

Correspondence.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER MENCIOUS.

Mencius is only secondary to Confucius. He is not a sage, nor a worthy, but a sub-sage, or an almost sage, according to the estimation and judgment of the Chinese of the present day.

The writer of the following brief account of Mencius will follow substantially the language and sentiments of the Rev. Dr. Legge of the London Missionary Society, located at Hong Kong, who has published an elaborate translation of the writings of this distinguished man, preceded by a studied estimate of his life, influence and opinions.

Mencius is the latinized form of Mang-tze, "the Philosopher Mang." His birth-place is situated in what was anciently the State or Principality of Yeow, but now forms a part of the Province of Shangtung, in the northern part of the Empire.

He was probably the fourth of the Emperor Looh, B. C. 371. He lived to the age of 84, dying in the year B. C. 288, the twenty-sixth of the Emperor Nan, the last sovereign of the Chow dynasty.

The first twenty-three years of his life thus synchronized with the last twenty-three of Plato's. Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, Demosthenes, and some other great men of the west were also his contemporaries.

When we place Mencius among them he can look them in the face. He does not need to hide a diminished head.

He had the misfortune to lose his father at a very early period of his life. But he was blessed with the instructions and the example of his mother, who has become a distinguished model or pattern of what a mother should be.

According to the Chinese, "The Mother of Mencius" is a kind of proverbial expression, indicating her extraordinary excellence.

She thrice changed her residence on his account. At first, they lived near a cemetery, and Mencius amused himself with acting the various scenes which he witnessed at the tombs.

"This," said the lady, "is no place for my son," and she removed to a house in the market-place, but the change was no improvement. The boy took to playing the part of a salesman, vaunting his wares and chaffing with customers.

His mother sought a new house, and found one at last close by a public school. There the child's attention was taken with the various exercises of politeness which the scholars were taught, and he endeavored to imitate them.

The mother was satisfied. "This," she said, "is the proper place for my son." As Mencius grew up he was sent to school. When he returned home one day, his mother looked up from the web which she was mending, and asked him how far he had got on.

He answered her with a look of indifference, that she was doing well enough, on which she took a knife and cut through her web. The idler was alarmed, and asked what she meant, when she gave him a long lecture, showing that she had done what he was doing—that her cutting through her web was like his neglecting his studies.

The admonition, it is said, had its proper effect; the lecture did not need to be repeated. Such are some of the accounts found relating to the mother of Mencius. Possibly some of them are inventions, but they are devoutly believed by the people of China; and it must be to their profit: We may well believe that she was a woman of very superior character, and that her son's subsequent distinction was in a great degree owing to her influence and training.

the term. One instance of this will be given: "When Kang of Tang made his appearance in your school," said the disciple Kung-too, "it seemed proper that a polite consideration should be paid to him, and yet you did not answer him; why was that?" Mencius replied, "I do not answer him who questions me presuming on his ability, nor him who presumes on his talents, nor him who presumes on his age, nor him who presumes on services performed to me, nor him who presumes on old acquaintance. Two of these things are chargeable on Kang of Tang."

The state of China had waxed worse and worse during the interval that elapsed between Confucius and Mencius. The vicissitudes of disorganization which were rife in the times of the earlier sages had gone on to produce their natural results. One feeble sovereign had followed another on the imperial throne, and the dynasty of Chow was ready to vanish away.

Men were persuaded of its approaching extinction. The feeling of loyalty to it was no longer a cherished sentiment, and the anxiety and expectation was about what new rule would take its place. The princes were at constant warfare with one another.

Ambitious statesmen were continually inflaming these quarrels. The recluses of Confucius' day, who withdrew in disgust from the world and its turmoil, had given place to a class of men who came forth from their retirement provided with the arts of war or schemes of policy which they recommended to the contending chiefs.

They made no scruple of changing their religion as they were moved by whim or interest. It is not wonderful that in such times the minds of men should have doubted the soundness of the ancient principles of the acknowledged sages of the nation. Doctrines, strange and portentous in the view of Mencius, were openly professed. The authority of Confucius was disowned. The foundations of government were overthrown; the foundations of truth were assailed.

