

hearing to an opinion because they are sure that it is false, is to assume that their certainty is the same thing as absolute certainty.

"If all mankind, minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were to be found of a contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.

"Strange it is, that men should admit the validity of arguments for free discussion, but object to their being 'pushed to an extreme,' not seeing that unless reasons are good for an extreme case, they are not good for any case. Strange that they should imagine that they are not assuming infallibility when they acknowledge that there should be free discussion on all subjects which can possibly be doubtful, but think that some particular principle or doctrine should be forbidden to be questioned because it is so certain, that is, because they are certain that it is certain."

"But I must be permitted to observe that it is not the feeling sure of a doctrine (be it what it may) which I call an assumption of infallibility. It is the undertaking to decide that question for others without allowing them to hear what can be said on the contrary side. And I denounce and reprobate this pretension not the less if put forth on the side of my most solemn convictions."

"No one can be a great thinker who does not recognize, that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead."

"But the strongest of all the arguments against the interference of the public with purely personal conduct is that when it does interfere, the odds are that it interferes wrongly and in the wrong place."

"The opinion of a majority imposed as a law on the minority, on questions of self-regarding conduct, is quite as likely to be wrong as right; for in these cases public opinion means, at the best, some people's opinion of what is good or bad for other people; while very often it does not mean that; the public with the most perfect indifference, passing over the pleasure or convenience of those whose conduct they censure, and considering only their own preference. There are many who consider as an injury to themselves any conduct which they have a distaste for, and resent it as an outrage on their feelings; as a religious bigot, when charged with disregarding the religious feelings of others, has been known to retort that they disregard his feelings by persisting in their abominable worship or creed. But there is no parity between the feeling of a person for his own opinion and the feeling of another who is offended at his holding it; no more than between the desire of a thief to take a purse and the desire of the right owner to keep it. And a person's taste is as much his own peculiar concern as his opinion or his purse."—*John Stuart Mill's Essay on Liberty.*

SOME CHINESE GODS.

Everyone has some general ideas concerning the Chinese religion, but perhaps few are even slightly acquainted with its tenets or the details of the worship.

There are two features of the Chinese religion which distinguish it from the faith of most other heathen nations. These are the absence of human sacrifices and the undeification of vice. No sacrificial immolation of man by his fellows has been found in Chinese annals in such a shape as to carry the conviction that it formed part of the belief or practice of the people. No Aphrodite or Sukshmi occurs in the list of Chinese goddesses; no weeping for Thammuz; no obscene rites of the Durgapuga have ever been required or sanctioned by Chinese priests; no Nautch girls as in Indian temples, or courtesans as in Corinth, are kept in their sacred dwellings, nor does their mythology beam with disgusting relation of the amours of their deities. On the contrary, like the Romanists, they exact and defy chastity and seclusion as a means of bringing the soul and body nearer to the highest excellence.

There are three forms of religion among the Chinese in this country, says the *New York Star*, the Lao-Tse, the Chung-Tse or Confucius and the Fo. Lao-Tse was the great reformer of the Chinese primitive religion, which was in a great degree a worship of nature. He was the meditative son of a poor peasant, the basis of his new teachings being that man must subdue and control his passions if he wishes to obtain spiritual and physical happiness. Every faculty and sentiment was given as good, the manner of arranging them being to place on one side all those that personify the virtuous, proper and pleasant with their corresponding antagonists opposite them. The priests practice an epicurean philosophy, and the professors of this creed are chiefly the rich and the higher classes of society.

The purpose of Confucius was to establish the primitive religion, his object being not so much to teach a new belief as the inculcation of moral principles and to induce his countrymen to lead a moral life. His philosophy embraced three grades of sacrifices—the great, medium and inferior. The objects to which the great sacrifices are offered are only four, viz: Tien, the heavens or sky, ti, the earth; tai miao, or the great temple of ancestors wherein the tablets of deceased monarchs of this dynasty are placed; and lastly the shie tsh, or gods of the land and grain.

The medium sacrifices are offered to nine objects: The sun, or "great light," the moon, or "night light," the names of emperors and kings of former dynasties, the ancient patrons of agriculture and silk, Confucius himself, and the gods of heaven, earth and the cyclic year. The mythology which Confucius taught was that the sun, day, warmth and the higher heavens or perfect principles were of the mas-

culine gender, and the imperfect principles, comprising the moon, earth, night and cold, were of the feminine gender. He attached no idea of personality to the Deity but ordered adoration paid to powers that represented that celestial ruler.

The Chung Tse, or as it is better known in America as Confucianism, is the religion of the more learned classes.

The most popular religion and that which we see practiced in Mott Street, and in fact in San Francisco, is that of Fo or Buddhism. Some of the doctrines of Confucius have been incorporated into it, but the salient features are those of Samanism, which have degraded it into a common idolatry. Many if not most of the idols to be seen in the various temples of joss houses here, which are usually devoted to the service of the patron deity of some one particular company, are little more than adaptations of Indian deities or the persons of remote ancestors invested with the characteristics of gods.

Of all the saints in the Chinese calendar Confucius is the chief, and with him are reckoned the early kings Yao and Shun, with King Wau and his two sons, King Wu and Duke Chau.

The highest divinity is Nguk Kuong Siong Ya. He is particularly prayed to in times of business troubles or financial depression, and is referred to as the producer and governor of all things terrestrial and celestial. The common people believe him to be the supreme ruler of all, who is to examine into the merits or demerits of mortals, and reward or punish them according to their deserts. The custom most in vogue of approaching his august presence is by nine genuflections and three knockings.

Tai Sang, or the deity controlling life and death, is the object of special adoration by the inhabitants of Chinese Tartary. He is the reputed grandson of Nguk Huong Siong Ta and reigns over the lower regions. He is regarded as the deity who has charge of the portals of the hereafter and it is that he might more easily and effectually draw his followers into his terrestrial abode that the common queues are so much worn by Chinamen.

In the Chinese joss house on Mott Street is a figure labeled "Hieng Tieng Siong Ta," who is regarded by the almond-eyed Celestials as the supreme ruler of the heavens. He is also known as the "water ruler" and is often prayed to prevent conflagrations, as wind and rain are believed to be his special dispensations. Joss sticks are burned in his honor and during the winter solstice, which is a great day of Chinese worship, he is ornamented with a silk cloak, cap and boots. When these garments are about to be taken off, all worshipers present express their adoration of the idol by spitting in its face nine consecutive times. The dress is then removed, and three joss sticks are placed at the foot of the "water ruler" until the coming of the next winter solstice.

There is but one of the numerous