

Correspondence.

LETTER FROM CHINA.

MENCIUS' DOCTRINE OF HUMAN NATURE.

But the question arises, "Is the view of Human Nature propounded by Mencius correct?" As far as yet appears, the translator sees not how the question can be answered otherwise than in the affirmative. Man was formed for virtue. Be it that his conduct is very far from being conformed to virtue, that simply fastens on him the shame and guilt. Man, heathen man, a Gentile without the law is still not without the law unto himself. The proper use of Mencius' principles is to reprove the Chinese, and ourselves as well, of the thousand acts of sin of which they and we are guilty, that come within their sweep and their condemnation.

From the ideal to the actual of man, there is a vast descent. Between what he ought to be and what he is, the contrast is melancholy. "Benevolence," said our philosopher, "is the characteristic of man." It is the "wide house in which the world should dwell," while "propriety" is "the correct position in which the world should ever be found," and "righteousness" is "the great path which men should ever be pursuing." In opposition to this, however, hatred, improprieties and unrighteousness are constant phenomena of human life. Mencius is ready enough to admit the fact that men in general do evil and violate the law of their nature. They sacrifice the noble part of themselves for the gratification of the ignoble; they follow that part which is little and not that part which is great. He can say nothing further in explanation of the fact, except that he points out the effect of injurious circumstances, and the power of evil example.

To the principle implied in the sentence "Losing the proper nature of one's mind," Mencius most pertinaciously adheres. He will not allow that original badness can be predicated of human nature from any amount of actual wickedness. "The trees," said he, "of the New Mountain, were once beautiful. Being situated, however, in the borders of a large state, they were hewn down with axes and bills; and could they retain their beauty? Still, through the activity of the vegetative life day and night, and the nourishing influence of the rain and dew, they were not without buds and sprouts springing forth: but then came the cattle and goats and browsed upon them. To these things is owing the bare and stripped appearance of the mountain, which, when people see, they think it was never finely wooded. But is this the proper nature of the mountain? And so also of what properly belongs to man; shall it be said that the mind of any man was without benevolence and righteousness? The way in which a man loses his proper goodness of mind is like the way in which the trees are denuded by axes and bills. Hewn down day after day, can the mind retain its beauty? The nature becomes not much different from that of the irrational animals, which, when people see, they think it never had those powers which I assert. But does this condition represent the feelings proper to humanity?"

Up to this point the translator fails to perceive anything in Mencius' views of human nature that is contrary to the teachings of our Christian Scriptures and that may not be employed with advantage by the missionary in his preaching to the Chinese. It is far from covering what we know to be the whole duty of man, yet it is defective rather than erroneous.

According to Mencius, the sages were actually perfect, and perfection is possible to all men. The actual realization of his views he found in the sages, and he contended it was within the reach of every individual. "All things which are the same in kind," he says, "are like one another; why should we doubt in regard to man as if he were a solitary exception to this? The sage and we are the same in kind." The feet, the mouths, the eyes of the sage were not different from those of other men, neither were their minds.

Among the sages, however, Mencius made a distinction. Yaou and Shun exceeded all the rest, unless it might be Confucius. Those three never came short of and never went beyond the law of their nature. The ideal and the actual were in them always one and the same. The others had only attained to perfection by vigorous effort and culture. "Yaou and Shun were what they were by nature; Tang and Woo were so by returning to natural virtue." The actual result was, however, the same, and therefore he could hold them up as models to his countrymen of the style of man that they all ought to be and might be. What the compass and the square were in the hands of the

workman, enabling him to form perfect circles and squares, that the sages, "perfectly exhibiting the human relations," might be to every earnest individual, enabling him to perfect himself as they were perfect.

Here we feel that the doctrine of Mencius wants an element which Revelation supplies. He knows nothing of the fact that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, because all sinned." We have our ideal as well as he; but for the living reality we must go back to Adam, as he was made by God in His own image, after His likeness. In him the model is soon shattered, and we do not discover it again, till God's own Son appeared in the world, made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet without sin.

When Mencius points to Yaou, Shun and Confucius, and says they were perfect and all men may become perfect, we cannot accept his statement. Understanding that he is speaking of them only in the sphere of human relations, we must yet believe that in many things they come short. One of the three, the greatest of them in Mencius' estimation, Confucius, again and again confesses so of himself. He says he was seventy years old before he could follow what his heart desired, without transgressing what was right. The image of sagely perfection is broken by what is implied in this admission and confession. It proves it to be but a brilliant and unsubstantial phantom of our philosopher's own imagining. When he insists again, that every individual may become what he fancies the sages were, i. e., perfect, living in love, walking in righteousness, obedient of propriety, approving whatever is good and disapproving whatever is evil; he is pushing his doctrine beyond its proper limit. It supplies a law of conduct, but law only gives the knowledge of what we are required to do; it does not give the power to do it.

