 A.D.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.

LOVERS of flowering plants and shrubs we have had by scores, but T'ao Yüan-ming* alone devoted himself to the chrysanthemum. Since the opening days of the T'ang dynasty, it has been fashionable to admire the peony; but my favourite is the water-lily. How stainless it rises from its slimy bed! How modestly it reposes on the clear pool—an emblem of purity and truth! Symmetrically perfect, its subtle perfume is wafted far and wide; while there it rests in spotless state, something to be regarded reverently from a distance, and not to be profaned by familiar approach.

In my opinion, the chrysanthemum is the flower of retirement and culture; the peony, the flower of rank and wealth; the water-lily, the Lady Virtue *sans pareille*.

Alas! few have loved the chrysanthemum since T'ao Yüan-ming; and none now love the water-lily like myself; *whereas the peony is a general favourite with all mankind.*

* See p. 105.

HUANG T'ING-CHIEN.

1045-1105 A.D.

COMMONPLACE.

SHU-YEH'S* verses are at once vigorous and purely beautiful, without a vestige of commonplace about them. Every student of the poetic art should know them thoroughly, and thus bring the author into his mind's eye.

Those who are sunk in the cares and anxieties of this world's strife, even by a passing glance would gain therefrom enough to clear away some pecks of the cobwebs of mortality. How much more they who penetrate further and seize each hidden meaning and enjoy its flavour to the full! Therefore, my nephew, I send you these poems for family reading, that you may cleanse your heart and solace a weary hour by their perusal.

As I recently observed to my own young people, the true hero should be many-sided, but he must not be commonplace. It is impossible to cure that. Upon

* A famous poet and philosopher of the third century of our era. He was ultimately put to death as a magician and a heretic.

which, one of them asked by what characteristics this absence of the commonplace was distinguished. "It is hard to say," I replied. "A man who is not commonplace is, under ordinary circumstances, much like other people. But he who at moments of great trial does not flinch—he is not commonplace."

A hero may exist in his generation, either as a man of action or as a man of retirement ; he may be inflexible or he may be of gentler mould. In any case, the above test gives the truest estimate of his value.

YŌ FEI.

1103-1141 A.D.

[A famous military commander who was equally successful, at home in suppressing rebellion, and abroad in resisting the encroachments of the Tartars. However, the intrigues of a rival, by whose advice peace with the Tartars was purchased at the price of half the empire, brought him to the sword of the executioner. Posterity has avenged him by adopting the hated name of his betrayer as the common term for a spittoon.]

GOOD HORSES.

HIS Majesty asked me one day if I had any good horses; to which I replied that I used to have two excellent animals. "They ate," I added, "large quantities of hay and many pecks of beans, daily; besides drinking each a gallon of spring water. Unless their food was fresh and clean, they would not touch it. On being mounted, they did not immediately break into a gallop; but would gradually warm into eagerness for their work. Between noon and sunset they would cover some sixty and odd miles; and on removing the saddle they would be found neither to have lost wind nor to have turned a hair any more than if they had been doing nothing. Such is the capacity for endurance in those who are well fed and well treated; who are willing,

but not over-zealous. Unhappily, they both died; and those I have now do not eat more than a few pints per diem. They are not particular about either their food or their drink. Before you have fairly got hold of the bridle, away they go; and then, ere many miles are passed, they pant and sweat and are like to drop with fatigue. Such is the jaded condition of those who get little and are easily satisfied, who are over-eager and are easily exhausted."

His Majesty praised my reply ("but," as one commentator says, "quite missed the point.")

CHU HSI.

1130-1200 A.D.

[The most voluminous, and one of the most luminous, of Chinese authors. He successfully introduced interpretations of the Confucian books, either wholly or partly at variance with those which had been put forth by the scholars of the Han dynasty and hitherto received as infallible, thus modifying to a certain extent the prevailing standard of political and social morality. His principle was simply one of consistency. He refused to interpret given words in a given passage in one sense, and the same words, occurring elsewhere, in another sense. Consequently, his are now the only authorised interpretations; and these, in spite of the hankerings of a few woolly-headed scholars, are never likely to be displaced.]

At Chu Hsi's death, his coffin is said to have taken up a suspended position, about three feet from the ground. Whereupon his son-in-law, falling on his knees beside the bier, reminded the departed spirit of the great principles (anti-supernatural) of which it had been such a brilliant exponent in life,—and the coffin descended gently to the ground.]

PORTRAITS.

It has always been considered first-class work in portrait painting, even for the most skilful artist, when the result is a likeness, more or less exact, of the mere features. Such skill is now possessed by Kuo Kung-ch'ên; but what is still more marvellous, he catches the very expression, and reproduces, as it were, the inmost mind of his model.

