

Original Communications.

CHINA FROM A CHRISTIAN STAND-POINT. II.

The first and strongest impression made upon a thoughtful mind on entering China, is the immensity of the population; a population full of energy, order and practical sense, but pursuing a method of thought and of action, in every department of life, utterly different from our own.

There are in China, three great systems of faith which may be styled, 1, Confucianism or Optimism; 2, Buddhism or Pantheism; and 3, Taoism or Intellectualism; and from the combined influence of these, there is Ancestral Worship which may be styled the real religious sentiment of China.

Confucius was born 551 years before Christ, and in early life was a close student of the leading literary works of China which, with those composed by himself, and Mencius, constitute the Chinese classics. They are the text books of the schools and of literary examinations, and the final authority in regard to history, manners, morals, philosophy and government.

The second great system of faith, Buddhism, came originally from India. Being in opposition to the Vedas of Brahminism, it was expelled from that country; but it went forth to delude mankind and found lodgment in Central Asia, Burmah, Siam, Ceylon, Java, China and Japan.

The minor commandments are, first, to avoid producing discord either between individuals, families, or the government; second, to abstain from abusive language; third, to abstain from foolish jesting and conversation; fourth, to avoid covetousness and malice; and finally to abstain from following false gods.

One of the most remarkable doctrines of Buddhism is the transmigration of souls. It teaches that the human soul, in order to be purified and attain absorption, is allowed several probationary trials, thus passing through many forms of animal life.

Royal Palace at Bangkok, two of these animals thus treated with divine honors. At the present time, in some parts of the East, an incarnation of Boodh is expected; and when male children are born, an examination is made of the hands and ears—the fingers of the former to be of equal length, and the latter, quite pendent.

When I was at Shanghai, a pall, which had been found at a grave near Soochow was on exhibition, and on it was inscribed the dying faith of a Buddhist Priest. It gives a very fair statement of the doctrine of Buddhistic immortality. "Perfection (or absorption) may be attained by the subjugation of the appetites. Having learned this doctrine, I am fully acquainted with it.

The third leading religious system of China is Taoism, or the worship of the intellectual powers—the word Tao meaning truth or doctrine. At the head of this system is a trinity of persons who preside over the intellectual universe. The first of this trinity is called "The honored one of heaven—first in time."

The second person of this Taoist trinity is very wise and benevolent, and collected all the sacred books which came into existence from the time the world was made. He calculated the succession of times, and divided the ages into periods. He determined the movements and inter-action of the great principles of nature.

Lautsi, the historical founder of the Taoist system, is the third person of the trinity, and was born about 600 years before Christ. He professed to communicate to mankind the doctrines which the first in the triad had uttered, and the second had collected in the form of books.

There are a great many eminent Chinese writers who are the advocates of this Taoist philosophy. Confucius himself has a place assigned him among the deities of this system; and he is addressed as "the honored one of heaven, who causes literature to flourish and the world to prosper."

In its best expression Taoism is a transcendental philosophy; but among the masses it has degenerated into the grossest superstition and idolatry. Its best teachers claim that it exalts and stimulates the intellect, and makes mental power and development the glory of man.

I have thus briefly gone over the three great systems of faith in China, in order to show that the Chinese are by no means destitute of grand moral and intellectual ideas as the basis for higher truth. Indeed, one of the great difficulties which Christian teachers encounter in China is the willing confession on the part of the people, that their doctrines are good—like the teachings of their own great writers.

At the present day China is thoroughly open to Christian missions, and no barriers are to be surmounted but those of language, and the pride, superstition, unbelief, and hardness of heart, found in every country. There is no caste in China, as in India; no religious fanaticism and positive opposition; but only the opposition of indifference, of nominal assent, and of an ancient confirmed civilization.

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literary culture, a caste of which any country might be proud. In China every official has to submit to a competitive examination; and no one holds office without the seal of literary approval. The first examinations are made by the district magistrates, afterwards by the prefects of the chief cities of the districts. If the candidates pass these officials, they can compete for the first degree, before the literary chancellors or commissioners sent from Peking to hold these examinations.

REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS. XXXIII. POPERY ON THE PACIFIC.

Austin, Nev., Jan., 1869.

A special aim of the Popish priesthood, and by long study and practice they have become most skillful propagandists, is to look after the foreshadowing of things; to preoccupy sections and points of coming interest. Far in advance of any other ecclesiastics, or statesmen, hers foresaw that this wonderful Pacific coast was to be the terminus of western emigration; that here the star of empire would stop and permanently shine; that here Europe, America and Asia must meet and strike hands; that after immense aggregation and congregation, from this centre of the world influences would go out to every nation and isle of the sea.

Here, too, she makes larger pretensions to universalism—yes, she is even liberal, and without intent to proselyte. Yet here, cropping out and manifest to all who will look, are every one of her subtle essences—and they are wonderful, as well as legion in number. Here she grants the largest sensual indulgences, in order to counterbalance a jealous spiritual restraint.