Mencius is not to be blamed for his ignorance of what is to us the Doctrine of the Fall. He had no means of becoming acquainted with it. We have to regret, however, that his study of human nature produced in him no deep feelings on account of men's proneness to go astray. He is greatly lacking in humility and in sympathy with human error. He never betrays any consciousness of his own weakness. Confucius acknowledged that he came short of what he knew he ought to have been. We do not meet with this in Mencius. His merit is that of the speculative thinker. His glance is searching, and his penetration deep; but there is wanting that moral sensibility which would draw him to us in our best moments, as a man of like passions with us. The absence of humility is naturally accompanied with a lack of sympathy. There is a hardness about his teachings. He is the professor in the class room, amid a throng of pupils who are admiring his science and his dexterity. He forgets, in the triumph of his skill, the suffering of the patient. The transgressors of their nature are to Mencius the "tyrants of themselves" or the "self-abandoned." The utmost stretch of his commiseration is a contemptuous "Alas for them!" The radical defect of the orthodox moral school of China,—that there only needs a knowledge of duty to insure its performance,—is in him exceedingly apparent. Confucius and Mencius, and others, most strangely never thought to have called this principle in question. It is always as in the formulary of Tszsze, a very eminent Chinese worthy: "Given the sincerity, and there shall be the intelligence; given the intelligence, and there shall be the sincerity."

We have said that Mencius' doctrine of human nature was defective, inasmuch as his ideal does not cover the whole field of duty. He says very little of what we owe to God. There is no glow of natural piety in his pages. Never once when he is treating of the nature of man does he make mention of any exercise of the mind as due directly to God. The services of religion come, in China, under the principle of propriety, and are a cold formalism; but even other things come with Mencius before them. We are told:—"The richest fruit of love is this—the serving of one's parents; the richest fruit of righteousness is this—the obeying one's elder brothers; the richest fruit of wisdom is this—the knowing those two things and not departing from them; the richest fruit of propriety is this—the ordering and adorning those two things." How different all this, from the reiterated declaration of the Scriptures that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!" The first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength," was never thought of, much less delivered by any Chinese philosopher or sage. Had Mencius apprehended this, and seen how all our duties

to our fellow men are to be performed as to God, he could not have thought so highly as he did of man's powers; a suspicion might have grown up that there is a shadow on the light he has in himself.

This absence of the recognition of man's highest obligations from Mencius' ideal of our nature, is itself a striking illustration of man's estrangement from God. His teaching has prepared the way for the grosser conceptions of the modern literati, who would often seem to deny the Divine Personality altogether, and substitute for both God and Heaven a mere principle of order or fitness of things. It has done more: it has left the people in the mass to become an easy prey to the idolatrous fooleries of Buddhism. Yea, the unrighteousness of the teachers has helped to deprave still more the religion of the nation, such as it is, and make its services a miserable pageant of irrelevant forms.

It is time to have done with the subject. It may be thought by some that more than justice has been done to Mencius in the first part of this discussion, and less than justice at the last, but the translator hopes that it is not so. A very important use is to be made both of what he succeeds in, and where he fails, in his discoursing on human nature. His principles may be, and it is conceived ought to be, turned against himself. They should be pressed to produce the conviction of sin. There is enough in them, if the conscience be but quickened by the Spirit of God, to make the haughtiest scholar cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Then may it be said to him with effect, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world!" Then may Christ as a new and true exemplar of all that man should be, be displayed "altogether lovely" to the trembling mind.

One thing should be plain. In Mencius' lessons on human duty, there is no hope for his countrymen. If they serve as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, they will have done their part; but it is from Christ alone that the help of the Chinese can come.

LETTER FROM INDIA.

MY DEAR BROTHER MEARS:—Your valuable paper comes to us with great regularity, always welcome as a representative of dear old Philadelphia, and bringing us tidings from many dear friends still "linked in pleasant memories."

But what a grand improvement you have made with the new year—enlisting the choice energies of more heads and hearts, and sending us a double portion of your richer fare. We feel like sending you a new vote of thanks. May the American Presbyterian live a thousand years. Surely it should henceforth become the favorite and special organ of "our church."