I had already heard much of him from a couple of friends; however, on my sending for him, he did not

make his appearance until this year. Thereupon, a number of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood set themselves to test his skill. Sometimes the portrait would be perfect; sometimes perhaps a little less so; but in all cases a marked likeness was obtained, and in point of expression of individual character the artist showed powers of a very high order.

I myself sat for two portraits, one large and the other small; and it was quite a joke to see how accurately he reproduced my coarse ugly face and my vulgar rustic turn of mind, so that even those who had only heard of, but had never seen me, knew at once for whom the portraits were intended.

I was just then about to start on my travels,—eastwards, to the confines of Shantung; westwards, to the turbid waters of the Tung-t'ing lake; northwards, to the quiet home of the old recluse, T'ao Yüan-ming;—after which I contemplated retirement from public life. And I thought how much I should like to bring back with me portraits of the various great and good, but unknown, men I might be fortunate enough to meet with on the way. But Kuo's parents were old, and he could not venture upon such a long journey, for which I felt very sorry. So at parting, I gave him this document.*

* The following most interesting note was written for me by my valued friend, Mr. J. B. COUGHTRIE, an artist well known in Hong Kong circles:—

NOTE.

The art of portraiture does not reach a very high standard in China, and its professors meet with limited patronage. The backward condition in which this branch of art remains is probably

owing to the fact that the style and taste peculiar to the Chinese combine to render a lifelike resemblance impossible, and the completed picture unattractive. The artist lays upon his paper a flat wash of colour to match the complexion of his sitter, and upon this draws a mere map of the features, making no attempt to obtain roundness or relief by depicting light and shadows, and never by any chance conveying the slightest suggestion of animation or expression. The degree of merit accorded to the production at this stage depends upon the ease and rapidity with which it is seemingly done, a timid highly-wrought face taking rank beneath a facile sketchy production, which latter in many cases is but the affectation of those qualities obtained slowly and with labour. On the drapery the utmost care is bestowed, and the sitter is invariably represented in the finest raiment he is entitled to wear, and equally invariably with fan in one hand and snuff-bottle in the other.

There is a wide-spread belief that the Chinese object to have their portraits taken for superstitious reasons; and it is true that artists who have visited the country have always failed to induce picturesque coolies, peasants, and even beggars, to allow themselves to be sketched. The writer, however, has been informed that no such superstition really exists, but merely a proud objection on the part of the native to be depicted in his rags or every-day clothing.

WÊN T'ÏEN-HSIANG.

1236-1282 A.D.

[The famous statesman and patriot, who, when finally held captive by Kublai Khan after the complete overthrow of the Sung dynasty, calmly faced death rather than own allegiance to the Mongol conqueror. The following beautiful *morceau* was penned in captivity, and cannot but fill us with admiration for the hero of whom the Chinese may proudly say, "Whatever record leaps to light, he never shall be shamed."]

DIVINÆ PARTICULAM AURÆ.

THERE is in the universe an *Aura* which permeates all things, and makes them what they are. Below, it shapes forth land and water; above, the sun and the stars. In man it is called spirit; and there is nowhere where it is not.

In times of national tranquillity, this spirit lies *perdu* in the harmony which prevails. Only at some great crisis is it manifested widely abroad. And as to these manifestations, those who run may read. Were there not the fearless and truthful annalists of old? * Was

* In allusion to certain murders which were denounced by the historiographers of the periods in question.

there not the disinterested chivalry of Chang Liang?* the unswerving devotion of Su Wu?† Did not Yen Yen‡ say they had headless generals in his district, but none who surrendered their allegiance? Was not an emperor's robe splashed with blood that might not be washed away?§ And the teeth of Chang Hsün?||—the tongue of Yen Hsi?||—the guileless honesty of Kuan Ning,¶ pure as the clearest ice?—the martial genius of K'ung Ming,** the admiration of Gods and men?—the oath of Tsu T'ï?††—the tablet dashed in the rebel's face?‡‡

Such is this grand and glorious spirit which endureth for all generations, and which, linked with the sun and moon, knows neither beginning nor end. The foundation of all that is great and good in heaven and earth,

* Who, after setting an Emperor upon the throne, refused all reward, and retired into private life. See p. 60.

† Held prisoner by the Huns for the space of nineteen years. See *Li Ling's Reply*, p. 86.

‡ In reply to the famous Chang Fei, who took him prisoner, but, in consequence of this bold answer, spared his life.

§ The blood of Chi Shao, who died to save his Imperial master's life.

|| Killed for their violent language in the presence of rebels by whom they had been taken prisoners.

¶ Who faithfully repaid all loans made to him while in exile.

