

THE HEATHEN CHINEE AT HOME.

His Peculiar Superstitions, Customs, Cruelties and Strange Performances---His Language and Religion.

For ways that are dark and for tricks that are vain, the heathen Chinese is peculiar.

TO ASCERTAIN why John Chinaman is so "peculiar" we must go further back than the history of our own civilization takes us and grope among the misty traditions of a long forgotten past. He lays claim to an antiquity that laughs our own to scorn and to a lineage which, by comparison, puts that of the "barbarian" completely in the shade. Everything, of course, depends upon the point of view, and if it is admitted at the beginning that an ancient ancestry carries with it a prestige before which the rest of the world should bow, then the Chinaman has an advantage at the start. The chronicle of Chinese dynasties alone extends back to nearly 3,000 years before the beginning of the Christian era, or some 5,000 years in all, which is quite a respectable period. China, in fact, is a survival of another and more ancient world than that in which we live at present, and herein lies the explanation of one phase of Chinese peculiarities.

Nearly 1,900 years ago, or about A. D. 50, the Chinaman introduced gunpowder from India and was using it to some advantage 1,400 years before the alleged discovery of America. Thirteen hundred and fifty years ago the art of making paper from vegetable fiber was brought into Europe from China, where it was probably invented; at least so far back as the sixth century, printing was practiced by the Chinese; in the tenth century the imperial classics were printed, and by the thirteenth much of the literature of former ages was in circulation.

In fact, there are few great inventions of modern times, saving those pertaining to steam and electricity, which were not common in China at one time or another. These facts may

ways counts for more than quantity, and that a nation is truly great only in proportion to its achievements and not to its area or population. For example, in 1855 little Japan destroyed China's mighty navy and brought the boastful

without being inventive or original, but they are slow to adopt the customs of the "barbarians," as they term all foreigners. If they do not understand it, it is because they do not want to, and the reasons given for not adopting foreign innovations are about on a par with those they allege for not indulging in dancing—that it is easier to hire some one to do it for them!

Because the customs of a person or people are different from ours it is not a necessary inference that they are therefore peculiar or barbarous. Some things that we do are doubtless strange and unaccountable in the eyes of the Chinese; but from our point of view they seem to go by contraries, like the Irishman's pig, who had to be driven in an opposite direction from the way

to a perverse sense of what should be rendered to antiquated and ridiculous custom. To ascertain why and when the first John Chinaman wore a pigtail we shall have to go back a few hundred years in his history, and yet not so very far either. There are older customs than that, and more important events have happened, of which chronicles have been preserved.

It was not until the year 1644, after long and bloody wars, that the present Manchoo dynasty was established, and it was just about that time also that the Chinaman was forced to adopt the badge of his Tartar conquerors, which was the cue. The Tartar gave John the cue, and he has kept it ever since, even though at the time it was bestowed as a sign of servitude. He was told to

the women, that is a custom which has been in vogue since a certain emperor, about a thousand years ago, found great pleasure in the dancing of a girl who had made her feet small by binding them up so that she could pirouette very prettily on the tips of her toes. The emperor was so delighted with the evolutions of her little feet that he caused a pavement of his palace to be inlaid with golden lotus leaves and flowers for her satisfaction, and the other women of his empire, hearing of it, all began to bandage their feet.

But when the Manchoo dynasty came into power the first edict issued, after the male Chinese had been ordered to wear the pigtail, declared it punishable by death for parents to bind the feet of their children. It is another illustration of the obscurity of the Chinese that they took kindly to the pigtail, which at first they despised and now consider as a sign of honor instead of disgrace, while they resented the edict against bandaging the feet, so that it was recalled after three years and the custom reinstated.

The most conspicuous example in this country of a woman of station with bandaged feet is that of the amiable wife of the Chinese minister, Mr. Wu, whose recent criticisms of American ladies and their dress might seem to come with better grace if his own spouse were not so frightfully maimed and mutilated in conformity to the behest of fashion.