MISSION CHURCHES IN HEATHEN LANDS.

And so our good friends of the N. Y. Evangelist consent to limit our Presbyterian polity to Christendom. Are we to understand they like it so well they wish to keep it all to themselves; not allowing us in heathendom to share its blessings? Or do they think it so poor a commodity as not to be worth transportation?

Doubtless this subject is to elicit more thought, if not discussion, among our intelligent patrons; and though I had in mind only the briefest allusion to it, let me suggest, in addition, two or three thoughts.

1. We must teach some church order and polity to our Mission Churches. If our churches are not Presbyterianial they will be something else.

2. If there is nothing in our Presbyterian principles worth propagating, why not call them a failure; abandon them wherever they exist and adopt better?

3. The idea that Presbyterianism is not adapted to our Mission Churches is a fallacy. Its good order, safety-valves and conservative power are all more needed here than there.

OUR VICEROY.

You learned who was to be our Governor-General before we did. Sir John Lawrence's appointment is most welcome to all Europeans in India, except a very few of a peculiar class, who regret that he is not "a Lord," not one of "our nobility." His long Indian experience, business habits, sterling qualities and Christian character give promise of an administration highly efficient to India. But he will exhibit special moral courage if he varies at all from the course of his predecessors, on religious questions. O that our statesmen would act on the belief that "India has been given to England for the good of her people and the glory of God."

SIR MORDAUNT WELLS.

You will remember this Calcutta

Judge who last year perverted justice by thrusting back a young Hindu convert into the power of his heathen friends; taking occasion, at the trial, to abuse missionaries in general, and the venerable Dr. Duff in particular. He has just visited Bombay en route to England; and in a foolish selflaudatory speech he gave occasion for the press of India to visit him with a fresh infliction, all the more severe for being so foolishly provoked, and so unquestionably merited. The Madras News says:

"It is a melancholy thing to see a man, who has done hard and honorable service, digging the grave of his own reputation, and proving out of his own lips that whatever may be his industry and integrity, whatever may be his ability and learning, he is unfit for any position which requires common sense."

This is a mere echo of the severer utterances from all parts of India; and we trust it gives promise of more righteous decisions hereafter in our higher courts.

HINDU REFORM.

The reform party at Calcutta, connected with a society known as the Brahma Somaj, have recently sent their Secretary Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen, as their representative to visit the educated young Hindus of Bombay. The Baboo has just given a lecture to a large audience in the Town Hall, and both English and vernacular reports of it go to show that genuine elements of reform are vigorously at work in the native mind. The Baboo appears as no advocate of Christianity, but certainly the principles he maintains are always found in close connection with the Gospel. He advocates female education, and the re-marriage of Hindu widows, condemns child-marriages, and discards all idolatry and the whole system of Hindu caste. He is said to exhibit much ability and some eloquence, and thoroughly to have aroused the young men of Bombay. We rejoice in all such agitation, and have absolute confidence in the divinity and ultimate supremacy of God's truth.

DEATH OF LITTLE PRAMA.

The Sabbath schools who feel a kind interest in these dear children will share in our sorrow at the death of one of them—the first taken from our "little flock." She was a dear little girl, the child of our native Helper, and he some eighty miles away, preaching and distributing tracts and portions of Scripture in the villages when she died. It will be a heavy blow to him, poor man; and indeed makes all our hearts very sad. We know not how to spare any one from our little band of believers and their baptized children. Her poor mother is full of grief; but her Christian submission, hope and trust in God shine out sweetly amidst her sorrow; giving new evidence of the blessed change God's grace effects in these Hindu hearts. We hope dear friends will often pray for these native converts who have believed through our word.

In the service of the Gospel, yours sincerely, R. G. WILDER. KOLAPOOR, April 9th, 1864.

P. S. It is with feelings of sorrow I know not how to describe that I open my letter to tell you of the murder of our beloved brother Janv-er. How strange a providence that one whose whole life and bearing was so full of meekness, and the sweet graces of the gospel should become a victim of such cruel revenge!

I send you brief details in the enclosed extract from the "Times of India," all we yet know of the sad event.

My heart grieves with no common grief. My acquaintance with this dear brother originated in America, in your precious noon-day prayer meeting; and since returning to this land, though separated by almost the whole length of India, his occasional letters have breathed a living interest in our common work, with a spirit of sympathy and Christian affection which bound my heart to him still more closely. Alas! that he has thus fallen! But in God's economy his death shall not be in vain. Dying we live—victory is ever by the Cross.