One of her special aims on this side the Continent has become fully manifest—to monopolize the education of the daughters, both Catholic and Protestant; knowing full well if she be able to get the future wives and mothers under her control, she can speedily and easily manage the entire community. Great has been my surprise as to the extent Catholic female seminaries—nunnery schools, are patronised by professed Protestants.

Just before leaving New York on my Pacific mission tour I met a young lady lately from the Pacific coast. Making some inquiries of her concerning the churches in a certain place in which she had been, "I know," she replied, "but little about any save one; I am a Catholic." I knew her friends were nominally Protestants, but learned from her that she had been three years in a California nunnery.

Visiting lately a well-to-do family in Austin, Nevada, the mother a professed Presbyterian; the father a man of the world, and attempting a conversation on the subject of religion with a grown daughter: the immediate response was: "I am a Catholic." "How?" "Was two years in a nunnery." "Still later; I was at the death and burial of a lovely little girl, daughter of a very

prominent man in Nevada; and where the physician and myself were the only helps and mourners save father and mother. The little daughter had been brought a long journey home from a nunnery in California, to have a joyous holiday season. Somehow, on the way, she had contracted that fell disease—small pox. When made conscious that death was near, "Mother," she said, "I want to say my prayers." "Say them, daughter." When uttered they were thoroughly popish. Prayers ended, the child continued: "Mother, I want to cross myself; is it wrong?" What could a heart-stricken mother, a professed Protestant, answer under such conditions, to her dying child?

Remonstrating with a mother whose young daughters were away at a nunnery school; the answer in substance was: "Anything like domestic help on the Pacific coast is very difficult to obtain. The nun take entire and thorough charge of their pupils, not only during school months, but vacations also; thus we are relieved from all care. Protestant teachers will not do this."

Mr. Editor, our business is not only to counteract popery, but educate and direct the masses into better and higher channels. The only practical way will be to excel in all educational and religious means and facilities. And to accomplish this vastly more means, efforts, and self-sacrifice are demanded.

A. M. STEWART.

FLORIDA AND THE FLORIDIANS. I.

BY H. E. C.

FIRST SIGHT OF THE COUNTRY.

Here we are, rolling and tossing on the St. John's bar. A thump, a rattle of glasses in the cabin, and a great creaking and groaning in the vessel's joints! "Stewardess, what is the matter?" "No danger, ma'am: only a ground swell ma'am." This to pacify us. The vessel has struck the bar; but thanks to the kind Hand that has shielded us, we are afloat again, and have escaped a danger where some before us have been shipwrecked.

Once across the bar we begin to look about us. First at the water, which has suddenly changed color. The sea-green is gone; we are sailing on a stream of almost inky blackness. What is that on shore; a snow-drift? If not, it is a good imitation of one—a bank of white sand. We must make up our minds to become accustomed to sand; for there is plenty more of it beyond us and below us, and there will be windy days where we shall have it whirling in the air above us. The shores are low, and the palmetto standing sentinel on either side, gives token of an approach to the tropics, and reminds us how far behind we have left our dear northern home.

How silent it is about us. One might almost imagine himself journeying in a country never before visited by a human being. But, occasionally, a little rough building peeps out of the woods and shows where some settler has begun his clearing; and as we still ascend the river lumber-mills begin to appear, some noisily doing their work, though more of them stand idle. On the left rises a bluff, ascending almost perpendicularly from the water. It does not reach a very towering height, but it is a pleasing change from the generally low, flat shores. Somebody has irreverently said, that the St. John's must have been built on contract, for its every where unfinished. It certainly has that look.

JACKSONVILLE.

The city is in sight. Our five days' sail is at an end. The sea and its accompaniments are left behind; and soon we shall be on shore. As we near the wharf, Darkies and Donkeys mingle before us in delightful confusion; a goodly number of each. Slavery makes men so much like brutes that you naturally associate the two. "Carriage? Carriage?" Ah, it is your turn; poor voyagers, to cry out "carriage." What would you give to meet a New York hackman now? Here we are, a ship-load of invalids. Some stiff box stagers stand yonder, and you can perhaps get a place in one of them, and perhaps not. They will be well-crowded; and yonder sits a young, attractive lady, panting for breath, who needs very tender handling. "Carriage?" Yes, in ten days, my poor child, a carriage, slow-moving, one lone mourner following, and all that is left of you goes North again—to rest.

Jacksonville, not a very musical name, but quite suited to the place: not much poetry in either. Much has been written of this small town, perhaps more than it deserves. A beautiful city, it certainly is not, although there are a few very pretty places in it. A first look gives the stranger an impression of white-wash. A second look, especially if it be accompanied by a walk, gives an additional impression of sand. The buildings have been thrown up rapidly, and mostly stand on posts, without cellars or foundation walls. Perhaps as pleasant an object as one greets in his stroll about town is the grand old live oak. These, especially, when changing leaves, are objects of great interest—the new foliage

seeming to push off the old, and combining spring and autumn in one view. We are disappointed to see so few flowers; is not this Florida? An occasional rose smiles its welcome, however, and we are thankful for that.