Mencius set his face sternly against these disorders and their innovations on the practices and the sentiments of the ancient sages. He spent twenty odd years in visiting the kings and princes of various States and Kingdoms, usually or frequently on invitation, in the hope of influencing them to rule according to the principles of righteousness.

When he found his instructions not followed, even though he himself was treated very respectfully, he invariably departed from that kingdom to another. When he was between sixty and seventy years old he retired from courts and great officers. We can but think and conjecture of him, according to tradition, passing the last twenty years of his life amid the more congenial society of his disciples, discoursing to them and compiling the works which have remained as his memorial to the present day.

Among the states or principalities he visited in the hope of influencing the rulers to better principles of government, may be mentioned Lee, Tang, Sung, Wei and Loo. One of his favorite pupils was called to assist in the councils of the kingdom of Loo. When Mencius heard of it he was so overjoyed that he could not sleep.

Mencius declared him to be "a good man" and "a real man." He allows that he was "not a man of vigor," nor "a wise man in council," nor "a man of much information," but he says he was "a man that loved what was good," and "the love of what is good is more than a sufficient qualification for the government of the Empire; how much more is it so for the State of Loo." While he was in Tze his excellent mother, who had accompanied him thither, died. He carried her coffin to Loo; to bury her near the dust of his father and ancestors. The funeral was a splendid one. Mencius perhaps erred in having it so from his dislike of the Nihilists, who advocated a spare simplicity in all funeral matters.

His arrangements certainly excited the astonishment of some of his own disciples, and was the occasion of general remark. He defended himself on the ground that "the superior man will not for all the world be niggardly to his parents," and that as he had the means there was no reason why he should not give all the expression in his power to his natural feelings. What he did was in harmony with his own teachings, and the ancient rites only on an extravagant scale. Having paid this last tribute of filial piety to his mother, Mencius returned to Tze, but he could not appear at court till the three years of his mourning was accomplished according to the ancient rules.

We must believe that he left a family, for his descendants form a large clan at the present day. He-wan, the 56th in descent from Mencius, was in the reign of Kea-ting (A. D. 1522-86) constituted a member of the Han-lin College, and of the board in charge of the 5 Classics, which honor was to be hereditary in his family, and the holder of it to preside at the sacrifices to his ancestor.

China's appreciation of our philosopher could not be more strikingly shown. Honors usually flow back in this Empire. The descendant ennobles his ancestors. But in the case of Mencius as in that of Confucius, this order is reversed. No excellence of descendants can extend to them, and the nation acknowledges its obligations to them by nobility and distinction conferred through all generations upon their posterity. An estimate of the influence and the opinions of Mencius, is a subject worthy of another letter.

FUR CHAU, November, 1863.

THE GREAT CENTRAL FAIR.

CAN CHRISTIANS CONSISTENTLY CO-OPERATE IN IT?

The question here asked is one which to my mind at least, is pressing itself upon the attention of every Christian in the States called to unite, and one on which I believe thousands of God's people are seeking light.

It is not even assumed by any one but that the object principally in view—that of affording relief to the physical wants of our brave and suffering soldiers—is a noble one, an object for which every laudable effort should be made and sacrifices of a high kind endured. But good and holy as it is, must it be that burlesques on divine institutions, such as mock marriages and gambling are to be resorted to in order to accomplish even this?

I will not allow myself to be understood by any one as inimical in any way to the Sanitary Commission in the prosecution of its grand object, while I am willing to have all men know that I am wholly in opposition to some of the means employed in connection with the great fair throughout the country to accomplish the end proposed.

What good Christian in our land has not shuddered for the religion of Christ as he has read of the manner in which these fairs have generally been conducted, and chiefly because ministers of the gospel and leading laymen in the membership of the church are prominent on the committees in the conduct of them, and it is taken for granted they endorse the methods employed to raise money.