** The famous general of the *Story of the Three Kingdoms*.

†† As he was about to cross the Yellow River with troops in pursuit of an enemy—"If I do not succeed in purging the country of these men, may my blood flow away like this river!"

‡‡ By a virtuous official whose loyalty the said rebel was vainly striving to undermine.

it is itself born from the everlasting obligations which are due by man to man.

Alas! the fates were against me: I was without resource. Bound with fetters, hurried away towards the north, death would have been sweet indeed; but that boon was refused.

My dungeon is lighted by the will-o'-the-wisp alone: no breath of spring cheers the murky solitude in which I dwell. The ox and the barb herd together in one stall: the rooster and the phoenix feed together from one dish. Exposed to mist and dew, I had many times thought to die; and yet, through the seasons of two revolving years, disease hovered round me in vain. The dank unhealthy soil to me became Paradise itself. For there was that within me which misfortune could not steal away. And so I remained firm, gazing at the white clouds floating over my head, and bearing in my heart a sorrow boundless as the sky.

The sun of those dead heroes has long since set; but their record is before me still. And, while the wind whistles under the eaves, I open my books and read; and lo! in their presence my heart glows with a borrowed fire.

LIU YIN.

13TH CENTURY A.D.

DESIGN.

WHEN God made man, he gave him powers to cope with the exigencies of his environment; and resources within himself, so that he need not be dependent upon external circumstances [for good or evil].

Thus, in districts where poisons abound, antidotes abound also; and in others, where malaria prevails, we find such correctives as ginger, nutmegs, and dogwood. Again, fish, terrapins, and clams, are the most wholesome articles of diet in excessively damp climates, though themselves denizens of the water; and musk and deer-horns are excellent prophylactics in earthy climates, where in fact they are produced. For, if these things were unable to prevail against their surroundings, they could not possibly thrive where they do; while the fact that they do so thrive is proof positive that they were ordained as specifics against those surroundings.

Chu Hsi said, "When God is about to send down calamities upon us, he first raises up the hero whose genius shall finally prevail against those calamities." From this point of view, there can be no living man without his appointed use; nor any state of society which man should be unable to put right.

LIU CHI.

1311-1375 A.D.

[For many years a faithful servant of the quondam Buddhist-priest Emperor, who at length succeeded in overthrowing the dynasty of the Mongols and establishing himself, under the title of Hung Wu, as the first ruler of the House of Ming.]

DIVINATION.

WHEN Tung Ling Hou was dismissed from office, he repaired to the abode of a famous augur to ask his fate by means of divination.

“What is it you would enquire about?” said the latter.

“He who has lain awhile,” replied Tung Ling Hou, “longs to arise. He who has hidden awhile, longs to come forth. He whose nose is stuffed, longs to sneeze. And I have heard that that which is over-pent breaks out at last; that excessive sorrow finds its own relief; that excessive heat is followed by wind; and that excessive compression makes its own vent. Thus, too, the seasons follow one another with ceaseless change: one rolls away and another comes on. Yet I have my doubts, and would fain receive instruction at your hands.”

“Sir,” said the augur; “after all you have just now stated, pray tell me what further you would have me divine?”

“The abstruser mysteries,” answered Tung Ling Hou, “I do not pretend to have penetrated; and would beg you to enlighten me thereon.”

“Alas!” cried the augur, “what is there that Heaven can bestow save that which virtue can obtain? Where is the efficacy of spiritual beings beyond that with which man has endowed them? The divining-plant is but a dead stalk; the tortoise-shell a dry bone. They are but matter like ourselves. And man, the divinest of all things, why does he not seek wisdom from within, rather than from these grosser stuffs?”

“Besides, sir, why not reflect upon the past—that past which gave birth to this present? Your cracked roof and crumbling walls of to-day are but the complement of yesterday’s lofty towers and spacious halls. The straggling bramble is but the complement of the shapely garden tree. The grasshopper and the cicada are but the complement of organs and flutes; the will-o’-the-wisp and firefly, of gilded lamps and painted candles. Your endive and watercresses are but the complement of the elephant-sinews and camel’s hump* of days by-gone; the maple-leaf and the rush, of your once rich robes and fine attire. Do not repine that those who had not such luxuries then, enjoy them now. Do not be dissatisfied that you who enjoyed them then,

* *Sc.*, rich food.

have them now no more. In the space of a day and night, the flower blooms and dies. Between spring and autumn things perish and are renewed. Beneath the roaring cascade a deep pool is found: dark valleys lie at the foot of high hills. These things you know: what more can divination teach you?"

OUTSIDES.