The Chinese ladies and gentlemen rarely eat together, but occupy different rooms, rather from the fact that it is more convenient than in obedience to some law of caste. The men have a custom in hot weather of divesting themselves of their coats and all superfluous garments and sitting around

on certain days of the year all the members of the family perform their sacred duty of carrying to the graves of their progenitors gifts of incense, sandalwood, candles, food and drink. The ancestor has a special niche in the household, as well as the family god or gods, for when a man dies it is believed that his ghost acquires great powers and must be placated with gifts.

As for the family idol, he has a good time or the reverse, according to the family fortune. So long as things go along smoothly he has a plate of rice placed for him at every meal, and joss sticks and incense are burned before him daily. But if ill luck comes to his owner he is first cursed for a "noter" do well; then, if it continues, he is kicked out of the house, or if made of metal, battered to pieces and sold for old junk.

While the visible embodiments of their gods are of mechanical manufacture, the Chinese also have a mechanical arrangement by which they do their praying, which consists in turning a big cylinder filled with innumerable invocations on paper or parchment. After jerking a bell rope as he enters the temple, to inform the god of his presence, the Chinese worshiper then gives the cylinder a whirl and reels off more prayers in a minute than an ordinary petitioner can utter in years.

Superstition is rampant in China, and the soothsayers are consulted on every important step or occasion, no class being exempt from its pernicious influence. One of the superstitions of the Chinaman is his belief in the "fung shway," or the eternal balance of things, as, for example, if a window is opened on one side of a room another must be opened on the other, etc. This superstition takes more forms than one can conceive, and a case is cited of a high mandarin, who had represented his country at a foreign court, protesting himself before and worshipping a green lizard found in his courtyard because he had been assured that it was the incarnation of the great dragon king who was then devastating the country by a terrible drought. We are considering, of course, the native as untouched by foreign civilization, which rolls off him like water off a duck's back, and as unimpressed by the missionaries who have devoted so many years trying to overcome his superstitions.

Strange to say, it is this ancestor worship which while it has kept China so long unprogressive and a laggard in the race between the nations, has given rise to the most tender family ties in

ents, their superiors and inferiors, with respect. The boys and girls are educated together until they are about 10 years old; then the boys of the rich go to a separate school or have a private tutor, and the girls are kept at home. It is said that while the worship of ancestors and obedience to parents is the religion of the Chinese, so education is their universal ambition. They positively worship learning and have the greatest respect for those who have acquired it. Naturally enough, too, Confucius is the particular god, the patron saint, of every Chinese school, and when a boy first attends he takes his joss sticks, painted candles and a small packet of mock money, all of which he burns before a strip of cloth or paper on which is inscribed one of the many titles of Confucius, the boy bowing while his offering burns before the god. This ceremony is called "entering school" and "worshipping the sage."

It is a matter of wonder how the Chinese children learn anything at all, since all the exercises are conducted viva voce, the pupil shouting out his lesson as loud as he can, and the more noise he makes the more proficient he is supposed to become. The height of a boy's ambition is to take the course prescribed by the tsung-ly-amen, or central government, at Peking, and become a diplomat, though to acquire a degree one has to undergo a most severe series of examinations, and many lives have been lost in the attempt.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the Chinese have fairly earned their designation of "peculiar," and that, though they have many commendable traits, they have some which they can well afford to do without. One characteristic trait of the Celestial is his power of endurance; another is his insensibility or indifference to pain. He is essentially thick skinned, or pachydermatous, and not only can endure suffering stoically, but is also unaffected by the sufferings of others. This is exemplified by the terrible cruelty exercised in his treatment of criminals and of those charged only with having committed small offenses against the laws. A person without influence, if suspected of any crime, is tortured in a most revolting manner in order to wring confession. Sometimes he is hung head downward by means of cords fastened to his toes; again, stood on his head, while the soles of his feet are beaten with heavy hammers. If he confesses, as he generally does, under the terrible punishment, he is thrown to the ground and beaten nearly to a jelly, or else is taken to the execution yard, where his head is chopped off. And the Chinese mode of execution indicates the vast difference between their civilization and ours, for, while we are only moved to execute capital punishment by dire necessity, and then effect it as secretly as possible, the Chinese use every sort of brutal accessory to make of it a sport and shocking exhibition. Sometimes a dozen or more victims have their heads chopped off at a time, being arranged in rows, so that each one can see the ghastly act performed on the one that goes before him. The prisoners are chained hand and foot, and are dumped on the ground like so many pigs, and their heads lopped off by an executioner with a keen bladed ax or long knife until the ground is drenched with blood, and all present are spattered with the blood that spouts from the headless trunks.