Must we do evil that good may come? Have all honorable means failed to fill waning treasuries? Are we obliged to resort to dishonest and dishonorable measures to accomplish a good object? Is the child of God called upon from his deep sympathies with the noble heroes of our land, and in order to relieve their sufferings, to do injury to his conscience before God and man? If the men of the world out-number, and in any cause, however good, thus control the action, will the people of God be led into, and quietly submit to do wrong? Is there no other channel through which the benefactions of the Christians of our land may reach the soldiers, conducted on strictly Christian principles?

In our own good city of Philadelphia another is about being added to the series of fairs that have been held in other cities. Are we in Philadelphia to follow in the wake of our predecessors? Is raffling to be a part of the programme? If so, will the Christian ministers and God-fearing men and pious women of our city co-operate and sanction it?

I have heard it already announced in a public meeting that an opera troupe will perform in connection with the fair for its benefit; and in the public prints of the city, in one of the most exhaustive appeals presented in the names of the officers of the committee on labor, &c, a call is made upon "every individual within the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, in any way earning a livelihood, to contribute one day's earnings."

Now I shall be very sorry, for one, for the reputation of our city, apart from its Christianity, when we stand at the door of the theatre, the dance-house, and the tavern, and ask their earnings and stand upon a level with them, in such a work as the religion of Jesus teaches, and exemplifies in its highest form.

As if designed to be a corrective of all these abuses, and meeting the same grand object, and much more at the same time, looking upon man as having a soul as well as a body, and doing the work not only in a much more economical but in a much more effective way. Has not God given to the country the Christian Commission? and has not His blessing rested on it?

In doing the same, and at the same time, a much higher and holier work, can the Christians of our land hesitate for a moment through which channel their benefactions, at least, shall flow?

In the name of our common Christianity, I protest against the means employed by the Sanitary Commission, as above referred to, in these fairs, for the securing of money, and I repeat the question, can Christians consistently co-operate in these fairs? M.

TWO MISSIONARY BOXES.

The following letters tell their own story and carry their own moral with them:

FEBRUARY 10, 1864.

To the Ladies' Sewing Circle of the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

KIND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:—Yesterday was a gladsome day in our family circle; and it was made so by your thoughtful, generous ministrations. Despite the winter's cloud and cold without we had a large experience of the "Sunny side" of Missionary life; and all this was brought to our sight and hearts on the opening of the box of good things from the city of benevolence and love. The day before I brought the box home from the railway station—8 miles distant—and such a box! So plentio, yet well-proportioned, as to require a two-horse team to convey it to its destination. In examining its contents we had an agreeable surprise party; the friendly gifts exchanging looks with us from every quarter of the room; only the donors were not present to witness the almost magical soothing and melting effect of these tokens and substantial proofs of Christian charity. We thank you, kind friends, for so ample a store of useful articles. Not one thing of all the treasures but what will do us service: from the dolls and marbles, &c, for the recreation of the little ones, to the books and papers for the reading of all. When winter was approaching, I could not see how we were to get comfortably through for clothing, &c, but I was willing to trust a gracious Father, and He has sent us, through your willing service, a large

supply for our wardrobe. For months to come will these articles of dress serve to clothe our bodies, and we hope to be thankful to God and you so long as a single thread of these things remains to speak through the eye to the heart. And while we gladly wonder at the sacrifice of time, influence and means on your part, to furnish so many useful things, we are grateful because without your aid we should have been destitute of many useful things, and also because you have alleviated, by many and many a stitch and hour of toil, the labors of my wife. The shoes, hoods and garments for the children—are all neat and timely. The clothing for myself and wife benefit the mind as well as the body; and in the fancy and furnishing goods, it seems as though the whole contents of a thread and needle store had been poured into our laps; and although cotton is no longer King, yet from the profusion of it sent us, in pieces made and unmade, we are persuaded that Christian charity is potential, and that cotton and all things earthly are at its disposal, for the service of Christ.

Myself and wife and children thank you for your generous aid, and we only wish that every needy missionary household might find relief so providential, and that every benevolent society may have the rich spiritual blessing that springs from a consciousness of doing good. May the Lord reward you, in your families and Church, with an increase of grace on earth and an overflowingfulness of glory hereafter. Yours in the Gospel.