At Hangchow there lived a costermonger who understood how to keep oranges a whole year without letting them spoil. His fruit was always fresh-looking, firm as jade, and of a beautiful golden hue; but inside—dry as an old cocoon.

One day I asked him, saying, "Are your oranges for altar or sacrificial purposes, or for show at banquets?*" Or do you make this outside display merely to cheat the foolish? as cheat them, you most outrageously do." "Sir," replied the orangeman, "I have carried on this trade now for many years. It is my source of livelihood. I sell: the world buys. And I have yet to learn that you are the only honest man about, and that I am the only cheat. Perhaps it never struck you in this light. The bâton-bearers of to-day, seated on their tiger skins, pose as the martial guardians of the State; but what are they compared with the captains of old? The broad-brimmed, long-robed ministers of to-day, pose

* A light touch of nature which seems to prove the kinship of the whole human family.

as pillars of the constitution ; but have they the wisdom of our ancient counsellors? Evil doers arise, and none can subdue them. The people are in misery, and none can relieve them. Clerks are corrupt, and none can restrain them. Laws decay, and none can renew them. Our officials eat the bread of the State, and know no shame. They sit in lofty halls, ride fine steeds, drink themselves drunk with wine, and batten on the richest fare. Which of them but puts on an awe-inspiring look, a dignified mien?—all gold and gems without, but dry cocoons within. You pay, sir, no heed to these things, while you are very particular about my oranges.”

I had no answer to make. I retired to ponder over this costermonger's wit, which reminded me forcibly of “The Wag.”* Was he really out of conceit with the age, or only quizzing me in defence of his fruit?

* Tung-fang So. See p. 79.

FANG HSIAO-JU.

14TH CENTURY A.D.

IT IS ALWAYS THE UNEXPECTED.

STATESMEN who forecast the destinies of an empire, oft-times concentrate their genius upon the difficult, and neglect the easy. They provide against likely evils, and disregard combinations which yield no ground for suspicion. Yet calamity often issues from neglected quarters, and sedition springs out of circumstances which have been set aside as trivial. Must this be regarded as due to an absence of care?—No. It results because the things that man can provide against are human, while those that elude his vigilance and overpower his strength are divine.

The Ch'ins obliterated the feudal system and united the empire under one sway. They saw that the Chou dynasty had been overthrown by the turbulence of vassal nobles, and therefore they dispersed these over the land as officers of state responsible to the central government; trusting that thereby appeal to arms would cease, and the empire be theirs for ever. But they could not foresee that the founder of the Hans would arise from

the furrowed fields and snatch away the sceptre from their grasp.

The Hans took warning by the Ch'ins, and re-established feudatory princes, choosing them from among the members of the Imperial family, and relying upon their tie of kinship to the throne. * Yet the conflict with the Confederate States was at hand, in consequence of which the power of the princes was diminished to prevent similar troubles for the future; when, lo! Wang Mang leaped upon the throne. †

Wang Mang took warning by his predecessors, and others, in like manner, took warning by his fate, each in turn providing against a recurrence of that which had proved fatal before. And in each case calamity came upon them from a quarter whence least expected.

The Emperor T'ai Tsung of the T'angs secretly learned that his issue would be done to death by Wu. He accordingly slew the Wu upon whom his suspicions fell: but the real Wu was all the time at his side.

The Emperor T'ai Tsu of the Sung's persuaded those who had placed him upon the throne to retire into private life. He little foresaw that his descendants would writhe under the barbarian Tartar's yoke. ‡

All the instances above cited include gifted men whose wisdom and genius overshadowed their generation. They took counsel and provided against disruption of their empire with the utmost possible care. Yet misfortune

* See *Music*, p. 83.

† A famous usurper.

‡ The dynasty of the Mongols, established by Kublai Khan.

fell upon every one of them, always issuing from some source where its existence was least suspected. This, because human wisdom reaches only to human affairs, and cannot touch the divine. Thus, too, will sickness carry off the children even of the best doctors, and devils play their pranks in the family of an exorcist. How is it that these professors who succeed in grappling with the cases of others, yet fail in treating their own? It is because in those they confine themselves to the human; in these they would meddle with the divine.

The men of old knew that it was impossible to provide infallibly against the convulsions of ages to come. There was no plan, no device, by which they could hope to prevail; and they refrained accordingly from vain scheming. They simply strove by the force of Truth and Virtue to win for themselves the approbation of God; that He, in reward for their virtuous conduct, might watch over them, as a fond mother watches over her babes, for ever. Thus, although fools were not wanting to their posterity, —fools, able to drag an empire to the dust,—still, the evil day was deferred. This was indeed foresight of a far-reaching kind.

But he who, regardless of the favour of Heaven, may hope by the light of his own petty understanding to establish that which shall endure through all time,—he shall be confounded indeed.