Lastly, the Chinese funerals, like their executions, partake of the awfully grotesque. As the Chinaman has to pay the "last debt of nature," like other individuals, and cannot hire a substitute, as he might if condemned to be beheaded, he accepts the inevitable with resignation. But he has taken every precaution to "fool the devil," who, he knows, is lying in wait for his soul, by providing a great store of firecrackers, which are let off at every corner as the funeral procession passes in a nip and tuck race for the cemetery. Under cover of the funeral Fourth of July celebration the just freed soul is supposed to depart in peace, uncaught by the evil one.

TRISTRAM W. WILCOX.

TRANSPORTING HORSES.

One of the most difficult matters connected with the transport of mounted troops is the embarkation of horses. Equine soldiers do not love the sea, and to get them on board and to keep them quiet and healthy during a long voyage is by no means an easy task. Horses are always kept in a cool state before embarking and are put on board ship rather low in flesh than in too high condition. Horses which are in the latter state are disposed to be fractious and kick, and are also liable to inflammation. Long, slow, steady work is given to horses previous to their embarkation. They are kept fasting and without water for some hours before being put on board.

This minimizes the bad effects of slinging an overtaken animal. They also become much sooner reconciled to their change of quarters and take to their feed on board when these measures have been adopted. As a rule, horses' shoes are not removed, as the animals are generally used directly they land.

Horses to be embarked are drawn up by troops as near the points of embarkation as possible. Their saddles and harness are taken off and packed in large sacks, while they are provided with ship's collars.

No fewer than five men are required to "sling" a horse quickly and well. One man holds the "head girth," which is made fast to the ship's head collar. Two men stand on each side of the animal and hold up the sling until the horse's legs leave the ground, and the two remaining soldiers stand at the head and tail to fasten the breast strap and breeching respectively.

A horse on board ship eats ten pounds of hay, five pounds of oats, five pounds of bran and one-half an ounce of rye. His drinking allowance is half a gallon of vinegar and eight gallons of water.

COMPLIMENT TO THE CLOTH.

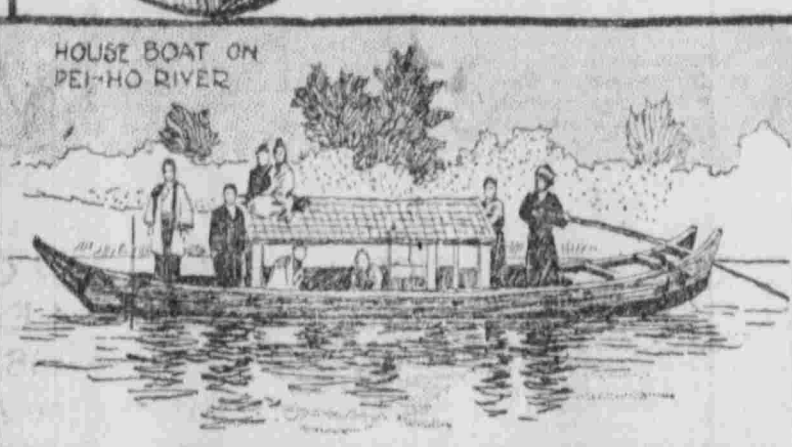
A distinguished clergyman tells a story at his own expense. He was on a tramp through the mountains with another clergyman for a companion. One day they mounted the driver's seat of a stagecoach. As is often the case, the stage driver was an interesting character, whose conversation abounded in good stories. The three speedily became friendly, and with red of the journey, "I'm glad to have met you, fellows," said the driver on leaving them, "yer see, I haven't seen a man this summer—only ministers."