P. S. During the high price of tea and sugar, we had been doing without them for some time, and were expecting thus to get along until the war, with its reign of high prices, is over. We pray for the end of war and its desolations, and feel in duty bound to stand by the Government in its painful and righteous duty. Our tea is now doubly sweet from the thought of its procurement.

March 11th, 1864.

VERY KIND FRIENDS:—Your most welcome gift was received by us day before yesterday, the 9th, having been nineteen days on the way. But we assure you that all our anxious waiting during that time was compensated when we were permitted to look within the box, and take from its sacred trust, one by one, the treasures it brought us. It had been a household word, and now that it had arrived all necessary labor was speedily finished up, not an article being removed (the cover already being off) until all were ready to see; then came the unpacking. Could you have witnessed the scene and beheld the delight depicted in each, I think it might have proved some slight compensation to you all for your labor and kindness. But the sensation of the hour was the discovery of the beautiful dolls. The largest one presented itself first, and was received with wild delight by its declared owner, Emma, who being eight years old and the senior of the juveniles, laid claim to it, to be sure, and we all gave way and admitted the claim. Those dress patterns were very fine, while piles of linen declared the generosity of the donors. Those Swiss blankets are very highly prized. That variety box was just in place. But words are not adequate to the gratitude we would express. Everything is acceptable. May God bless you a thousand fold, and keep you to the life above. I paid freight on the box on both roads. The amount was \$2 46; so you see there was some left of the \$5 you sent for this purpose. Yours very truly in Christ.

S. HODGES CRITTENDEN.

Departed this life on Thursday, the 10th inst., after a severe and protracted illness. S. Hodges Crittenden, Esq., Principal of the Commercial College which bears his name, in this city.

At the early age of 12 years, Mr. Crittenden assumed the sacred responsibilities of the Christian profession by uniting with the Church, and he continued the active and consistent discharge of its duties for the remainder of his life. He was deeply interested in every department of Christian benevolence and instruction. As Superintendent and Teacher he devoted himself with great zeal and success to the Sabbath School and Missionary work. In all the relations of home and society his daily life and character commanded an unusual degree of confidence, affection and esteem. But the great and peculiar mission which the Master gave him to fulfil for the last four years of his life, was one of suffering. Worn out by slow degrees; exhausted by pain and want of rest; feeling the sensitive threads of life cut away one by one, and yet tantalized from time to time by an appearance of amendment and the promise of recovery; occasionally sinking in deep waters, and then lifted up by a strong and restoring hand, though always left a little lower than before; doomed to be a spectacle of woe, a living embodiment of affliction, waiting for release from the body of this death, it was his great and sacred mission to preach Christ through it all, by exhibiting a patience that silences complaint, and a faith that conquers agony to the end. While many mourn the loss of so excellent a brother, they cannot but rejoice that he received grace to complete his course so well, and that his tried and troubled spirit, out of great tribulation, has entered into rest. The faith of many has been strengthened by the testimony which he bore to the saving power of the truth as it is in Jesus, when he could no longer speak the beloved name with the utterance of the tongue.

THERE are four different ways by which men expect and propose to be saved. One is fate; another is chance; a third is self; the fourth is Christ.—Nehemiah Adams.

NEAR brings out stars, as sorrow shows his truths.

Miscellaneous.

TUNNEL UNDER MONT CENIS.

To connect the railway system of Italy with those of France and Europe generally, it is necessary in some way to surmount the great obstacle presented by the Alps. The Italian government is distinguishing itself by the unparalleled engineering exploit of successfully undertaking this grand enterprise. A tunnel was commenced under the ministry of the great and lamented Cavour, by which the Alps are to be pierced in the direction of France, and an underground passage, between seven and eight miles long, will be hewn through the heart of the mountains. In carrying out this novel enterprise, a new power has been brought into extensive use, that of compressed air. We give an account of the mode in which this agent is employed, taken from the late number of the Westminister Review.