THE LADY CHANG.

16TH CENTURY, A.D.

[Wife of the patriot statesman Yang Chi-Shêng.]

FOR HER HUSBAND'S LIFE.

MAY it please your Majesty,

My husband was chief minister in the Cavalry Department of the Board of War. Because he advised your Majesty against the establishment of a tradal mart,* hoping to prevent Ch'ou Luan from carrying out his design, he was condemned only to a mild punishment; and then when the latter suffered defeat, he was restored to favour and to his former honours.

Thereafter, my husband was for ever seeking to make some return for the Imperial clemency. He would deprive himself of sleep. He would abstain from food. All this I saw with my own eyes. By-and-by, however, he gave ear to some idle rumour of the market-place, and the old habit came strong upon him. He lost his mental balance. He uttered wild statements, and again incurred the displeasure of the Throne. Yet he was not slain forthwith. His punishment was referred to the Board.

* At the frontier, between China and Tartary, the alleged object of which was to keep China supplied with a fine breed of Tartar horses. Ch'ou Luan was a statesmen and general in favour of the project, until complications arose and he was beaten by the Tartars in a pitched battle.

He was beaten: he was thrown into prison. Several times he nearly died. His flesh was hollowed out beneath the scourge: the sinews of his legs were severed. Blood flowed from him in bowlfuls, splashing him from head to foot. Confined day and night in a cage, he endured the utmost misery.

Then our crops failed, and daily food was wanting in our poverty-stricken home. I strove to earn money by spinning, and worked hard for the space of three years, during which period the Board twice addressed the Throne, receiving on each occasion an Imperial rescript that my husband was to await his fate in gaol. But now, I hear, your Majesty has determined that my husband shall die, in accordance with the statutes of the Empire. Die as he may, his eyes will close in peace with your Majesty, while his soul seeks the realms below.

Yet I know that your Majesty has a humane and kindly heart; and when the creeping things of the earth,—nay, the very trees and shrubs,—share in the national tranquillity, it is hard to think that your Majesty would grudge a pitying glance upon our fallen estate. And should we be fortunate enough to attract the Imperial favour to our lowly affairs, that would be joy indeed. But if my husband's crime is of too deep a dye, I humbly beg that my head may pay the penalty, and that I be permitted to die for him. Then, from the far-off land of spirits, myself brandishing spear and shield, I will lead forth an army of fierce hobgoblins to do battle in your Majesty's behalf, and thus make some return for this act of Imperial grace.

THE LADY CHANG.

16TH CENTURY A.D.

[Wife of Shên Shu.]

IN HER HUSBAND'S STEAD.

MAY it please your Majesty,

My husband was a Censor attached to the Board of Rites. For his folly in recklessly advising your Majesty, he deserved indeed a thousand deaths; yet, under the Imperial clemency, he was doomed only to await his sentence in prison.

Since then, fourteen years have passed away. His aged parents are still alive, but there are no children in his hall, and the wretched man has none on whom he can rely. I alone remain—a lodger at an inn, working day and night at my needle to provide the necessaries of life; encompassed on all sides by difficulties; to whom every day seems a year.

My father-in-law is eighty-seven years of age. He trembles on the brink of the grave. He is like a candle in the wind. I have naught wherewith to nourish him alive, or to honour him when dead. I am a lone woman. If I tend the one, I lose the other. If I

return to my father-in-law, my husband will die of starvation. If I remain to feed him, my father-in-law may die at any hour. My husband is a criminal bound in gaol. He dares give no thought to his home. Yet can it be that when all living things are rejoicing in life under the wise and generous rule of to-day, we alone should taste the cup of poverty and distress, and find ourselves beyond the pale of universal peace?

Oft, as I think of these things, the desire to die comes upon me; but I swallow my grief and live on, trusting in providence for some happy termination, some moistening with the dew of Imperial grace. And now that my father-in-law is face to face with death; now that my husband can hardly expect to live—I venture to offer this body as a hostage, to be bound in prison, while my husband returns to watch over the last hours of his father. Then, when all is over, he will resume his place and await your Majesty's pleasure. Thus, my husband will greet his father once again, and the feelings of father and child will be in some measure relieved. Thus, I shall give to my father-in-law the comfort of his son, and the duty of a wife towards her husband will be fulfilled.*

* "For every word we read," says a commentator, "we shed a tear of blood." It is at any rate satisfactory to know that the lady's husband was released.

TSUNG CH'ËN.

16TH CENTURY.

FLUNKEYISM.

I WAS very glad at this distance to receive your letter which quite set my mind at rest, together with the present you were so kind as to add. I thank you very much for your good wishes, and especially for your thoughtful allusion to my father.