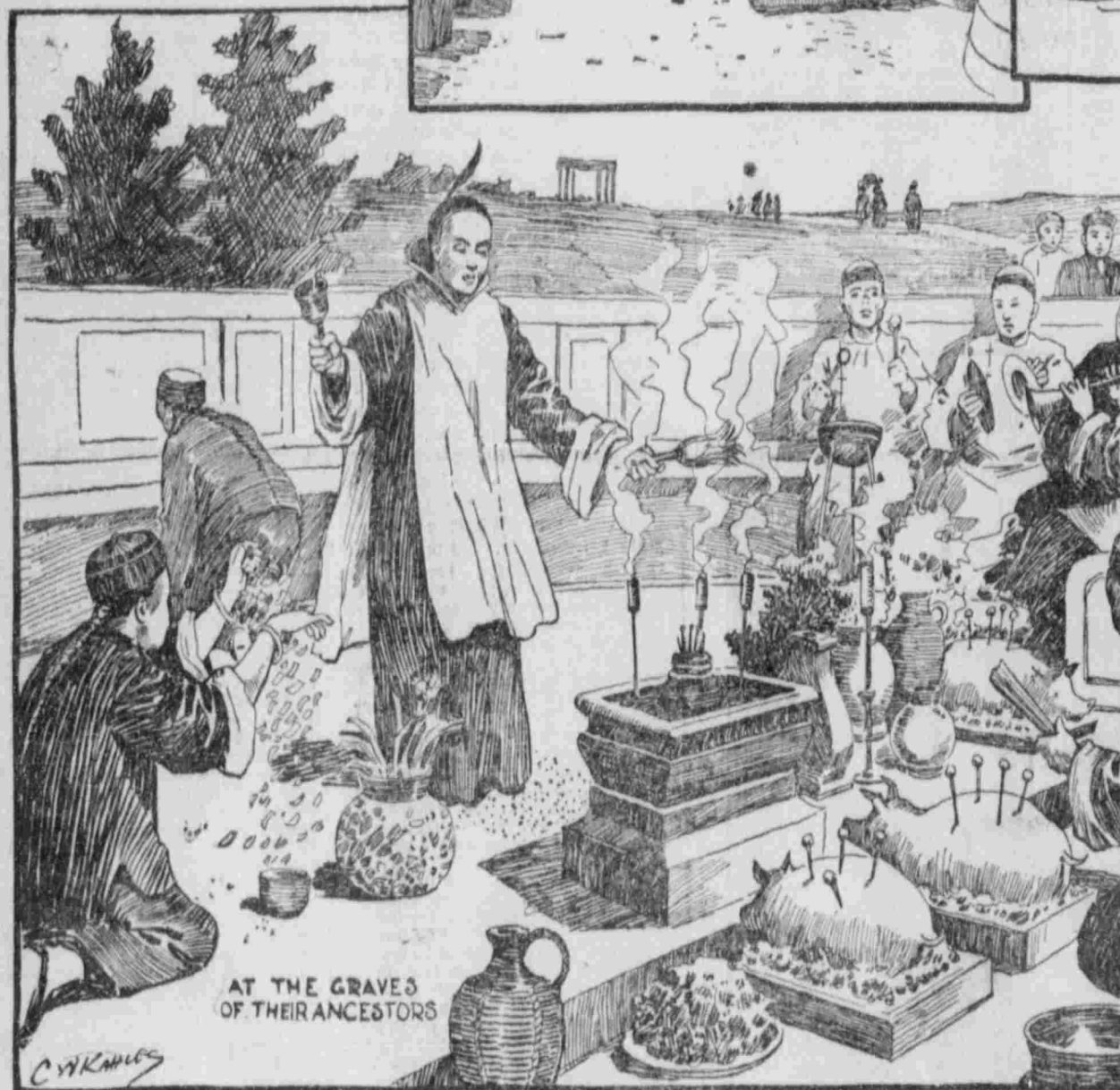
A CHINESE BEHEADING PLACE



WU TING FANG.