Every one who comes to Jacksonville, is expected to take a walk to the Camp, and another to the Monument. The former is an especial object of interest. Situated on a bluff, just where the river bends from its long journey northward, to meet the sea, it commands a fine view of the steamers and smaller craft coursing their way up and down the stream. Then there are some neat white-washed barracks and some very fine trees, and O happy sight! some green grass! I could almost imagine myself home again as I look at it, and could kneel and kiss the dear old turf with a good heart! But what of the Monument? We plunge out for it through the sand-spurs, and here it is just back of the town, a pile of bricks in pyramidal form, perpetuating the memory of some member of one of the "first families" in the following lines. Do not misread them: here they are, pathetic and beautiful!

"Though I am dead and in my grave,
And my bones they are all rotten,
When this you see remember me,
That I may not be forgotten."

I met a colored boy on my way back to the city, and said to him: "Did you know that I was a rebel?" "No m," he answered with a shrewd show of ivory; "You isn't a rebel: dey isn't so han'-some as you is!" The sagacious little rascal. He knew I was a Northerner in a moment; and intended to win a dime by his very untruthful compliment. The Yankee and the Southerner are very distinct types of being. You distinguish them at a glance.

HOME MISSIONS.—GOOD NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

KANSAS.

REV. H. KENDALL, D.D.—DEAR SIR.—Bro. J., of N. Y., has just written about Kansas. I have sent him a favorable reply. We should have one organization at least in every county in our new Presbytery. There are several yet that have none. Bro. C. visited me about two weeks ago. He says you can help churches here needing Sunday-school libraries, to them. The books I got at first we lost largely while worshipping in the Hall and in the Public School building. Now we have better accommodations, but our library is very inadequate. We will do what we can, but there is the constant poverty to speak of. Our church building must be finished inside and out this season, an organ must be got, a bell, &c., while money is tight. So we go squeezing along, "Festina lente." Week before last at a festival we cleared \$275. Five hundred more on subscription, we think, will complete what we want to do this season. The Church Election has done all we can ask; we must help ourselves and begin to pay back. If you can help us to more books this spring, we will make good use of them, and receive them gratefully.

I have just been answering a letter from Mrs. Moore, of the First Presbyterian church of West Chester, Pa. It is true our wardrobe, &c., needs replenishing, our clothing is pretty threadbare, but our wants are so much less than the home missionary, with a large family of children, that he certainly should have the preference, and so I wrote her.

A GLORIOUS REVIVAL.

Flushing, Mich., March 15, 1869.

DEAR BRO.—I should have forwarded my report before now, (for it has been due almost a month,) but I have been greatly pressed with labor. Ever since the beginning of the year my hands have been so full of work. Beginning with the week of prayer there have been manifest tokens of God's presence. At the close of the week we felt that it would be wrong to discontinue the meetings; and through the first week of February (five weeks in all), the daily meetings were kept up. There have been 40 to 50 hopeful conversions. There have been thirty-one added to our membership, twenty-six on profession. In many respects the revival has been very wonderful, entirely free from all exciting elements, but of remarkable solemnity throughout. Of the number who have united with the church, 24 are heads of families, 14 of them men, and six families of both husband and wife. The Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad. His name be praised!

Truly yours, J. H. PHELPS.

ANOTHER REVIVAL.

Woodbine, Harrison Co., Ind., March 17, 1869.

DEAR BROTHER:—This last quarter of my communion has been so busy and eventful, that I am seriously embarrassed to know where to begin or what to say. But, at the beginning of it, I was relieved of St. Johns and Cincinnati by the happy coming of our beloved brother, G. R. Carroll, the noblest spirit, and best Evangelist I have ever seen my fortune, to meet in all my varied ministerial career. Still his coming did not alleviate my excessive labors in the least. For, ere he got settled, I had held a meeting nine days at Dakan's school-house; Harris Grove, riding from fifteen to twenty-five miles daily for five days, preaching each night, till our meeting was ended by the state of the roads. In this meeting there was much real interest, solemnity and weeping; seven to nine of these have since been hopefully converted. In Lower Harris Grove Mr. Carroll was about half the time with me. Twenty-five were hopefully converted. At the close of this most interesting meeting—the most general and genuine revival I have ever seen, we organized a church of twenty-one members; all by profession but three, of which five were heads of families. Ten adults were baptized—a most impressive scene, in which some were melted to tears. This was a grave, a happy day! the birth-day of a church. What a changed community! With what a zest they do sing new songs of salvation! I have purchased and distributed \$24 of our Social Hymn and Tune Book in this field, getting them at half price from Mr. Dulles.