As to what you are pleased to say in reference to official popularity and fitness for office, I am much obliged by your remarks. Of my unfitness I am only too well aware; while as to popularity with my superiors, I am utterly unqualified to secure that boon.

How indeed does an official find favour in the present day with his chief? Morning and evening he must whip up his horse and go dance attendance at the great man's door.* If the porter refuses to admit him, then honied words, a coaxing air, and money drawn from the sleeve, may prevail. The porter takes in his card; but the great man does not come out. So he waits in the stable among grooms, until his clothes are

* The reader of JUVENAL will no doubt be reminded of Satire III.—

“quid das, ut Cossum aliquando salutes?
Ut te respiciat clauso Veiento labello?”

charged with the smell; in spite of hunger, in spite of cold, in spite of a blazing heat. At nightfall, the porter who had pocketed his money comes forth and says his master is tired and begs to be excused, and will he call again next day. So he is forced to come once more as requested. He sits all night in his clothes. At cock-crow he jumps up, performs his toilette, and gallops off and knocks at the entrance gate. "Who's there?" shouts the porter angrily; and when he explains, the porter gets still more angry and begins to abuse him, saying, "You are in a fine hurry, you are! Do you think my master sees people at this hour?" Then is the visitor shamed, but has to swallow his wrath and try to persuade the porter to let him in. And the porter, another fee to the good, gets up and lets him in; and then he waits again in the stable as before, until perhaps the great man comes out and summons him to an audience.

Now, with many an obeisance, he cringes timidly towards the foot of the dais steps: and when the great man says "Come!" he prostrates himself twice and remains long without rising. At length he goes up to offer his present, which the great man refuses. He entreats acceptance; but in vain. He implores, with many instances; whereupon the great man bids a servant take it. Then two more prostrations, long drawn out; after which he arises, and with five or six salutations he takes his leave.

On going forth, he bows to the porter, saying, "It's all right with your master. Next time I come you need

make no delay." The porter returns the bow, well pleased with his share in the business.* Meanwhile, our friend springs on his horse, and when he meets an acquaintance flourishes his whip and cries out, "I have just been with His Excellency. He treated me very kindly, very kindly indeed." And then he goes into detail, upon which his friends begin to be more respectful to him as a *protégé* of His Excellency. The great man himself says, "So-and-so is a good fellow, a very good fellow indeed;" upon which the bystanders of course declare that they think so too.†

Such is popularity with one's superiors in the present day. Do you think that I could be as one of these? No! Beyond sending in a complimentary card at the summer and winter festivals, I do not go near the great from one year's end to another. Even when I pass their doors I stuff my ears and cover my eyes and gallop quickly past as if some one was after me. In consequence of this want of breadth, I am of course no favourite with the authorities; but what care I? There is a destiny that shapes our ends, and it has shaped mine towards the path of duty alone. For which, no doubt, you think me an ass.

* JUVENAL, Satire III.—

“præstare tributa clientes
Cogimur, et cultis augere peculia servis.”

† *Ibid.*—

“rides? majore cachinno
Concutitur: flet, si lachrymas aspexit amici,” etc.

WANG TAO-K'UN.

16TH CENTURY.

HOW TO GET ON.

A RETAINER was complaining to Pǒ Tzǔ that no one in the district knew how to get on.

"You gentlemen," said he, "are like square handles which you would thrust into the round sockets of your generation. Consequently, there is not one of you which fits."

"You speak truth," replied Pǒ Tzǔ; "kindly explain how this is so."

"There are five reasons," said the retainer, "why you are at loggerheads with the age, as follows:—

"(1) The path to popularity lies straight before you, but you will not follow it.

"(2) Other men's tongues reach the soft places in the hearts of their superiors, but your tongues are too short.

"(3) Others eschew fur robes, and approach with bent backs as if their very clothes were too heavy for them; but you remain as stiff-necked as planks.

"(4) Others respond even before they are called, and seek to anticipate the wishes of their superiors; whose enemies, were they the saints above, would not escape abuse; whose friends, were they highwaymen and thieves, would be larded over with praise. But you—you stick at facts, and express opinions adverse to

those of your superiors whom it is your special interest to conciliate.*

“(5) Others make for gain as though bent upon shooting a pheasant; watching in secret and letting fly with care, so that nothing escapes their aim. But you—you hardly bend your bow, or bend it only to miss the quarry that lies within your reach.

“One of these five failings is like a tumour hanging to you and impeding your progress in life. How much more all of them!”