HOUSE BOAT ON PEI-HO RIVER



AT THE GRAVES OF THEIR ANCESTORS



A MERCHANT PRINCE AND HIS FAMILY



IN THE HOUSE OF A MANDARIN

be set down to the Chinaman's credit, but to his discredit must be urged the other notorious fact that, while he was the originator of many useful inventions, he never learned how to apply them to the best advantage. He makes his paper in the same manner as his ancestors did 3,000 years ago; he prefers block to movable type today; his country used firearms centuries before other nations had abandoned bows and arrows; yet up to the present time he has great faith in antiquated "jingals" and other primitive weapons (with which some of the rebels are resisting the allied powers at this moment) and believes in the efficacy of hideous noises, grimages and "stinkpots" in arresting the advance of an enemy armed with the latest inventions of warfare.

These facts betray another phase of Chinese character and show how a nation great at the beginning or in ancient times may become the victim of arrested development and in a certain sense be petrified. That is the trouble with John. He started out well, made great progress at first and then, probably overcome by his mighty conceit, suddenly "stopped short, never to go again," like that famous clock which was either wound up too tight or filled with cog. Anyway, he slipped and fell, and when he arose, bewildered by the shock, he seemed to have forgotten everything else but the former greatness of his ancestors and the magnitude of his country.

It is a sorry state to get into when a nation assumes, either by assertion or by implication, that it "knows it all" and can no longer be taught. This seems to be the condition of China, for, reflecting that it is, or ought to be, next to Russia, the largest state that ever existed, with a population aggregating 400,000,000, or one-third the earth's inhabitants, it arrogates to itself some quality of greatness which it really does not possess.

It seems to forget that quality al-

Chinese in abasement to their knees. Overbearing and narrow minded, the Chinese learn nothing from experience and fail to perceive the lessons of adversity.

The Chinese are not a homogeneous people, yet, with the exception of some natives, such as those of Hainan and the half wild peoples of the interior of Formosa, now under Japanese rule, they all speak a common language, which, again, has so many dialects that the residents on different sides of a river or a mountain range may have a different pronunciation. Chinese is a difficult language for a foreigner to acquire, and this may account for the ease with which those to whom it is natural learn another tongue. Educated Chinese diplomats, like Mr. Wu Ting Fang, the present minister to the United States, speak our language with accuracy and an exquisite pronunciation. The fact that even those Chinamen supposed to be highly educated do not always master all the intricacies of their own written language may be responsible for the amazing ignorance they sometimes display of the resources of their own land. This ignorance, however, invariably results in exaggeration of the greatness of China.

A Chinaman will tell you that his country possesses the best artists in the world; but any one who has seen a Chinese drawing, with its total lack of proportion and perspective, can refute this. He will assert that his native musicians are fit to twang a harp in celestial choirs; but whoever has listened to their discordant "harmonies" with-out rhythm and melody, and in which the ear splitting gong is the prime factor, can testify to the contrary. As to the drama, in which women are replaced by eunuchs and beardless youths, and which, like the poet's brook, goes on almost "forever, oh," it is no wonder that the official classes are deterred from attending its performances. The Chinese are imitative

he was going." For instance, when we address the Supreme Being we raise our faces and direct our thoughts to heaven; but the Chinaman prostrates himself upon the earth, in which he supposes his gods to dwell. Our location of intelligence is in the brain, while the Chinese locate it in the stomach. Their meals, especially their dinners, begin with sweetmeats and preserves and end with plain food, like rice, contrary to our custom of eating the simpler articles first and the dainties last. And, while we use a fork in conveying the food to the mouth, the Chinese use the primitive chopsticks.