MURDER OF A MISSIONARY IN THE PUNJAB.

Lahore, 28th March, 1864.—We publish with deep sorrow the sad details of the murder of the Rev. Levi Janvier, at Anundpoor, in the Hosiarpur district.

The Holi festival commenced on the 21st and ended on the 26th instant at Anundpoor. This place was visited on the occasion of the above festival by the Rev. Mr. Janvier, with his wife and child. The unfortunate Missionary was passing from one tent of his to the other about 3 or 9 P. M., of the 24th, when two blows were dealt him on the side of the head by an Akalee Sikh named Bhag Singh, who instantly made off, but was apprehended a short distance away by some of the converts. When caught, the Nihang said he had done the deed to avenge himself for certain supposed insults he had received from the English. He related how he had been dismissed from Government employ on one occasion, and on departing had received 30 stripes; how on a second he had not been paid what was due to him for his services; and on a third (and this seems to have been the crowning point of his

grievances), how he had been one day struck with a whip by an Officer in the streets of Sajibpoor, near Patna, because he had not saluted that Officer. The Wah Gooagroo, i. e. Govind Singh, he said, prompted him, probably in a dream, to take vengeance on any European on the first opportunity that offered. The victim was the unoffending Missionary, a man whose name has been associated for so many years with the Lodiana Mission, and whose loss will be no less felt by that body than by his family and friends. The reverend gentleman died at a quarter to six on the morning of the 25th, having remained insensible from the time he was struck.

The blows were not given during the excitement of religious controversy (the deceased had never even spoken to the murderer), but in the cold-blooded spirit of revenge; the Missionary died, not a martyr to the faith which he taught, but a victim to the sullen rage of an Akalee fanatic. There was but one general feeling in Anundpoor, and it was a desire to cut in pieces Bhag Singh. Harichly deserved to have been hanged on the spot without a trial, and though the Government would probably not have approved of such a summary proceeding, yet public opinion would not have been against it. In a case like this, the punishment should be sharp and severe.

MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

ANOTHER SCRAP FROM ANCIENT HISTORY.

Much of the history of the Church in the first four or five centuries is taken up with accounts of the persecutions carried on by the Roman power—much space is also occupied with accounts of theological discussions of faithful bishops and presbyters upon the various heresies that arose—and the machinations of the leading heretics to obtain power and influence in the Church. It is refreshing to find in the midst of such a record, that the Church was possessed of some true missionary zeal and enterprise.

In the fourth century, a philosopher from Tyre, from the love of travel and research, explored the interior of what was called India: supposed to be the Abyssinia of the present day. He took in his company two pious boys, relatives, who were well educated. The whole party was murdered except the boys, who were retained by the royal family, (in whose eyes they found favor) for the purpose, among other things, of educating the young prince. They soon rose to positions of importance and like Daniel of old, one of them was appointed prime minister. His name was Frumentius. With the assistance of some Roman merchants who traded there, he discovered a few scattered Christians, collected them together and built a church for them. By the united efforts of this little band of believers the native heathen were brought in, converted and instructed. After a time the brothers were reluctantly allowed to visit their native home, Frumentius immediately reported to Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, requesting assistance to evangelize the country. Athanasius, after careful consideration, ordained him "Bishop of the Indians" when he returned and zealously carried on his missionary work. A copious outpouring of the Spirit of God soon blessed his labors, many churches were built and large numbers converted. The genuineness of the work appears from the fact that the Emperor Constantius found it impossible afterward to introduce his favorite Arian heresy into the Indian Church, although he ordered Frumentius deposed and an Arian bishop appointed.

Christianity was spread in Iberia, bordering on the Black Sea, by a pious woman who had been taken captive by the Iberians. It is said that both the king and queen of the country were converted under her teaching.

Christian churches were also built in Arabia, and a bishop appointed, through the influence of ambassadors sent thither by the Emperor Constantius.

The Gospel must have been carried to Great Britain at an earlier period; as we learn that an ecclesiastical council was called by the Emperor Constantius to consider the Arian heresy. Orders were given by the Emperor to supply the expenses of the bishops attending, from various countries, out of the public treasury. The bishops from Britain thought it unbecoming their position to receive secular maintenance, and proudly bore their own expenses. Only three of their number were too poor to refuse the bounty of the Emperor. The accurate preservation of the circumstance in history, indicates a Christian Church in Britain at the time, of large dimensions and considerable wealth.