“It is indeed as you state,” answered Pö Tzŭ. “But would you bid me cut these tumours away? A man may have a tumour and live. To cut it off is to die. And life with a tumour is better than death without. Besides, beauty is a natural gift; and the woman who tried to look like Hsi Shih only succeeded in frightening people out of their wits by her ugliness.† Now it is my misfortune to have these tumours, which make me more loathsome even than that woman. Still, I can always, so to speak, stick to my needle and my cooking-pots and strive to make my good man happy.‡ There is no occasion for me to proclaim my ugliness in the market-place.”

“Ah, sir,” said the retainer, “now I know why there are so many ugly people about, and so little beauty in the land.”

* Cf. the well known—“si dixeris aestuo, sudat.”

† Hsi Shih was a famous beauty who made herself even more lovely by contracting her brows.

‡ *I.e.*, do my duty.

HSÜ HSIEH.

16TH CENTURY.

ANTIQUES.

FOR some years I had possessed an old inkstand, left at my house by a friend. It came into ordinary use as such, I being unaware that it was an antique. However, one day a connoisseur told me it was at least a thousand years old, and urged me to preserve it carefully as a valuable relic. This I did, but never took any further trouble to ascertain whether such was actually the case or not. For supposing that this inkstand really dated from the period assigned, its then owner must have regarded it simply as an inkstand. He could not have known that it was destined to survive the wreck of time and come to be cherished as an antique. And while we prize it now, because it has descended to us from a distant past, we forget that then, when antiques were relics of a still earlier period, it could not have been of any value to antiquarians, themselves the moderns of what is antiquity to us!

The surging crowd around us thinks of naught but the acquisition of wealth and material enjoyment, occupied

only with the struggle for place and power. Men lift their skirts and hurry through the mire; they suffer indignity and feel no sense of shame. And if from out this mass there arises one spirit purer and simpler than the rest, striving to tread a nobler path than they, and amusing his leisure, for his own gratification, with guitars, and books, and pictures and other relics of olden times,—such a man is indeed a genuine lover of the antique. He can never be one of the common herd, though the common herd always affect to admire whatever is admittedly admirable. In the same way, persons who aim at advancement in their career, will spare no endeavour to collect the choicest rarities, in order, by such gifts, to curry favour with their superiors; who, in their turn, will take pleasure in ostentatious display of their collections of antiquities. Such is but a specious hankering after antiques, arising simply from a desire to eclipse one's neighbours. Such men are not genuine lovers of the antique. Their tastes are those of the common herd after all, though they make a great show and filch the reputation of true antiquarians, in the hope of thus distinguishing themselves from their fellows, ignorant as they are that what they secure is the name alone without the reality. The man whom I call a genuine antiquarian is he who studies the writings of the ancients, and strives to form himself upon their model though unable to greet them in the flesh; who ever and anon, in his wanderings up and down the long avenue of the past, lights upon some choice fragment which brings him in an instant face to face with the immortal dead. Of such enjoyment

there is no satiety.* Those who truly love antiquity, love, not the things, but the men of old ; since a relic in the present is much what it was in the past,—a mere thing. And so if it is not to things, but rather to men, that devotion is due, then even I may aspire to be some day an antique. Who shall say that centuries hence an antiquarian of the day may not look up to me as I have looked up to my predecessors? Should I then neglect myself, and foolishly devote my energies to trifling with things?

Such is popular enthusiasm in these matters. It is shadow without substance. But the theme is endless, and I shall therefore content myself with this passing record of my old inkstand.

* *Cf.*—

O ye who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculanean lore,
What rapture could ye seize!—
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted scroll
Of pure Simonides.

MISCELLANEOUS.

[THE proverbial philosophy of the Chinese is on a scale commensurate in every way with other branches of their voluminous literature. Most Western proverbs, maxims, household words, etc., are to be found embedded therein; sometimes expressed in strictly identical terms, at other times differing only in point of local colour. Thus the Chinese say (*e.g.*)—

One actor does not make a play.
 Out of the wolf's lair into the tiger's mouth.
 Prevention is better than cure.
 Better a living dog than a dead lion.
 As the twig is bent the tree's inclined.
 When the cat's away, the rats play.
 Better be a fowl's beak than a bullock's rump.
 It is the unexpected which always happens.
 Oxen till the fields, and rats eat the corn;
 Bees make honey, and men steal it, etc., etc.

The name of these is legion. A full collection of such proverbs and sayings would probably embrace all that is contained in Western literatures in this sense, and leave a margin to the credit of China. The specimens which are given below have been taken at random and brought together without classification. In the majority of cases, the flavour of these will, I think, be found to be peculiarly Chinese.]

DEAL with the faults of others as gently as with your own.

Three men's strength cannot prevail against Truth.

If you bow at all, bow low.