As we shave our faces and allow the hair of our heads to grow, so John Chinaman shaves his head and coaxes out all the hair he can on his chin; he chalks his shoes, while we have ours blackened and polished; he shakes his own hand when he casually meets a friend; after a visit he bows out ceremoniously and does his bowing in the street; at the left hand is his post of honor; he pays his doctor only while he is sick—a custom which, it would seem, could not be too highly commended.

The Chinese gentleman prides himself upon his ceremonious etiquette and the punctilious observance of polite formalities; he never thinks of sitting while his guest is standing or until he has bowed him to a seat at his left hand. Yet the Chinese have recently revoked the guarantee of safety due to all ministers at Peking, and Chinese officers at Taku gave the command to fire upon the foreign ships before war was declared, for their foes were "barbarians" in their estimation and not entitled to consideration.

All these things mentioned may be merely matters of ethics, for which the individual is not to be held responsible any more than for the cues worn by the men and the deformed feet of the women. Both these fashions are due

to the foot binding practiced on the women, that is a custom which has been in vogue since a certain emperor, about a thousand years ago, found great pleasure in the dancing of a girl who had made her feet small by binding them up so that she could pirouette very prettily on the tips of her toes. The emperor was so delighted with the evolutions of her little feet that he caused a pavement of his palace to be inlaid with golden lotus leaves and flowers for her satisfaction, and the other women of his empire, hearing of it, all began to bandage their feet.

There are about 120,000,000 fish. There are occasions, however, when it would be difficult to convince deep-sea fishermen that the calculator's figures are within 125,989,999 of being correct. Of 80 balls fired in battle only one on the average hits its mark. The common German hen lays about 50 or 60 eggs in ten years. In the first year the number is only from 10 to 20;

in the second, third and fourth years from 100 to 125 each, and thereafter it rapidly diminishes. In the tenth year the ordinary hen lays but 10 to 12 eggs. Many varieties of the cactus plant are put to commercial uses in Mexico. The spines of the hedgehog cactus are sold as toothpicks, a single plant sometimes producing as many as 50,000. The cochineal insect, from which coloring mat-

ter is obtained, is found on cactus plants. The organ cactus is used in the erection of fences, its sharp spines making it an effective barrier. It resembles barbed wire.

In 1899 there was sold about \$5,200,000 special delivery stamps. The distance traveled for special delivery was about 2,625,000 miles. A messenger boy to accomplish the distance would have to

inculcating a beautiful filial piety. On account of the fact that the possession of children will probably secure him perpetual worshippers when he shall be entombed with his ancestors, the Chinese father welcomes a birth with joy, and from that hour the mother becomes a person of importance in the household. The childless wife is despised and maltreated, but the mother of a large family is almost idolized, for the Chinaman holds, with Napoleon, that the greatest woman is she who is the mother of the most sons.

One of the first lessons the children learn is courtesy, and rich and poor alike are taught to address their par-

ents, their superiors and inferiors, with respect. The boys and girls are educated together until they are about 10 years old; then the boys of the rich go to a separate school or have a private tutor, and the girls are kept at home.

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PICK UPS FROM EVERYWHERE.

For preserving timber from decay an Australian has patented a new treatment, consisting of immersing the timber in a solution of arsenic acid and an alkali until thoroughly impregnated, after which a coating of sulphate of copper is applied.

The astonishing total of \$485,000 has

been realized from Kipling's "Absent-minded Beggar" in various ways, the proceeds going to the families of men fighting in South Africa. This is at the rate of \$10,000 a line, which doubtless breaks the poetry record.

A German statistician has estimated that beneath every square mile of sea

8,000 soldiers, all devoted to their venerable chief and ready at his behest, be the same what it may.

A new cyclone story is that a cow which was picked up by a rope was picked up by the cyclone and carried up the length of the rope—about 60 feet—where she remained until the storm had passed, when she quietly climbed down the rope and resumed her grazing.