During this fourth century Christianity spread itself beyond the Roman Empire. Heathens living on the Rhine and in the remotest parts of France had become Christians. The Goths, in the country of the Danube had carried away captives from the Christian countries they invaded, among whom were pious bishops, who remained among them as missionaries. Christians in Armenia and Persia began to be numerous. They

were carried to that region by means of the trade and commerce carried on with the Roman Empire. So numerous were the converts in Persia in this century that thousands of them were severely persecuted, refusing to worship the Sun. The Magi and Jews assisted in persecuting them, but their sincerity and fortitude under suffering gave evidence of a high order of piety.

Let us, Christians of the highly favored nineteenth century, never forget that men lived 1500 years ago, whose sacrifices to spread the Gospel among the heathens amounted to more than an annual donation to a missionary board. They gave their time, their energy, their comforts, yea their very lives to the cause. G. W. M.

UNION OF PRESBYTERIANS AT THE SOUTH.

The Pittsburg Banner gives the following from a late number of the Southern Presbyterian:

The Presbytery of East Alabama expresses its approval of a proposed union between the Southern Presbyterian Church (O. S.) and the United Synod; (or New School.)

On the other hand the South Carolina Presbytery vehemently protests against the proposed union. They affirm that "The glorious vindication of the doctrines of grace made by our Church in 1837 was a separation from undoubted heretics. The parties now proposed to be introduced into union with us continued in fellowship with those heretics until driven out by their legislation against the political institutions of our country. This Presbytery cannot understand how it is possible for the United Synod to have held at one and the same time to the theology of BARNES, BEMAN, and BECKER, and to the theology of our Old School Standards." They insist upon a "formal and distinct repudiation by them of every one of the New School errors," before the union be consummated.

GARIBALDI ON THE PAPACY.—Amongst the incessant deputations which Garibaldi was good natured enough to receive during his stay in London, was one from the "Evangelical Continental Society," to an address from whom he is reported to have replied: "You are the true friends of progress, and I am glad to see you. In Italy the moral influence of the Papacy is extinct, and if the French were withdrawn from Rome the Papacy would cease to exist in Italy. I do not say that I am Protestant, for if I did the priests would raise the cry of heretic against me and my influence would be gone. We are sons of the same God."

Science and the Arts.

THE CATASTROPHE AT SHEFFIELD, ENGLAND.

WHY THE BRADFIELD RESERVOIR SHOULD HAVE GIVEN WAY.

The fatal results and immense damage done by the breaking of the reservoir is fresh before the mind of the public; and a few suggestions gleaned from the evidence before the Coroner's Jury, may satisfy the practical engineer that there were abundant reasons for the giving way of the embankment.

1st. The drain pipes were carried through the puddle wall, without any flanges or collars to prevent the water following along the pipe, as it was certain to do, for it is impossible to make a perfect joining between clay puddle and cast-iron pipe, as any one who has tried it, well knows.

2. The drain pipes were laid on a bed of puddle, the entire distance through the embankment—500 feet. The irregular pressure and settlement of the embankment, bent and perhaps broke every one off.

3. The drain was composed of but two 18 inch pipes, not of sufficient area to vent the water coming into the reservoir.

4. The stops were placed at the lower end of the pipe, outside the embankment, with a pressure of over 10,000 pounds continually, tending to drive the pipe apart.

5. The embankment was formed by dumping material from a railroad car, in tips of about two feet deep,—these forming a loose and open bank as possible, one totally unfit for a reservoir.

6. The reservoir was filled suddenly, without any testing of the embankment by cautious filling, which should have occupied weeks of time, careful working and frequent inspection, by a competent engineer.

Had these blunders been the work of an American engineer, what serious and wholesome counsel our cousins over the water would have administered to us for recklessness. The above suggestions however may be of some use to young and inexperienced engineers in this country; but the very superior talent, profound learning and great experience of the world renowned engineers of Great Britain, are no doubt beyond such homely suggestions. B.

LOCOMOTIVE POWER.

There are about 6500 locomotives, employed on the British railroads. These travel yearly about 120,000,000 miles. Each engine will run about 480,000 miles, undergoing many repairs and renewals; which may be considered the useful life of a locomotive. The annual waste of locomotives, may be set down at 400, of which 50 are destroyed by casualties, and 350 worn-out by actual service. The average consumption of fuel is about 36 lbs of coal per mile run, or two millions of tons of coal per annum.