Nothing can be more curious than the account M. Sommeiller gives of the manner in which the works proceed. The section of the tunnel which the machines are employed to excavate is about eleven feet wide and eight high; a double rail runs along the centre, upon which a framework upon wheels is rolled forward, carrying the ten perforators; of which nine are usually kept at work at once, close up to the face of the rock. Once there, the distributing pipes for air and water which are fixed on the frame are put in connection with the main tubes, carried along under the floor of the tunnel from the machine-house outside by means of flexible pipes, and each perforator is then supplied with air and water by turning the cocks belonging to it in the distributing pipes. Pressed forward by the compressed air, the augers then strike the rock, which they pierce very much as a gimlet bores a plank, only that by a special contrivance they recede after each blow, that a jet of water may be impelled into the hole being bored, in order to clear it of dust, and to keep the auger itself cool.

This retrograde motion is produced in a manner very similar to that in which the same movement is given to the piston of a steam-engine. In the perforating-machine the auger is fixed to the end of a piston moving backwards and forwards in a cylinder. Compressed air enters this cylinder at both ends; but as it is contrived that the front surface of the piston (the one towards the rock) upon which it presses should have only half the size of the other end, it follows that an equal pressure of six atmospheres, the pressure received from behind is twice as potent as that in the contrary direction, and the auger strikes the rock, although less violently than if there were no compressed air in front of the piston to resist its forward motion. However, this relative proportion of the strength of pressure is reversed. The valve by which the compressed air enters the portion of the cylinder behind the piston closes; and another communicating with the outer atmosphere, opens. This escape being afforded, the forward pressure is immediately reduced to the strength of one atmosphere, which is of course overcome, and the piston recedes, while the compressed air which has just escaped resumes its primitive volume, and thus fulfils its second purpose, by driving out the mephitic air, which naturally collects in so small a space with no draught through it, and supplies the workmen with fresh air to breathe. The augers of the perforating-machines continue their work until eighty holes have been bored, each from twenty-seven to thirty-two inches in depth, an operation often accomplished within six hours, though in the beginning especially, it took a good deal more—ten, or occasionally even fourteen hours. The connection with the main pipes is then cut off, and the whole framework, with all its apparatus, is rolled away by the workmen to a distance of a hundred and fifty to two hundred yards, behind great gates made of thick planks and beams, called "safety-doors." A fresh gang of workmen, the miners, then appear on the scene, whose duty it is to load the mines thus prepared, and then to fire them. No sooner have the mines been exploded than in the centre, where they are closer together, first, then the ones on the circumference, than a burst of compressed air is admitted into the farthest end of the tunnel, to clear it from smoke and the gases produced by the explosion, and a third set of workmen arrive, with a number of little trucks running upon side rails laid for this special service, in which they cart away the fragments of rock brought down by the explosion. In this way about a yard of progress is generally attained.

When this system was first proposed there were innumerable objections urged against it in the scientific world. It was declared impossible to construct recipients strong enough to hold a supply of compressed air, which was thought capable of bursting the vessel in which it was enclosed, and perhaps even of oozing out through the pores of the cast-iron plates of which it was made. The practicability of conveying compressed air to any distance through pipes, without a loss of tension rendering it utterly useless was even more strongly and generally insisted on. Fortunately, the experience acquired at Bardonneche affords a full refutation of these unfavorable predictions; for we learn that not only is there no escape of air from any part of the machinery or pipes, sufficient to stir the flame of a taper, but experiment shows that the loss of tension liable to be incurred in the transport of compressed air would not equal one-tenth of an atmosphere in any distance less than 25,000 metres, or nearly four times that which it can be required to traverse for the works under Mont Cenis! Another fear also expressed by the opponents of the tunnel

was, that from want of shafts the workmen employed must necessarily be suffocated; it is, however, found that though the temperature is somewhat higher, it is as easy to breathe at the further end of the tunnel as on the hillside itself, since a quantity of compressed air is daily impelled into the small section seven feet in diameter, and this cubic capacity, and this rush of compressed air not only renews the atmosphere, but also tends to moderate the heat generated by the presence of a large number of workmen in a small space, in which a number of gas-flights are perpetually burning; for it has been demonstrated by experience, that when air is compressed it loses a portion of its natural caloric, whence it follows, that when it resumes its primitive volume on being allowed to escape, it is ready to absorb an amount of heat equal to that which it had previously emitted. From what we have already said, our readers will readily perceive that there need be no fear of the workmen being suffocated; nevertheless, the directing engineers proposed at least to double the supply of compressed air before the end of 1863.