A man thinks he knows, but a woman knows better.
If Fortune smiles,—who doesn't? If Fortune doesn't,—
who does?

The host is happy when the guest has gone.

No medicine is as good as a middling doctor.

Great truths cannot penetrate rustic ears.

Better to jilt than be jilted: better to sin than to be
sinned against.

[This was a *mot* of the great and unscrupulous general, Ts'ao
Ts'ao. It is in no sense a Chinese household word.]

A bottle-nosed man may be a teetotaller, but no one
will think so.

Like climbing a tree to catch a fish [*Mencius*].

“Forbearance” is a rule of life in a word.

With money you can move the Gods; without it, you
can't move a man.

Oblige, and you will be obliged.

Armies are maintained for years, to be used on a
single day.

More trees are upright, than men.

Only imbeciles want credit for the achievements of
their ancestors.

Long visits bring short compliments.

Some study shows the need for more.

Better eighty per cent. ready money than cent. per cent. on trust.

The highest towers begin from the ground.

Medicine cures the man who is fated not to die.

If a man has money, he will find plenty who have scales.

Even the best artificial flowers have no smell.

A thousand soldiers are easier to be got than one general. A thousand prescriptions are more readily forthcoming than a single cure.

No needle is sharp at both ends.

Straight trees are felled first.

No image-maker worships the Gods. He knows what they are made of.

Half an orange tastes as sweet as a whole one.

Even the Yellow River is sometimes clear.

We love our own compositions, but other men's wives.

Don't pull up your shoe in a melon-field, nor adjust your hat under a plum-tree (*i.e.*, avoid the appearance of evil).

Free-sitters at the play always grumble most.

The cup's in the hand—seize the hour ere 'tis fled !
How seldom in life is the moon overhead.

If you suspect a man, don't employ him ; if you
employ him, don't suspect him [*Confucius*].

Something is to be learnt from every book.

Men grow old and pearls yellow. There is no cure
for age.

When a man is at peace, he is silent ; as level water
does not flow.

It is not the wine which makes a man drunk : it is
the man himself.

Whispered words are heard afar.

Ripe melons drop without plucking.

Better a dog in peace than a man in war.

The faults which a man condemns when out of office,
he commits when in.

Losing money is begotten of winning.

One needn't devour a whole chicken to know the
flavour of the bird.

There's sure to be fuel near a big tree.

Man combs his hair every morning. Why not his
heart ?

You may set with all care,—but the flow'ret will fade,
While the chance-planted willow-twigg spreads out its
shade.

One man makes a road and another walks on it.

Don't break a vase for a shy at a rat.

Every one gives a shove to the tumbling wall.

Sweep the snow from your own doorstep.

You can't chop a thing as round as you can pare it.

One jibbing horse throws out the troop.

All language is not in books, nor all thoughts in
language.

The men of old see not the moon of to-day; yet the
moon of to-day is the moon that shone on them.

He who rides a tiger, cannot dismount.

A stupid son is better than a clever daughter.

Politeness before force.

Life feeds upon adversity and sorrow. Death comes
amid pleasure and repose [*Mencius*].

If you can't draw a tiger, draw a dog.

One dog barks at something, and the rest bark at him.

You can't clap hands with one palm.

Cleanse your heart as you would cleanse a dish.

Shoes for the same foot must be worn by different people.

Draw your bow, but don't shoot.

One more good man on earth is better than an extra angel in heaven.

Don't take a pole-axe to kill a fowl [*Confucius*].

Don't make dumplings in a teapot.

Good or bad, 'tis the wine of my country.

The virtuous man is his own arbitrator :
The foolish man carries his suit into court.
Man's heart is like iron :
The law like a smelting-furnace.

In the market-place, money ; in solitude, peace.

One man spreads a false report and a hundred report it as truth.

Gold is tested by fire ; man, by gold.

The influence of good is all too little. The influence of bad is all too much.

Man dies and leaves a name. The tiger dies and leaves a skin.

Those who have not tasted the bitterest of life's bitters, can never appreciate the sweetest of life's sweets.

He who is first is prince. He who comes after is minister only.

New-born calves don't fear tigers.

Money makes a blind man see.

For every man that Heaven creates, Earth provides a grave.

Man is God upon a small scale. God is man upon a large scale.

A near neighbour is better than a distant relation.

Women share adversity better than prosperity.

The Tongue is a sharp sword which slays, though it draws no blood.

Without Error, there could be no such thing as Truth.

NOTE.—Sir E. J. Reed, in his work on Japan, quietly includes as specimens of Japanese proverbs, etc., well-known quotations from Mencius and other Chinese authors, the truth being, of course, that all the high-class literature of Japan is essentially of Chinese origin.

THE END.

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