DR. ROSS AT HUNTSVILLE, ALA.

Rev. F. A. Ross, D. D., formerly of Chattanooga, Tenn., is well known to our readers as one of the most extreme of the pro-slavery interpreters of Scripture in the South. His home is now within the lines of the National army, but from the following which we find in a recent number of the Congregationalist, we judge he has chosen to remain, and has, of course, taken the usual obligations prescribed by military authority. The sermon described in this extract was preached February 7th, in Huntsville, Ala., a place then, as now, in the hands of our army.

Dr. Ross's large and fine church was filled to overflowing, about one-half of the congregation being the first families. The other half were soldiers, for the most part occupying the side seats. He, a portly man of sixty years, with gray standing hair, and short gray beard, was playing as we entered. He used short, dry sentences, with reverent manner, covering the usual objects of public prayer, with marked and habitual exception of national affairs. His text was from Luke: "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." Dr. Ross is equal to any audience, or occasion. In the commonplace, familiar, conversational way, he showed that the Lord liked Peter, a rough, honest, swearing, but strong-minded fisherman. There was some kind of affinity of tastes. In order to any intimacy, it is a necessity that there be corresponding sympathies, culture, or habits. "How can two persons walk together unless they are agreed?" Jesus liked and chose three of his disciples as companions. He saved more, and in order that he might have the testimony of an enemy, he made use even of Judas. Dr. Ross's peculiar views upon society were quite apparent. He proceeded to say that Peter was a timid man. He was afraid of a girl. He denied that he knew the man. Here the Doctor illustrated the vehemence of Peter's denial, and became quite impassioned. Though not recorded, yet he did not hesitate to give the very oaths of Peter, equally as profane and blasphemous as any of modern date. Strange that in God's house, and before Southern chivalry and the army it should be thought necessary to give illustrations in swearing!

Peter was timid; he was afraid to die a martyr. This was sheer folly. Why, a man who was hung, or shot, or beheaded, or who was drowned, or who died by any sudden cause, suffered less pain than fifteen minutes of tic douloureux or inflammatory rheumatism. Peter should have shown more of the courage of a man. Whether this picture of Peter's fall will have the effect to make the preacher and his Southern hearers less regardful of worldly comforts, and more ready to expose themselves to danger of sudden death, remains to be seen. But Peter was very guilty. As he stood at the far end of the Hall, the Lord turned and looked upon him. The evident satisfaction with which this was illustrated, during a solemn pause of some minutes, might suggest to some minds the fact that there is but a step between the sublime and the ridiculous. But the crowning impudence of the sermon was in the application. Peter wept, he ought to weep. All who deny the Lord, professing Christians who come in the army and have forgotten their vows and the Sabbath, chaplains who have learned to drink, soldiers who are seen going toward low houses of license, these should all weep. Yes, even in little things we may deny the Lord. Dr. Ross again illustrated that a child with closed eyes, so that no one, not even itself should see, and on tiptoe, with pinching fingers, could reach and take a lump of sugar; and so deny the Lord. He ended the examples: "May such have grace to repent as did Peter."

No allusion was made to those who make broad their phylacteries, yet bind heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and will not move them with one of their fingers; nor those who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; nor those who make clean the outside of the cup, but within are full of extortion and excess. Of course not. Why should it be expected? If Dr. Ross and the four other pastors of this place are deliberately opposed to every effort to instruct and elevate the negro—if they simply will not pray for the President and our government—if the wife of a distinguished rebel officer has just been lashing a servant girl, (thank God, no longer a slave) for the offense of coming to our Sunday school—does the thin varnish of an oath make them anything else than pro-slavery rebels at heart? What called upon to fall down before such eminent ability and piety, I must pray to be excused. W. C. S.